



H&M Group

Press release: for immediate release

H&M Group and WWF pilot new AI solution to help reduce pressures on natural forests in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 25 August 2022: A new application using Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been launched today, to support garment and textile factories reduce their potential contribution to deforestation. This is an exciting collaboration on innovative technology development between H&M Group and WWF in Cambodia.

His Excellency Neth Pheaktra, Secretary of State to the Ministry of Environment, says that the Ministry of Environment applauds the launch of the Wood Artificial Intelligent Application developed under partnership of H&M Group and WWF. “We appreciate this innovative initiative by WWF and H&M Group, and welcome H&M Group’s commitments to address climate change and reduce pressures on natural forests through its production chains,” he said.

“The WoodAi App represents an important contribution to addressing some of the drivers that are causing deforestation. The Ministry encourages other clothing brands to follow this example and also support efforts to save natural forests and wildlife for the long term benefit of people and nature,” **His Excellency Neth Pheaktra** added.

The Secretary of State calls on the private sector to join hand in hand with Royal Government of Cambodia to develop local economies by improving the livelihoods of local communities living in and around protected areas. Companies are also encouraged to do whatever they can help reduce the pressures on natural forests. The government supports these initiatives, as well as conservation-friendly and responsible management practices for soft wood industry.

The WoodAi App can quickly identify wood species and can further support garment factories in tackling the lack of information around biomass sourcing. The app enables wood species to be identified using only a smartphone and a macro lens, at the factory gate, helping factories to verify that the wood they source for power generation is from H&M Group approved residues of plantation species like mango and cashew, which are less likely to contribute to deforestation.

“WWF’s mission in Cambodia is to conserve the country’s rich biological diversity. The forests of Cambodia remain relatively contiguous and contain a large diversity of threatened species. Therefore, we look out for new and innovative technology like this WoodAi app, as it can play a role in helping to address some of the pressures threatening our natural forests,” says **Mr Seng Teak, Country Director of WWF-Cambodia**.

Providing factories with the technology to make better decisions is an active step to contribute to reducing the pressures on forests, to protecting the rich biodiversity and to stabilising the global climate. This is particularly key for the fashion sector – where the energy used in producing clothing

is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. This energy is used in processes such as washing and ironing of clothing, and has traditionally come from coal, gas and biomass such as wood.

When used in combination with other additional solutions the WoodAI app can provide an important resource to support the efforts needed in Cambodia to responsibly manage plantations and forests. H&M Group aims for projects like this to play a part in its broader efforts to help forest ecosystems stay healthy and continue storing CO2. Reducing deforestation is critical for keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius, and therefore also essential for H&M Group's goal to achieve net-zero by 2040.

“It is exciting to pilot this new technology in Cambodia and find new ways to work with suppliers that can help reduce negative impacts on Cambodia's natural forests,” says **Christer Horn af Aminne, Country Manager for H&M Group in Cambodia.**

-end-

[Link to photos](#)

Press contacts:

WWF Cambodia:

Asnarith Tep, email: asnarith.tep@wwf.org.kh

H&M Group press inquiries, groupmediarelations@hm.com



A factory worker using the app on wood

Weblinks:

WWF Cambodia: <https://www.wwf.org.kh>

H&M Group: <https://hmgroup.com/sustainability>

WoodAI App: <https://www.woodai.app>

Forests.AI: <https://www.forests.ai>