

## Fashion's Digital Passport to End Greenwashing

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The global fashion industry, valued at about \$1.7 trillion, is on the verge of a major transformation as clothes destined for **European markets may soon require digital product passports (DPPs)** to prove their sustainability claims. This initiative aims to tackle rampant *greenwashing*—where brands exaggerate or misrepresent their environmental impact—by providing consumers with clear, verifiable data about a garment's lifecycle.

### What Are Digital Product Passports?

Digital product passports are **electronic records linked to physical garments**—accessible through QR codes or electronic tags—that provide detailed information on a product's materials, manufacturing process, and environmental footprint. Data may include what the clothes are made of, how much water, energy, or chemicals were used, and each entity involved in production from raw material to finished piece.

These passports give consumers direct access to verified sustainability credentials, helping them distinguish between genuine eco-friendly products and misleading marketing claims—a growing concern among environmentally conscious shoppers.

### Implementation Timeline and Industry Readiness

According to the **European Parliamentary Research Service**, initial versions of the digital passport may be required as early as **2027 for garments exported to the EU**.

Bangladesh, the world's second-largest apparel exporter, is among the first large manufacturing hubs that may need to adopt the system. Industry figures acknowledge the potential of digital passports to improve transparency, but also point out that **many smaller manufacturers are currently unprepared** to implement the technology and data-management systems required.

### Challenges for Smaller Producers

Small and mid-sized suppliers may face significant hurdles, from upgrading hardware and software capabilities to implementing consistent data-tracking practices across their supply chains. Many of these businesses currently lack the infrastructure to collect, verify, and upload detailed production information, raising concerns about compliance costs and readiness.

Efforts are underway to support these manufacturers. Partnerships between **local garment associations and technology firms** aim to pilot systems and provide training so that smaller producers are not left behind in the transition to mandatory transparency.

### Technology and Verification

To ensure trustworthiness, data reported in digital passports will be corroborated through **third-party verification** and may use technologies like decentralized blockchains to prevent tampering and maintain data integrity. Each step in the supply chain—such as spinning, dyeing, or finishing—will be logged, and QR codes generated to make this information publicly accessible.

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