

# GUIDE TO SPOTTING GREEN-WASHING IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

## Find the company's sustainability page

What does the company write on their website about sustainability?

Use the website menu or search function.

You may also want to examine the company's SoMe profiles on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or similar.

Many companies have a page about sustainability, the environment or social responsibility – it may be called something like “Sustainability”, “Our Responsibility”, “Environment” or “CSR” (Corporate Social Responsibility).

Example: If the company prides itself on being sustainable, but writes very little about how they relate to climate and sustainability, it may indicate that it is not something they attach great importance to.

## Look for concrete evidence

What figures and facts does the company present?

Companies that genuinely want to be sustainable often show concrete figures about their environmental and climate impact. This could be figures about their CO2 emissions, how much water they use, or what percentage of the textiles they use are recycled.

Example: If the company does not mention what percentage of their clothing is made from organic cotton or recycled plastic, or otherwise provide specific figures, it is easier for them to exaggerate their efforts.

## Pay attention to the language

Does the company use vague words and/or imprecise descriptions?

Look for if the company uses very general words like “green,” “eco-friendly,” or “natural” without explaining exactly what they mean. If they write that they want to be sustainable without explaining how, this could be a sign of greenwashing.

Example: If the company writes “We use sustainable materials,” but they don't explain what materials they use and how they are sustainable, it can be suspicious.

## Find markings

What certifications and/or labels does the company have?

Certifications and labels can be a sign that the company is working sustainably and climate-consciously.

Known markings:

- GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard): The clothing is made from organic cotton.
- OEKO-TEX Standard 100: The textile is tested for harmful substances.
- EU Ecolabel. A comprehensive assessment of a product's environmental impact throughout its entire life cycle, from raw materials to production, distribution and disposal.

Example: If the company or their products have one or more of these markings, it is a good sign. But if they just say they are “green” without any markings, it can be suspicious.



**Examine what the clothes are made of.**

What does the clothes contain?

Check what materials the company uses for their products. For example, if they use a lot of polyester, which is typically produced from crude oil and natural gas, it can be harmful to the climate. However, if they use materials like organic cotton or tencel and lyocell (more environmentally friendly fabric types), it can be less harmful.

Example: If the company writes that they use “sustainable materials” without explaining which ones, this may be a sign that they are hiding the facts.

**Look at the company's actions, not just their words**

What does the company do?

Some companies write that they will become sustainable in 5 or 10 years, but they may be doing nothing or very little right now. Check whether they are doing anything concrete now, or whether they are mainly promising improvements in the future.

Example: If the company writes: “We plan to reduce our CO2 emissions by 50% by 2030,” but does not explain what they are doing right now and how they will ensure the reduction, this may be a sign of greenwashing.

**Examine working conditions**

How does the company treat their workers?

Sustainability is not only about the climate and environment, but also about the people who make the clothes. Find out if the company works to ensure good working conditions and how they do it. Look for information about whether they pay fair wages, how they protect themselves against child labor, and how they create safe working conditions and respect human rights.

Example: If the company doesn't mention anything about their factories or workers, that could be a red flag.

**Use independent sources**

Which sources are credible?

Cross-check with external sources whether the company's claims are credible after examining the company's website. Use websites such as the Danish Consumer Council TÆNK, Danwatch, Ranka-brand, Good On You or reports from environmental organizations such as Greenpeace. They can provide an assessment of whether the company is truly working to be sustainable.

Example: If an independent source says that the company is not delivering on their promises, it may be a sign that they are greenwashing.