
Annual Report

2025

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A Year of Meaningful Progress



2025 allowed us to pause, reflect, and refocus. It allowed us to assess what is working within the Roadmap to Zero Programme, where we need to go further, and how we continue to evolve in a rapidly changing landscape.

Across the industry, sustainability moved firmly into implementation. With CSRD reporting underway and CSDDD progressing into practice, expectations have shifted towards transparency, credible data, and measurable impact. For ZDHC, this reinforces the need to go beyond tracking implementation and to demonstrate real-world outcomes better.

In response, we strengthened our approach to impact. Insights from the [ZDHC-Quantis study](#) helped us better understand both our progress and the remaining gaps, particularly in human toxicity and biodiversity. At the same time, we continued to expand our digital ecosystem, from the Air Emissions Module to the digitalised Supplier Roadmap to Zero and tools such as Zeddy, making our programme more accessible and actionable for our community.

2025 also marked ten years of the ZDHC Foundation. What began as a focused initiative has grown into a global movement, built on collaboration, scientific rigour, and long-term commitment.

Looking ahead, challenges remain. Data gaps across supply chains continue to limit visibility and slow progress. Addressing these gaps, while expanding participation and improving data quality, will be critical. With the launch of Supplier to Zero V2 in 2026, we will take an important next step to support suppliers and strengthen implementation.

The pace of change is accelerating, and expectations are rising. ZDHC is well-positioned to meet this moment, with a strong community, evolving tools, and a clear commitment to advancing safer chemistry.

Together, we are building a future where better chemistry supports healthier ecosystems and more resilient supply chains.

Frank Michel
Chief Executive Officer, ZDHC Foundation

Growing Our Global Community



Year-on-Year Growth

Category	2024	2025	Growth
Brands	57	64	+12%
Suppliers	45	44	-2%
Chemical Formulators	58	60	+3%
Associates	19	18	-5%
Textile Machinery Manufacturer	1	2	+100%
Approved Solution Providers	153	159	+4%
Friends of ZDHC - Brands	17	19	+12%
Friends of ZDHC - Vendors	19	27	+42%

Highlights of ZDHC Activities & Collaborations

Community Growth and Engagement

- ZDHC Community grew to 392 Signatories, with continued expansion across brands, suppliers and partners.
- Seven brands transitioned to full Signatory status, strengthening programme commitment.
- Delivered 251 global events across five regions, engaging more than 20,000 participants.
- Expanded InConnect sessions and Solutions Roadshows, supporting implementation at scale.

Digitalisation, Data and Transparency

- Digitalised the Supplier Roadmap to Zero, transforming guidelines into structured digital journeys.
- Launched new platform modules for Air Emissions, Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester.
- Introduced QR code functionality for ZDHC MRSL-conformant products, enhancing transparency and traceability.
- Developed the first ZDHC brand dashboard and a structured data access model with add-ons.

Impact, Science and Global Recognition

- Launched the ZDHC-Quantis report, demonstrating potential impact reductions of up to 80-96%.
- Strengthened scientific engagement, including participation in SETAC Europe.
- Recognised as a best-practice example within the UNEP Global Framework for Chemicals.

Programme and Product Development

- Progressed Supplier to Zero V2 as the flagship standard for sustainable chemical management for suppliers.
- Advanced Brands to Zero, including alignment with emerging regulations such as the CSDDD.
- Operationalised the product development funnel, improving product design and delivery processes.

Global Projects and Strategic Partnerships

- Advanced key global projects, including UNIDO Southern Africa and AFD Bangladesh.
- Expanded partnerships with multilateral organisations and financial stakeholders.

Impact Team

The Impact Team plays a central role in strengthening the evidence base and strategic direction of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme. By advancing impact measurement methodologies, fostering scientific collaboration, and supporting innovation, the team ensures that ZDHC's work is grounded in credible, data-driven insights.

In 2025, key priorities included delivering the ZDHC-Quantis Nature Impact Report, and increasing engagement with the scientific community. These efforts provided stronger evidence of the environmental benefits of sustainable chemical management and identified critical data gaps to be addressed for future scalability.

At the same time, the team contributed to the development of core methodologies and advisory workstreams, supporting the evolution of impact measurement approaches across the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme. Together, these activities strengthen ZDHC's ability to demonstrate measurable impact and support informed decision-making across the value chain.

Key Achievements

- Directed the development and delivery of ZDHC Impact Day 2025 in Amsterdam, the organisation's flagship annual gathering during Convention Week, marking the tenth anniversary of the ZDHC MRSL; this included leading the production of the Impact Day and Gala at the historic Rode Hoed, delivered in partnership with BLACK PEARL and featuring a sustainable fashion showcase curated by the Amsterdam Fashion Institute. A record 15 brands achieved Champion Level in the Brands to Zero Assessment, with the awards presented during the event.
- Commissioned and oversaw the delivery of the ZDHC-Quantis report, "Protecting Supply Chains and Natural Capital: The Power of Safer Chemistry", demonstrating that proactive upstream chemical management through ZDHC's tools can lead to reductions of up to 80-96% in nature-related impacts across air, water, and soil.
- Sponsored and delivered a dedicated session at the SETAC Europe Annual Meeting in Vienna, establishing ZDHC's presence in the global ecotoxicology and environmental science community. This enabled the establishment of strategic contacts across biodiversity, ecotoxicology, and ecosystem science organisations, including ECETOC, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of Leeds.
- Provided strategic and technical advisory support across multiple impact measurement workstreams, including critical review of the Sustainable Chemistry for the Textile Industry (SCTI) Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational method, the draft Quantis Impact Report, and the Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational Impact Data Sheet concept, and initiated alternatives analysis through the ChemSelect tool.

Challenges

- The availability of funding for impact projects was more constrained than anticipated due to the ongoing development of the impact funding business model throughout 2025. This created constraints on the pace and scope of project delivery across the team's workstreams.
- Lack of agreement on the path forward for Impact Data Sheets, combined with the delayed release of the SCTI Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational draft framework, created downstream delays for the Innovation Funnel, which is closely dependent on this approach. This slowed progress toward full operationalisation of the Funnel and the identification and piloting of innovative solutions.

Metrics

- 15 brands achieved Champion Level in the Brands to Zero Assessment.
- Nature-related impact reductions of 80-96% attributable to ZDHC MRSL adoption, as quantified in the Quantis report.

Key Initiatives

Impact Day and Gala 2025

Objective	Convene the global ZDHC Community at the ten-year ZDHC MRSL milestone, celebrate collective progress, and strengthen engagement across all signatory and external stakeholder groups.
Impact	• Delivered a record Brands to Zero Champion Level outcome with 15 brands recognised • Produced a high-profile cultural sustainability showcase in partnership with BLACK PEARL and AMFI
Challenges	Stakeholder value propositions for Convention Week and the Gala were not communicated clearly enough in advance, particularly for new or prospective attendees.
Lessons Learned	Pre-event communications should clearly articulate specific programmatic outcomes and opportunities for engagement, so stakeholders can clearly understand the value of attending before committing.

ZDHC-Quantis Nature Impact Report

Objective	Establish a science-based, quantified evidence base for the environmental performance of ZDHC's MRSL sustainable chemical management framework, with a focus on nature-related impacts beyond climate, supporting corporate nature strategy integration across the industry.
Impact	- Produced a first-of-kind report demonstrating ZDHC tools can reduce nature-related impacts by up to 96% - Identified key data gaps across formulation disclosure, substance-level toxicity data, product testing, and wastewater emissions
Challenges	As noted in the report, limited access to primary and secondary data constrains the ability to calculate impact at the required level of precision.
Lessons Learned	The study confirmed that substance-level environmental impact can be meaningfully quantified when the right data infrastructure is in place. Closing identified data gaps, particularly around formulation disclosure and facility-level wastewater monitoring, is a prerequisite for scaling this methodology across the industry.

SETAC Vienna and Academic Engagement

Objective	Establish ZDHC's presence and credibility in the global environmental science and ecotoxicology community, build strategic academic and scientific partnerships, and identify opportunities to strengthen ZDHC's impact measurement methodology with cutting-edge biodiversity and toxicity science.
Impact	- Sponsored and delivered a ZDHC session at the SETAC Europe Annual Meeting in Vienna, positioning ZDHC within the broader environmental science discourse - Established key contacts, including the ECETOC Biodiversity Task Force (planning a workshop for early 2026), the Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics at the University of Amsterdam, and a University of Leeds Post-Doctoral Fellow researching microfiber releases from textile processing facilities - Identified relevant scientific frameworks, including the IPBES Nexus Assessment, the JRC biodiversity safety assessment publication, and the Biodiversity Time-Machine framework, for potential integration into ZDHC's nature impact methodology
Challenges	As a first-year engagement, ZDHC's profile and scope of work were not yet widely known in this community. Building recognition as a credible scientific voice will require sustained presence over multiple years.
Lessons Learned	ZDHC can be a meaningful voice in the wider biodiversity and ecotoxicology community. Continued engagement at SETAC and related forums will strengthen ZDHC's scientific positioning and expand the network of academic partners.

Strategic and Technical Advisory, Impact Measurement Workstreams

Objective	Provide independent critical review and strategic direction across ZDHC's core impact measurement initiatives, ensuring scientific rigour and practical applicability.
Impact	• Conducted a critical review of the SCTI Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational method, identifying key gaps including exclusion of solvents, potential bias toward large manufacturers in the Corporate Governance section, and the need for a broader scope in the Safety Profile to include data gaps, worker exposure, and process chemicals • Reviewed and provided critical comments on the draft Quantis Impact Report, including questions on the definition of nature-related impact and the appropriateness of LCA given current data limitations • Provided initial recommendations for a potential ChemForward collaboration, connecting it to the impact report and the proposed next phase of Quantis work • Initiated alternatives analysis for ADCA via the ChemSelect tool • Contributed to the Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational Impact Data Sheet concept, linking ChemSelect, ChemForward, and the Human Chemical Company work under a coherent conceptual framework
Challenges	The availability of primary and secondary chemical data remains a key challenge for calculating and substantiating impacts. Current data limitations hinder the consistent application of robust methodologies and may limit the depth and comparability of impact measurement across chemical use cases and supply chain contexts.
Lessons Learned	Engagement of chemical suppliers and formulators will be essential to further advancing impact measurement work. Their active contribution is needed to improve data availability, strengthen the practical applicability of assessment approaches, and support more credible, science-based decision-making across chemical management and circularity initiatives.

Future Goals

- Continue development of the Innovation Funnel and hazard rating of chemical inventories, building on the SCTI Chemicals to Zero - Aspirational framework and integrating the ChemSelect tool and other approaches to address data gaps in substance-level environmental and toxicity profiles.
- Deliver the ZDHC 2026 Impact Report, continuing the annual reporting commitment on chemical phase-out and programme performance.
- Deliver the AFD Impact Project, incorporating new impact measurement approaches, including a toxicity test proxy for biodiversity and basin-level calculation models, advancing the methodological frontier for nature-related impact quantification.
- Advance academic partnerships focused on research into alternative chemicals and materials, deepening ZDHC's engagement with the academic external community and building the scientific evidence base for safer substitution.

Roadmap to Zero Programme

In 2025, the team focused on strengthening the credibility, relevance, and effectiveness of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme while delivering key initiatives in an evolving regulatory and industry environment. Priorities included assessing Brands to Zero against emerging requirements such as CSRD and CSDDD, advancing Supplier to Zero V2 as a flagship programme, and engaging the ZDHC Community through consultation and pilot phases.

Quality control and assurance were strengthened across the ZDHC Gateway, Approved Solution Providers, and the broader programme, with greater use of data-driven and proactive monitoring to identify risks and prioritise assurance activities.

Community engagement remained strong, while results highlighted the need to better support brands and suppliers in progressing to higher performance levels. Overall, 2025 focused on strengthening existing frameworks, improving quality assurance, increasing stakeholder engagement, and preparing for the next phase of implementation.

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Key Achievements

- A new organisational structure was conceptualised, resourced, and implemented in which each sector (Brands, Suppliers, Chemical Formulators, and Approved Solution Providers) has a dedicated senior Sector Lead with a strong background in its sector. Provisions were also made for new and emerging sectors (Recyclers, Vendors and Machine Manufacturers) to offer a more comprehensive, consistent, and accessible programme.
- Brands to Zero 2025 was successfully completed within budget. The team further completed work to assess the Brands to Zero framework against the CSDDD and other relevant elements of the evolving legislative landscape, to ensure that Brands to Zero provides value for participating brands.
- Supplier to Zero was entirely redesigned to address emerging needs, strengthen credibility, and reflect the ambition of sustainable chemical management leadership for Suppliers.
- A first round of multi-stakeholder consultation was completed on the Supplier to Zero V2 assessment framework. Draft requirements, reviewer guidance and other material were shared with the Signatory Community. Subsequently, the self-assessment pilot was conducted, with 50 suppliers participating globally and providing valuable feedback. The consultation and pilot inputs informed a comprehensive revision.
- Workshops during the June 2025 Convention Week were successfully delivered. Discussions of case studies and topics contributed by the Sector Advisory Groups helped inform further sector engagement in 2025.

Challenges

- Brands to Zero results show a disproportionate number of brands at the Pioneer Level, due to many brands becoming Signatories prior to the assessment and established brands being unable to reach the Accelerator Level. The team is developing strategies to support brands in transitioning to Accelerator Level, including improvement plans.
- Supplier to Zero V2 did not progress according to the initial timelines, and timelines were reset to allow for a second consultation and a six-month training and preparation period for suppliers to account for the new requirements introduced with version 2.

Metrics

- Brands to Zero 2025: 47 Signatory Brands completed the assessment at the following levels: 15 Champions; 7 Accelerators; 25 Pioneers.
- All Signatory Brands that are not yet meeting the Accelerator Level operate under a reviewed improvement plan.
- A total of 50 suppliers (maximum allowance) participated in the Supplier to Zero self-assessment pilot globally, with many more requesting to participate.
- The number of active Supplier to Zero V1 certificates held by suppliers in December 2025 was over 2,600, an increase of 29% from 2024.
- Maintained regular engagement with key stakeholder groups, with at least quarterly calls held with 82% of Signatory Friends and Brands, 70% of Signatory Suppliers, and the main representatives of both the Chemical Supplier and Approved Solution Provider Advisory Groups.
- All sector Advisory Group meetings were held in 2025.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Brands to Zero 2025

Objective	Signatory Brands undergo the Brands to Zero Assessment within the given timeframe and budget.
Impact	Ensuring that the Signatories implement the joint Roadmap to Zero Programme.
Challenges	A large group of newcomer brands that needed onboarding to undertake Brands to Zero for the first time.
Lessons Learned	Intensive onboarding of newcomer brands paid off.

Brands to Zero and CSDDD

Objective	Assess the alignment of Brands to Zero with CSDDD and identify improvement opportunities.
Impact	Align Brands to Zero, which is based on the OECD Due Diligence Guidance, with the latest due diligence regulations in order to create benefits for participating brands.
Challenges	At the time, the CSDDD regulation was still in draft and awaiting approval, so the assessment reflects an earlier version that has since been amended.
Lessons Learned	Brands to Zero is well aligned and can provide brands with benefits in setting up their due diligence system for sustainable chemical management in the supply chain, meeting the needs of CSDDD standards.

Supplier to Zero Redesign

Objective	Establish Supplier to Zero V2 as the single, industry-leading standard for sustainable chemical management, replacing fragmented tools and aligning stakeholders around one recognised system. Supplier to Zero V2 shall demonstrate real leadership in sustainable chemical management for both the supply chain and ZDHC, as a leader in this space.
Impact	Drives transparency, credibility and scale, enabling suppliers and brands to demonstrate performance, reduce risk and strengthen trust across the value chain.
Challenges	Managing the transition from legacy tools, building market recognition, aligning stakeholders, and ensuring consistent, high-quality implementation.
Lessons Learned	Adoption is driven by clear value, credible outcomes and strong ecosystem alignment, not compliance alone.

Supplier to Zero V2

Objective	Update the Supplier to Zero assessment framework and align it with the new Supplier Roadmap to Zero structure.
Impact	Not yet available, as the initiative is still ongoing.
Challenges	Ongoing changes to technical content, platforms, and tools affect this project. This also creates a lot of competing asks of our stakeholders by way of reviews, consultations, and pilots.
Lessons Learned	Consult with stakeholders who are directly impacted by any changes to their assessment and plan in sufficient time to prepare when introducing new requirements. Make incremental changes to existing frameworks based on continuous system improvements and feedback mechanisms.

Cascale Collaboration

Objective	Joint verification and mutual recognition of Supplier to Zero and HIGG FEM.
Impact	Scaling up the engagement of the industry in sustainable chemical management while lowering the challenges for suppliers and brands.
Challenges	Working out a feasible system that supports both organisations and their stakeholders.
Lessons Learned	Not yet available, as the project is still ongoing.

The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) Collaboration

Objective	• Creating a standard method to measure fibre fragmentation in wastewater; • Exploring the correlation of fibre fragmentation and Total Suspended Solids (TSS); • Identifying hotspots across production processes; and • Defining action points for brands and suppliers built on data and insights.
Impact	Strengthen our community's ability to measure water stewardship and biodiversity impacts, and take action on it.
Challenges	Funding for extended testing in production processes and in the affected environments around the production.
Lessons Learned	A preliminary correlation was identified between TSS and fibre fragments present in wastewater using DIA testing. However, a larger sample size is required to strengthen the confidence in using TSS as a proxy for fibre fragmentation.

Canopy Collaboration

Objective	Contribute the Man-Made Cellulosic (MMCF) Module results to Canopy's Hot Button Report.
Impact	Provide MMCF manufacturers meeting the ZDHC MMCF Guidelines to gain further industry recognition in an industry report.
Challenges	• Engaging beyond 80% of market share, as the remaining MMCF manufacturers are either smaller or innovation-oriented producers, or they mainly do not supply partners exposed to respective requirements. • Brands may not have influence or leverage over the selection of MMCF material, therefore, not all MMCF manufacturers are required to undergo the ZDHC MMCF Module.
Lessons Learned	Strengthening the local engagement and working with brands to initiate transparency programmes or programmes to address MMCF production.

Introduction of Technical Bulletin for Approved Solution Providers

Objective	Share technical decisions, interpretations or quality control outcomes that may affect the operations of Approved Solution Providers
Impact	Increase the consistency, transparency, and reliability of solution providers' operations, while reducing misinterpretations and enhancing compliance with ZDHC requirements.
Challenges	Ensuring all expectations from Approved Solution Providers are captured.
Lessons Learned	Not yet available, as implementation begins in 2026.

Future Goals

- Support the development of ZDHC's water stewardship-related tools and programmes (i.e. Water Use Benchmarks) in collaboration with like-minded organisations through the cultivation of meaningful shared value propositions, such as Corporate Water Leaders, Leather Working Group and World Wildlife Fund, among others.
- Contribute to the adoption of the sustainable chemical management-related programmes of ZDHC, ensuring recognition, endorsement, or convergence by the ecosystem of like-minded organisations such as Cascale and the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO).
- Support the development of ZDHC's circularity-related tools and guidelines in collaboration with like-minded organisations, and cultivate the co-creation of shared value propositions with Textile Exchange, Global Fashion Agenda, Ellen McArthur, and Cradle to Cradle.
- Enhance complementarity and reduce duplication among key Apparel Alliance partners, and support the development of shared tools, such as the Supply Chain Taxonomy, to foster shared language and industry alignment.

Key Achievements

- Risk-based and data-driven quality control through Safety Data Sheet (SDS) Assessment
- Strengthened oversight through stakeholder notifications
- Ensured consistency and reliability among ZDHC MRSL Certifiers and Wastewater Testing Laboratories
- Maintenance and improvement of Quality platforms

Challenges

- High Operational Effort for Quality Monitoring: Managing quality control activities required significant time and resources. Reviewing large volumes of data and coordinating corrective actions with laboratories and certifiers creates a substantial operational workload for the team.
- Scaling Quality Control with Increasing Data Volumes: Growth in the number of implementing facilities, quality notifications, and support requests increased the volume of information to be reviewed and assessed, requiring scalable processes and tools to maintain effective oversight.
- System Integration and Technical Constraints. Quality control activities sometimes highlight the need for platform improvements or systemic changes, which can be challenging to implement due to technical limitations and development priorities.

Metrics

70,000+

SDS assessed to detect data inconsistencies and ZDHC MRSL interpretation issues

57

Quality investigations conducted in response to stakeholder notifications

62

Support-related quality tickets managed

34

MRSL Approved Certifiers in ZDHC MRSL testing Round Robin Test (2024/2025)

180+

Participants attended quality platforms webinars in May & December

Key Initiatives and Projects

New Approved Solution Provider Approval process for Supplier Assessment activities

Objective	To simplify and strengthen the approval process for Approved Solution Providers delivering supplier assessment services such as Supplier to Zero, MMCF and any future on-site assessment solution that is a part of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme
Impact	Introduced a more flexible approval model, allowing organisations to expand their assessment services portfolio based on demonstrated technical capabilities
Status	Ongoing, expected Q2 2026
Challenges	Finalisation and alignment with the upcoming Supplier to Zero V2 approval framework. Impact on platform developments
Lessons Learned	A modular approval approach can reduce administrative burden while maintaining credibility and enhancing technical oversight

Supplier to Zero Desktop Assessments

Objective	To strengthen the understanding and oversight of Approved Solution Providers delivering Supplier to Zero assessments and improve alignment on assessment methodologies and operational models
Deliverables	• Execution of desktop audits under the Supplier to Zero V1 programme • Direct engagement with Solution Providers conducting supplier assessments • Identification of differences in assessment approaches and operational practices, and improvements of sets of instructions shared with Solution Providers
Status	Completed
Challenges	Variability in operational models and assessment approaches among Approved Solution Providers required additional alignment efforts
Lessons Learned	Direct engagement and review activities provide valuable insights into assessment practices and support the development of more robust and harmonised programme frameworks

Future Goals

- Develop and formalise the Quality Framework for Supplier to Zero V2, cascading from the overall quality strategy to operational controls and onboarding processes.
- Drive Innovation and Future-Ready Quality Systems. Explore, design, and progressively integrate innovative solutions (AI-assisted) to strengthen scalability, intelligence and the long-term sustainability of the quality ecosystem.
- Support the Chemicals to Zero Programme with a tailor-made and effective quality framework.
- Gap analysis and strategic evaluation towards ZDHC becoming an ISEAL Community Member.

Competence Centres

The Competence and Education department plays a central role in enabling the effective implementation and continuous improvement of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme. By integrating technical guideline development, capacity building through the ZDHC Academy, and stakeholder engagement via Customer Support, the department ensures that Roadmap to Zero Programme requirements are both practical and accessible.

In 2025, the department focused on strengthening the digitalisation of key frameworks, expanding guidance on priority topics such as chemicals, wastewater, and air emissions, and enhancing the user experience across platforms. At the same time, increased stakeholder engagement provided valuable insights for refining tools, training, and support services.

Through these combined efforts, the department continues to drive alignment across the value chain, support informed decision-making, and build the technical capacity required to advance industry-wide adoption of the Roadmap to Zero Programme.

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Key Achievements

- Completed the digitalisation of our Suppliers Roadmap to Zero user journey, including new content on input materials management, waste management and air emissions. Completed the Chemicals to Zero - Progressive draft framework.
- Published the Wastewater and Sludge Guidelines V2.2 and completed V3, with data digitised in the Data Module. The effluent treatment plant (ETP) assessment protocol was published, and work on water use targets for the textile and leather industries began.
- Launched the Air Emissions module along with the modules on MMCF V3, Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester on the Supplier Platform. Alignment with the Textile Exchange Materials Matter Standard and the Canopy Hot Buttons Report completed.

Challenges

- Chemicals to Zero - Progressive framework acceptance by the chemical industry.
- Progress on InCheck Solutions was slow.

Metrics

- Suppliers Roadmap to Zero collated the different guidelines PDFs into a cohesive and meaningful user journey for manufacturers to engage in the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme, with clear requirements and explanations.
- Recycled Polyester and Dissolved Pulp Guidelines and modules expanded the engagement of fibre manufacturers in the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme and supported our efforts in circularity.
- Developed the ZDHC Chemical Watchlist, which helps connect the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme with CSRD legislation.
- The ETP Assessment protocol helps align brand efforts in the assessment of ETP efficiency at their suppliers.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Suppliers Roadmap to Zero

Objective	Collate different guidelines for textile and leather suppliers into a cohesive user journey
Impact	Ease of implementation and evaluation through Supplier to Zero V2
Challenges	Digitising expansive content into an easy-to-read digitised format

Chemicals to Zero - Progressive

Objective	Develop a framework that builds on ZDHC MRSL conformance to connect to produce restricted substance list (RSL) compliance
Impact	Raising the bar for the chemical industry and helping support informed decision-making on input chemicals by suppliers and brands
Challenges	Chemical industry understanding on RSL responsibility
Lessons Learned	Increased engagement with chemical industry stakeholders is needed

ETP Assessment protocol

Objective	Develop a protocol to evaluate ETP efficiency at suppliers to bring more credibility to ClearStream Report results
Impact	Harmonised brand efforts for ETP assessment to present an industry standard for ETP assessment
Challenges	Implementation scale-up and alignment into Supplier to Zero V2
Lessons Learned	Strong support from selected brands helped develop the protocol

Future Goals

- Update and publish the ZDHC MRSL V4.0
- Publish the Chemicals to Zero - Progressive and Aspirational frameworks
- Publish the water use benchmarks for textile and leather wet processes
- Develop a new, meaningful wastewater testing approach that is risk-based and incentivises input chemical management and ETP efficiency

Key Achievements

- Launched the ZDHC Community Forum to enhance self-help search and engagement with the ZDHC Community.
- Revamped the Roadmap to Zero Knowledge Base section and Glossary in line with the Suppliers' Roadmap to Zero digitalised content.
- Zeddy - ZDHC's AI self-service chatbot - was used extensively to resolve many queries.

Challenges

- ZDHC Gateway-related tickets remain the largest share (74%) of customer queries.
- Average ticket resolution time increased to 8.8 days from 8.3 days due to increased workload with the same resources.

Metrics

- 17% increase in tickets compared to 2024.
- 96% of tickets raised were rated as "good" by customers after closure.
- 274 Number of articles created and 423 updated on the Roadmap to Zero Knowledge Base.
- 12,236 questions answered on Zeddy.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Updating articles on the Roadmap to Zero Knowledge Base

Objective	Ensure that the articles on the Roadmap to Zero Knowledge Base remain relevant
Impact	Ease of reference for customer queries and enhance the self-help desk
Challenges	Changing guidelines and activities in ZDHC
Lessons Learned	Additional support is needed for monitoring

Zeddy AI launch

Objective	Develop an AI chatbot in the Roadmap to Zero Knowledge Base as a self-help tool
Impact	Ease of finding answers and faster reaction time to queries
Challenges	Communication about the Zeddy chatbot to all stakeholders
Lessons Learned	More training on the Zeddy is needed

ZDHC Community Forum

Objective	Discussion forum for the ZDHC Signatory Community as a self-help tool
Impact	Connecting with experts in the Community rather than relying on Customer Support
Challenges	Low number of active participants and scaling of the tool
Lessons Learned	More marketing and additional value-added features are needed

Future Goals

- Encourage self-service through tools such as Zeddy and Community Forum, and reduce direct contact with Customer Support
- Participate in the ZDHC Gateway relaunch and channel user feedback to the Platform team
- Enhance coordination with other ZDHC teams based on analysis of user feedback to improve the programme or communication

Key Achievements

- Redesigned the training modules on the ZDHC Academy to align with the Suppliers Roadmap to Zero content to provide competence building for Supplier to Zero assessment.
- Recruited a Learning & Development Specialist to assist in the design of modules and strategy for revenue from learning.
- Inducted three new Approved Training Providers (ATPs).
- Conducted an ATP event in Bangalore to co-create a strategy for 2026.
- Dashboard on ZDHC Academy datapoints was created.

Challenges

- The lack of new training modules during the year led to a decrease in uptake of the Chemical Management System Technical Industry Guide (CMS TIG) training module.
- Wastewater and ETP Operator training modules were not developed.

Metrics

- 3 new Approved Training Providers (ATP) added.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Restructuring of Academy Courses tabs

Objective	Align the Courses tabs on the platform to the Suppliers Roadmap to Zero courses
Impact	Ease of access by learners
Challenges	Necessary modifications to the ZDHC Academy architecture or features were not feasible within the current setup

Prepare new ZDHC e-learning module and introduction videos on Suppliers Roadmap to Zero content

Objective	Update the ZDHC e-learning module and upload short, interesting videos on Suppliers Roadmap to Zero chapters
Impact	Learners are equipped with basic knowledge of ZDHC and Suppliers Roadmap to Zero
Challenges	Building the modules in-house
Lessons Learned	Better digital learning software is needed

Designing and developing new modules aligned with Suppliers Roadmap to Zero

Objective	Create modules that address supplier facility types training requirements to implement the Suppliers Roadmap to Zero and prepare them for Supplier to Zero assessments
Impact	Capacity building in suppliers for Supplier to Zero V2 success
Challenges	Designing content and curriculum for different facility types

Future Goals

- Develop more content on the ZDHC Academy platform to build capacity in chemical management topics in our community
- Prepare an endorsement/hosting strategy for new modules that can be accessed through our ATPs or other training institutions
- Identify data points for tracking user information and stakeholder preferences to develop a long-term strategy for scaling ZDHC Academy as an educational platform
- Measure the impact of training to translate training into practical action and improvement at the facility level

Regions

In 2025, the ZDHC Regions Team played a pivotal role in driving the on-the-ground implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme while strengthening stakeholder engagement across the world's major textile, apparel, footwear, and leather production and sourcing regions. Operating across five regions, including East Asia, South Asia, Europe, Central & West Asia, and Latin America & the Caribbean, the team successfully hosted or co-hosted 251 events with over 20,000 participants.

Key milestones included the expansion of ZDHC InConnect events and ZDHC Solutions Roadshows, deeper collaboration with formulators and suppliers, and measurable growth in regional adoption of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme and platforms, including Supplier to Zero certification, InCheck reports, and ZDHC MRSL conformance.

Engagement in the footwear sector was strengthened, alongside deeper collaboration with regional stakeholders, supporting increased adoption and implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme and enhancing overall programme impact.

Key Achievements

- Delivered a comprehensive global engagement programme in 2025, including 251 events (+52.9%) reaching 20,000 participants (+14.1%), alongside expanded InConnect sessions, Solutions Roadshows, webinars, and regional conferences, strengthening stakeholder collaboration and on-the-ground implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme.
- Achieved significant growth in regional adoption of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme and platforms.
- Led and supported regional business development, resulting in 23 new Signatories across five regions.
- Enhanced footwear sector engagement through 18 events, conducted in six languages with 1,303 participants.
- Promoted the localisation and adoption of ZDHC MMCF Guidelines in China through active collaboration with industry partners and associations, resulting in broader regional uptake.
- Strengthened collaboration with regional stakeholders, including exhibition organisers in China and Vietnam, industry associations in Sri Lanka, government initiatives in Türkiye and other regions.

Challenges

- Translating early successes in domestic market engagement and footwear sector engagement into broader adoption and deeper implementation across value chains.
- Encouraging the value chain to maintain investment in sustainable chemical management despite economic uncertainty and market volatility.
- Continuing to scale knowledge and awareness among stakeholders, fostering a transition from reactive execution to proactive ownership.

Metrics

251

Events Hosted / Co-hosted

20,336

Total Participants

ZDHC InConnect

101 events · 5,984 participants

ZDHC Solutions Roadshow

91 events · 7,661 participants
16 languages

Key Initiatives and Projects

ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme Implementation Through Events

Objective	Expand the adoption and execution of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme by organising events jointly with brands, solution providers, suppliers, and chemical formulators in major global textile, apparel, leather, and footwear production and sourcing regions.
Impact	Increased event coverage, participation, and supply chain engagement; facilitated multi-tier collaboration.
Challenges	Engaging non-ZDHC Signatory stakeholders and communities.
Lessons Learned	Combining top-down brand leadership with bottom-up supplier engagement strengthens industry-wide adoption.

ZDHC InConnect Expansion

Objective	Support the deeper implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme within the supply chains of ZDHC Signatory Brands and Friends of ZDHC through joint ZDHC InConnect events, expanding influence and moving towards ZDHC 2030 goals.
Deliverables	101 events, participation from 33 Signatory Brands and 6 Friends of ZDHC
Status	Completed in 2025 and will continue in the coming years.
Challenges	Expanding engagement to involve more Signatory Brands and Friends of ZDHC.
Lessons Learned	Joint events with brands increase implementation practices and improve implementation performance, as well as the impact on regional engagement.

ZDHC Solutions Roadshows

Objective	Collaborate with ZDHC Approved Solution Providers to drive in-depth implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme within the ZDHC Community, while creating greater awareness among non-ZDHC communities.
Deliverables	91 ZDHC Solutions Roadshows co-hosted with ZDHC Approved Solution Providers, conducted in 16 languages, with participation from 75 Approved Solution Providers.
Status	Completed and will continue in the coming years.
Challenges	Expanding coverage in previously unengaged regions and engaging ZDHC Approved Solution Providers who had not participated before.
Lessons Learned	Local-language events, combined with collaboration between ZDHC Approved Solution Providers, local associations, and non-ZDHC Signatory Brands, significantly enhance ZDHC's impact, including within non-ZDHC communities.

Footwear Sector Engagement

Objective	Engage more footwear formulators to move towards producing ZDHC MRSL-conformant chemicals and registering in the ZDHC Gateway, while increasing participation of footwear facilities and material suppliers in the execution of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme.
Deliverables	18 events, 6 languages and 1,303 participants.
Status	Completed and will continue in the coming years.
Challenges	Engaging diverse stakeholders across the footwear supply chain to increase Roadmap to Zero adoption and ZDHC MRSL-compliant chemical use.
Lessons Learned	Sector-specific events and tailored engagement models increase awareness and practical adoption of ZDHC requirements.

Future Goals

- Accelerate ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme on-the-ground implementation
 - Drive the adoption and scaled implementation of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme across all regions by increasing the usage of ZDHC solutions and strengthening regional implementation ecosystems.
- Strengthen Regional Stakeholder Engagement
 - Enhance strategic engagement with regional stakeholders to expand ZDHC's impact, support the growth of the ZDHC Community, and ensure continued retention of brands, vendors, suppliers, formulators, and solution providers.
- Advance Footwear Sector Engagement
 - Promote the implementation of sustainable chemical management and the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme within the global footwear sector, driving sector-wide adoption of ZDHC MRSL-conformant chemicals and best practices.

Platform Development

In 2025, ZDHC strengthened its digital infrastructure, platform performance, and data strategy, building on the foundations established in 2024. The focus was on scaling dependable, user-centred solutions that improve data quality, reduce operational friction, and support more consistent, insight-driven decision-making. This strengthens the continued evolution of ZDHC guidelines, tools, and reporting through greater data integrity, transparency, and more efficient workflows.

Key outcomes included the launch of a QR code generator for all ZDHC MRSL-conformant products, improving the accessibility and traceability of product information, alongside the completion of the ZDHC MRSL Certifier product verification roll-out to strengthen assurance and consistency. ZDHC also launched the Air Emission Module and introduced new Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester modules to expand digital reporting capabilities, while delivering a digitalised Supplier Roadmap to Zero journey, converting static guidance into structured, version-controlled content powering dynamic user journeys and platform logic.

In parallel, the platform team advanced cross-platform user journeys and the relaunch of the ZDHC Gateway, laying the groundwork for a more coherent digital ecosystem with improved interoperability, reduced duplication and a better overall user experience. Foundational work also began on a shared design library and the technical concept for Supplier to Zero V2, establishing a scalable architecture and an aligned UI/UX approach to accelerate delivery and readiness for future programme expansion.

Key Achievements

- Implemented a QR code generator for all ZDHC MRSL-conformant products.
- Completed the roll-out of product verification processes for ZDHC MRSL Certifiers.
- Built and launched the Air Emission Module.
- Digitalised the Supplier Roadmap to Zero Journey.
- Integrated data flows across ZDHC platforms to reduce manual handling.
- Improved user experience through UX/UI enhancements and analytics-driven iteration.

Challenges

- Overseeing a continually changing platform and data architecture while working through heavy backlog demands, which affected delivery schedules.
- Balancing capacity between new development and day-to-day platform operations and support.
- Managing shifting and sometimes redefined concepts during the build phase, with requirements evolving as understanding developed.

Metrics



- 18.9% increase in registered chemical formulators on the ZDHC Gateway.
- 6.1% usage growth for the Wastewater Module.
- 27.4% usage growth for the Chemical Module.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Cross-Platform User Journeys

Objective	Create a cohesive, end-to-end user experience across all ZDHC digital tools.
Impact	Higher user satisfaction through smoother navigation and stronger integration between tools.
Challenges	Aligning and synchronising platforms built on different data models and structures.
Lessons Learned	A robust middleware layer and standardised error handling are essential for reliable interoperability.

Design Library Creation

Objective	Create a unified internal design library to standardise the look and feel across ZDHC platforms, covering components, patterns, tokens, icons, templates, and documentation as the foundation for future development.
Impact	Improve UI consistency and user experience across products, and support faster delivery over time through the reuse of standard components. First adoption is planned for Supplier to Zero V2 in 2026.
Challenges	Aligning legacy platform interfaces while building a complete library from scratch that is robust enough to scale and be adopted broadly.
Lessons Learned	This work should start earlier, with dedicated expertise in place; having focused UI/UX capability significantly accelerates quality and progress.

Supplier to Zero V2 Technical Concept Creation

Objective	Define the technical concept for Supplier to Zero V2 to support the updated programme scope, including a refreshed architecture, an aligned UI/UX approach, updated flows for self-assessment and third-party verification, and support for new levels and scoring presentation.
Impact	Provided a clear delivery blueprint and early stakeholder alignment across product, programme, and platform teams, reducing delivery risk and enabling strong momentum towards a 2026 launch.
Challenges	Managing capacity constraints while UI/UX work progressed in parallel, and stabilising evolving concepts over time to protect delivery focus.
Lessons Learned	Full clarity should be secured before building; when key decisions are locked early, delivery moves materially faster with far less rework.

Air Emissions Module

Objective	Allow suppliers to track and report their facility's air emissions in accordance with ZDHC Air Emissions Guidelines V1; calculate VOC emissions, GHG impact, and set science-based reduction targets.
Deliverables	• User-facing platform • Potential To Emit (PTE) of VOC Calculator • Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Calculator • GHG Reduction Target visualiser
Status	Launched August 2025
Challenges	• Incorporating location-specific data to tailor GHG emissions estimates to each supplier's energy context • Creating an intuitive interface that allows users to easily enter data, with some advanced algorithms in the backend to perform calculations
Lessons Learned	• A better understanding of success metrics and data reporting prior to the release. • The importance of alignment with other modules to enable the addition of this module to a unified digital ecosystem

QR Code Generator for all ZDHC MRSL-Conformant Products

Objective	Enhance chemical product transparency, traceability, and verification efficiency by enabling formulators to generate QR codes for products published on the ZDHC Gateway.
Deliverables	• QR code generation and bulk download functionality on the ZDHC Gateway products page • Public-facing QR landing page displaying key product details and ZDHC MRSL conformance status • Re-certification request functionality, accessible directly from the QR code landing page for expired products
Status	Launched 7 November 2025.
Challenges	Driving adoption while clearly communicating that the feature is optional proved delicate, and some larger formulators expressed reservations due to operational constraints and the difficulty of adjusting existing packaging formats to accommodate QR codes. Managing expectations around immediate value versus future enhancements also required careful positioning.
Lessons Learned	Introducing transparency tools benefits from early dialogue with key market players to better understand operational timelines and constraints. Clearly communicating phased value delivery and long-term strategic benefits supports steady adoption and alignment across stakeholders.

ZDHC Gateway Product Verification Upgrade

Objective	Improve automation of ZDHC MRSL certification integration via API connectivity with ZDHC Approved Certifiers.
Deliverables	• API development for ZDHC MRSL data transfer • Manual submission option for non-API users • The ChemCheck Report will become the ZDHC standard for ZDHC MRSL conformance
Status	Launched 1 April 2025.
Challenges	API adoption started slowly, even among larger certifiers; maintaining both manual and automated channels requires careful balance.
Lessons Learned	Adoption requires sustained outreach and resourcing. Proactive communication is key.

Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester Module launches

Objective	Implement digital modules on the ZDHC Supplier Platform to operationalise the Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester Guidelines and enable relevant suppliers to assess and report performance.
Deliverables	- Two new modules on the Supplier Platform for Dissolved Pulp and Recycled Polyester suppliers - End-to-end functionality, including data capture and reporting for the 2025 performance year
Status	Launched 2025 (broad supplier roll-out planned in 2026).
Challenges	Ensuring the modules were complete and usable for 2025 reporting while preparing for wider adoption and operational roll-out in 2026.
Lessons Learned	Launching early provides a strong runway for testing, enablement, and readiness ahead of broader roll-out, reducing operational risk at scale. The strong framework developed on the Supplier Platform provides flexibility for module development.

Digitalised Supplier Roadmap to Zero Journey

Objective	Convert static ZDHC Guidelines PDFs into a structured, digitalised guideline framework powering dynamic user journeys, platform logic, and version-controlled content across ZDHC systems.
Deliverables	- User-facing digital framework (programme.roadmaptozero.com) with audience-specific journeys - Backend CMS for structured guideline management, versioning, and API integration. - API connectivity enabling SBX to consume guideline logic and generate ClearStream workflows and reporting
Status	Launched 2025.
Challenges	- Unclear and non-standardised guidelines data structure - Siloed collaboration between content and IT teams - Complex backend review and validation processes - Translating narrative guidance into rule-based system logic
Lessons Learned	- Guidelines should be developed in line with platform data constraints from the outset - Product (IT) teams and technical architects should be involved early to ensure data coherence - Shared governance over rule-setting avoids rework - Early cross-functional alignment improves scalability and maintainability

ZDHC Gateway Relaunch

Objective	Build and launch a renewed ZDHC Gateway that serves as the entry point to a coherent digital ecosystem, integrating data flows across ZDHC platforms to improve user experience, and enabling a more data-driven, scalable approach to credible impact across the Roadmap to Zero Programme.
Deliverables	• Relunched Gateway with improved UI/UX and clearer user journeys. • Integrated data flows to minimise duplication, reduce manual processing, and improve data consistency. • Clear alignment with verification processes and credible claims frameworks, including updated guidance and communications on implications for stakeholders. • Improved reporting capabilities (impact data views and dashboards).
Status	Planned for mid-2026.
Challenges	Aligning diverse stakeholder expectations and requirements while making foundational platform changes. Ensuring stakeholders understand not only what is changing but why. The transition also needs to be managed without disrupting ongoing programme delivery, while maintaining trust in data quality and continuity.
Lessons Learned	Major platform relaunches succeed when change management is treated as a product workstream rather than an afterthought. Early, structured stakeholder engagement and clear messaging around “what remains the same versus what changes” reduces uncertainty and protects adoption.

Future Goals

- Relaunch the ZDHC Gateway as a seamless entry point to an integrated ZDHC digital ecosystem to improve the user experience.
- Digitalise and streamline the Brand, Vendor, and Chemical Formulator Roadmaps to Zero journeys.
- Deliver new modules and enhance existing functionality to support the implementation timelines for the Roadmap to Zero (e.g., Chemicals to Zero, Supplier to Zero V2, ZDHC MRSL).
- Integrate data flows across ZDHC platforms to minimise manual processing and duplication.
- Enhance user experience through targeted UX/UI improvements and analytics-led iteration.
- Establish a coherent architecture and user journeys to support the delivery of the Roadmap to Zero Programme.

Market and Product Growth

In July 2025, the Market and Product Growth team was established to bring greater structure and ownership to ZDHC's market growth, product development and value communication.

In 2025, the team focused on building the foundations for scale, including clearer roles, stronger cross-departmental coordination, and tools to help brands derive greater value from ZDHC participation. Key progress included the development of a structured brand data access model, the launch of the first brand dashboard and the creation of a clearer product marketing narrative.

The team also prepared for responsible growth beyond the core community through an IP licensing model and initial engagement with financial and ESG investment actors. In parallel, the Product Development Funnel was developed and operationalised to support a more evidence-based, user-centric approach to product development.

These foundations provide ZDHC with a clearer narrative, cleaner interfaces and a stronger platform for testing and scaling in the coming year.

Key Achievements

- Established and operationalised the Market and Product Growth team, with clearer roles, responsibilities and ways of working across departments.
- Launched a structured brand data access model, including data and natural capital add-ons, to support deeper insights, evidence-based impact research and stronger reporting.
- Delivered the first brand dashboard, creating a shared reporting language and stronger assets for sustainability claims and brand communication.
- Developed ZDHC's product marketing and messaging narrative to improve clarity, consistency and relevance.
- Supported go-to-market and pricing strategies for new products, including InCheck and Supplier to Zero.
- Helped operationalise the Product Development Funnel, bringing more structure to product design, validation and market introduction.
- Initiated an IP licensing model to support responsible adoption of ZDHC approaches beyond the existing ZDHC Community.
- Formalised ZDHC's finance sector engagement initiative and strengthened engagement with investors, rating agencies and multi-stakeholder initiatives.
- Participated in Climate Week NYC and co-hosted the inaugural Climate & Nature Studio.
- Expanded the ZDHC Community with 10 new Friends of ZDHC – Brands and 8 new Signatory Brands.
- Strengthened internal data strategy, insights, reporting and analytical structures across ZDHC.

Challenges

- Multiple key products were being redesigned simultaneously, creating moving parts, changing timelines and shifting priorities. This made marketing, messaging and positioning more complex.
- As a new team, roles, responsibilities, and ways of working were still being established as we responded to organisational needs. Further clarity on processes and working rhythms is still being developed.
- Data remained central to many conversations, but limited clarity on future data needs, credibility requirements and verification standards created uncertainty for product decisions, development work and messaging.
- Operational requests and strategic design work had to progress in parallel, often within constrained resources.

Metrics

- Number of brands engaged in dashboard testing and follow-up sessions: 23.
- Add-ons and data access: 13 brands participated in discussions, forming the initial cohort expected to opt into add-ons in the first half of 2026.
- Continued growth in Signatory and Friend Brands, with 10 new Friends of ZDHC - Brands and 8 new Signatory Brands onboarded.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Data access and products (data access model, brand dashboard and API access)

Objective	Enable the ZDHC Community to leverage more value from their participation through structured access to ZDHC data, additional data visualisation solutions, and optional add-ons for deeper insights and impact measurement.
Deliverables	• Brand data access model with clear engagement levels • Voluntary add-ons on data (including brand API) and natural capital, including pricing structure, communication plan and legal documentation for implementation • First brand dashboard as a minimum viable product.
Status	All initiatives have been successfully launched.
Challenges	• Communication was not fully aligned before going out, which created uncertainty • Finding the right positioning and language while also protecting the scope was difficult • Reporting requirements (e.g., the CSRD) continued to evolve as we were developing the work • There is a fine line between supporting brands in translating ZDHC participation into reportable data and claims, and being perceived as offering reporting solutions
Lessons Learned	• Internal alignment on communication before launch is essential • Stakeholder pushback is expected and does not necessarily indicate a need to change direction. Some decisions are necessary to protect impact. • Strategic communication matters. It is important to clearly explain why we are doing something, how it links to impact and how it strengthens the programme • ZDHC should be positioned as part of efforts to improve the Roadmap to Zero Programme and impact system, not as a solution provider per se • Managing expectations is essential to protect scope and credibility while still being helpful • Bespoke, tailored solutions are not possible or desired. We need to offer standard, community-wide solutions that brands with varying levels of data sophistication can be used

ZDHC Messaging and Product Narrative

Objective	Strengthen clarity and simplicity in how ZDHC communicates value, impact and products.
Deliverables	• High-level ZDHC messaging framework • Product visions and descriptions
Status	In progress, with first outputs already used.
Challenges	The ZDHC setup can be complex and difficult to translate into a clear, simple messaging framework.
Lessons Learned	• Simplicity is key. It is important to distil communication down to the essentials before building layers • If the top layer is complicated, everything below becomes heavier • Clear foundations are required before producing content • Good messaging creates coherence and speeds up adoption

Product Development Funnel

Objective	Bring structure, discipline and ownership to how products move from idea to market.
Deliverables	• Funnel model and setup • Facilitation for teams • Support for product development decisions
Status	Actively used for several initiatives.
Challenges	• Embedding the process while products are being redesigned • Ensuring clear ownership and accountability
Lessons Learned	• Stronger ownership and more commercial thinking are required • The community should be considered as customers, not just stakeholders • Adoption is essential: impact requires uptake and ongoing use • Products must be useful, serve a purpose and keep users engaged over time

TEAM REPORT - MARKET AND PRODUCT GROWTH

IP Licensing Model

Objective	Enable a controlled way to expand ZDHC beyond the current community, without diluting programme value.
Deliverables	• Licensing concept and access levels • Use cases and governance approach • Initial structure for how it can be implemented
Status	Designed; implementation planned for Q1 2026.
Challenges	• Balancing protection and openness • Defining what needs to be controlled and why
Lessons Learned	• We should treat the ZDHC MRSL and ZDHC ecosystems as a brand, since that is what they have become • We need to protect the integrity of the programme without being afraid of growth • Expansion is part of how we reach impact • Moving from being “a standard” to becoming “a brand” is a positive evolution

Go-To-Market Support (InCheck, Supplier to Zero, Chemicals to Zero)

Objective	Support product teams with positioning, value proposition and commercial readiness.
Deliverables	Pricing and go-to-market strategies for multiple ZDHC products
Status	Ongoing
Challenges	• Products are complex and evolving, which makes pricing and positioning difficult • Lack of compatibility across elements increases effort
Lessons Learned	• We need to simplify products, strategies and communication • Without simplification, go-to-market becomes fragmented and hard to implement • Compatibility across products is critical for a coherent strategy

New Communities and Outreach

Objective	Amid growing momentum around the Global Biodiversity Framework, increasing recognition of natural capital as an asset class, and rising nature-positive commitments from brands, there is a need to clearly define and communicate ZDHC's role, relevance, and value to investors, rating agencies, policymakers, brands, and supply chain actors. In response, the initial phases of the ZDHC Finance Sector Engagement Initiative were developed and launched to formalise activities in this area. - The initiative aims to: - Position ZDHC as a key player in the biodiversity-finance landscape, a systemic enabler for the financial industry and investors to advance the Global Biodiversity Framework and Pledge, and a practical, scalable, real-economy solution that helps companies and investors deliver their nature-positive commitments (biodiversity, water, circularity) - Empower internal sustainability teams to translate Roadmap to Zero Programme implementation, data, and results into investor, CFO, and Investor Relations ready outcomes - Demonstrate how to integrate ZDHC metrics into ESG ratings, lending criteria, natural capital risk frameworks and investor engagement
Deliverables	- Key meetings and events that were completed in 2025 include: - ZDHC Investor and ESG Breakfast in London in June 2025 - ZDHC Climate Week Sessions with investor-led dialogue focused on natural capital protection, natural capital accounting and financial strategies of safer chemistry - Launched a new thought leadership and insights series, Investor Insights, and authored two articles in Q4 2025 ‘Safeguarding Fashion: The Chemical Blindspot’, Nov 2025 ‘Why Chemicals are the Missing Link in Nature-Finance’ A ZDHC playbook, Dec 2025 - Key new relationships developed include: Amundi, MSCI, Nature Disclosure Task Force, Bloomberg, Finance for Biodiversity Foundation
Status	Advanced discussions on 2026 webinar collaboration with the Finance for Biodiversity Foundation and their Investor Engagement Initiative, F.A.B.R.I.C.
Lessons Learned	- ZDHC has clear and growing relevance for institutional investors, lenders, and rating agencies engaged in biodiversity and ESG frameworks - Embedding ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme into decision-making is feasible and can be a long-term driver of market and offering value, increased signatory commitments, market expansion, and the programme's strategic relevance and legitimacy

Future Goals

- Embed the dashboard into the ZDHC system and move from a minimum viable product to a fully integrated part of the ZDHC Gateway. The objective is to make reporting and insight generation a natural part of the ZDHC experience, not an add-on or one-off activity. Dashboards should support brand decision-making, storytelling and regulatory reporting.
- Pilot and fully scale the IP licensing model. Move from design to real-world use. Pilot with selected partners, learn from the first cases, and scale responsibly. The goal is to create a structured pathway for using ZDHC terminology and claims outside the current community, while protecting integrity and strengthening the brand.
- Activate the working groups for add-ons. Bring brands into co-development. These groups will focus on shared learning, defining impact indicators and making data useful for impact conversations. The goal is for brands to move from passive participants to partners in shaping future tools, insight and research.
- Translate strategic messaging into strong content. Produce materials that reflect ZDHC's value clearly and simply: website pages, product descriptions, onboarding materials, slides and event narratives. Content should be easy to understand, unified in tone and aligned with our mission.
- Strengthen go-to-market and product adoption. Simplify products, positioning and pricing so that each offering stands on its own and fits into the wider system. Adoption should be easy, logical and beneficial to users.
- Grow the ZDHC Community. Support the continued expansion of Friend and Signatory brands by communicating value more clearly, backed by data and reporting.
- Increase clarity on data and credibility. Work with colleagues and partners to determine which data will be needed for reporting and impact, and how credible and verifiable it must be. This will shape future work on dashboards, add-ons and programme guidance.
- Deepen relevance in new stakeholder communities. Continue engaging with financial, sustainability and investment audiences to explore how ZDHC data can support their decision-making without ZDHC becoming a reporting or assurance provider.
- Build stronger internal alignment. Create predictable rhythms for planning, communication and ownership across teams. Reduce ad-hoc work and create more room for strategic execution.

Communications

In 2025, the Communications team strengthened ZDHC's brand positioning, stakeholder engagement, and digital communication channels. Key achievements included the new ZDHC website, the revamped Impact Report, the ZDHC 10-year anniversary campaign, an improved newsletter format, and stronger engagement on LinkedIn and the Forum Call.

Despite shifting timelines and cross-team dependencies, the team improved structure, coordination, and use of analytics. Looking ahead, the focus will be on strengthening the digital ecosystem, event strategy, community engagement, and brand consistency.

Key Achievements

- Adopted a new Communications team structure in 2025, with clearly defined core and interchangeable responsibilities across the team. This strengthened coverage across the communication ecosystem, editorial and content strategy, content delivery, and events.
- Launched the revamped annual ZDHC Impact Report, balancing stronger storytelling with evidence-based facts and impact data.
- Launched the new ZDHC website, www.zdhc.org, to strengthen the ZDHC brand persona around the ZDHC MRSL, position ZDHC as a catalyst for systemic change, and support the organisation's broader vision beyond the textile, apparel, leather, and footwear industries.
- Delivered a successful Convention Week series of events, bringing the ZDHC Community together for engagement, exchange, and collaboration.
- Successfully launched and executed the ZDHC 10-year anniversary communication campaign for the Roadmap to Zero Programme. This included developing a temporary anniversary visual identity and logo.
- Supported the successful launch of Supplier Roadmap to Zero, the first component of the digitalised Roadmap to Zero platform. This marked an important milestone in the broader innovation strategy to digitalise programme documentation.
- Revamped the newsletter format to provide stakeholders with more concise, direct, and relevant updates.
- Revamped the Forum Calls, shifting from internal team updates towards more engaging content that supports programme updates, stakeholder learning, and community growth.

Challenges

- Project timelines, priorities, and communication planning were often impacted by shifting programme deadlines and cross-team dependencies.
- Several major communication and digital projects were delivered in parallel, requiring careful prioritisation and resource management.
- Coordinating content ownership across teams remained a challenge, particularly where programme updates, website content, event communications, and campaign delivery overlapped.
- Ensuring consistency across multiple channels, platforms, and audiences required continuous alignment, especially during periods of organisational change and programme digitalisation.

Metrics

- Newsletter Engagement
 - Open rate increased slightly from 31.7% in 2024 to 32.83% in 2025.
 - Unsubscribe rate decreased from 0.27% in 2024 to 0.10% in 2025.
- LinkedIn Performance
 - Click-through rate reached approximately 6–6.5%.
 - Engagement rate reached approximately 8.5–9%.
 - LinkedIn followers increased by 2,633 over 365 days.

Key Initiatives and Projects

Communications Engagement and Analytics

Objective	Improve stakeholder engagement across LinkedIn, Forum Calls, and Newsletters communications.
Impact	Newsletter engagement increased slightly compared with 2024, while the unsubscribe rate decreased. LinkedIn also showed strong growth in reach, engagement, and clicks, with a click-through rate of approximately 6–6.5% and an engagement rate of approximately 8.5–9%. These results are strong compared with typical B2B engagement benchmarks.
Status	Ongoing. Analytics are increasingly being used to inform content planning, posting strategies, and future stakeholder engagement activities.
Challenges	Performance analysis required a period of consistent posting before reliable insights could be drawn. The process involved trial and error, and accuracy depended on having enough comparable data over time.
Lessons Learned	Quarterly analysis is more useful than annual analysis because it allows the team to adjust content, timing, and engagement tactics more frequently.

Launch of the New ZDHC Website

Objective	Launch a new website, www.zdhc.org , to create and strengthen the ZDHC brand persona around the ZDHC MRSL and clearly position ZDHC as a catalyst for systemic change.
Impact	The new website strengthened ZDHC's brand presence and awareness. It also supported clearer external positioning of ZDHC's role in driving systemic change across the textile industry and beyond.
Status	Launched in June 2025.
Challenges	A key challenge was ensuring clear separation between two ZDHC websites (www.zdhc.org and www.roadmaptozero.com) to avoid content overlap, confusion, or cannibalisation.
Lessons Learned	Earlier alignment on project timelines, content ownership, and decision-making responsibilities is critical to keeping website development and launch processes on schedule.

Roadmap to Zero Programme Website Update

Objective	Update the programme section of the Roadmap to Zero website to align with the programme's digitalisation.
Impact	Improved the user experience and supported the transition from static PDF-based documentation towards a more digital and accessible programme structure.
Status	Launched in July 2025.
Challenges	Ensuring clarity for users during the transition from PDF to digital documentation was challenging, particularly when both formats were available simultaneously.
Lessons Learned	Programme updates should be reviewed from the perspective of all key stakeholder groups to ensure that structure, language, and navigation are clear and practical for different user needs.

Event Platform Update

Objective	Improve the ZDHC event platform to better support registration, participant management, communication workflows, and the overall event experience.
Impact	The platform update supported more efficient event management and contributed to a more streamlined participant journey. It also created a stronger foundation for future event data, reporting, and stakeholder engagement.
Status	In progress / ongoing.
Challenges	The update required balancing immediate operational event needs with longer-term platform improvements. Aligning technical development, user needs, and event timelines remained a key challenge.
Lessons Learned	Event platform improvements should be developed around the full user journey, from registration and communication to on-site participation, feedback, and post-event reporting.

ZDHC 10-Year Anniversary Campaign

Objective	Develop and deliver a communication campaign to celebrate 10 years of ZDHC and highlight our progress, community, and impact.
Impact	The campaign strengthened recognition of ZDHC's role and achievements over the past decade. It created a clear moment of celebration and reflection for the ZDHC Community, supported by a temporary anniversary visual identity, dedicated messaging, and event-related communications.
Status	Completed in 2025.
Challenges	The campaign required coordination across branding, events, content, and stakeholder communications. Ensuring consistent messaging across all touchpoints was essential.
Lessons Learned	Anniversary campaigns benefit from early alignment on narrative, visual identity, and channel planning to ensure a cohesive and recognisable campaign experience.

Future Goals

- Further develop the new digital communication ecosystem to ensure clearer connections among ZDHC platforms, websites, programme content, and stakeholder journeys.
- Define and implement a stronger event strategy to support strategic engagement, operational efficiency, and a consistent stakeholder experience across the global event portfolio.
- Strengthen community engagement through more case studies, stakeholder stories, and practical examples of programme implementation and impact.
- Continue developing the ZDHC brand architecture and visual identity to ensure consistency, clarity, and relevance across all communication channels.
- Use analytics more consistently to guide communication planning, content development, stakeholder engagement, and event performance.

Academia and Multilateral Partnership Engagement

In 2025, the Academic and Multilateral Partnerships team expanded ZDHC's global reach and strategic influence across regional implementation, project development, policy engagement and academic collaboration.

Key achievements included the delivery of the UNIDO Southern Africa project across Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa and Ethiopia, establishing ZDHC's presence in a previously unrepresented region. The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Bangladesh project was scoped, resourced and approved for delivery in 2026, linking chemical management, biodiversity and supply chain financing in a key sourcing region.

ZDHC was also recognised as a best practice example within the UNEP Global Framework for Chemicals Sector Implementation Programme, strengthening its role in international policy discussions. In parallel, a new Academic engagement model was approved, supported by expanded partnerships with organisations including Solidaridad, CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries), ITC (International Trade Centre) and International Labour Organization (ILO) Better Work.

Despite operational challenges, the team built strong foundations for a high-impact 2026, including AFD Bangladesh, the Gender and Chemicals campaign and the first academic engagement event.

Key Achievements

- Developed and secured approval of a new Academic engagement model, establishing a structured and sustainable framework for ZDHC collaboration with universities, research centres, and students.
- Fully established the AFD Bangladesh project team, initiated project development, and signed the Terms of Reference and Request for Proposals, enabling the pathway for the solution provider tender and project kick-off.
- Implemented the UNIDO Southern Africa project across Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa, and Ethiopia, delivering sustainable chemical management and wastewater training, train-the-trainer sessions, and on-site advisory visits in a region with no existing ZDHC representation.
- Established ZDHC's role in the UNEP Global Framework for Chemicals Sector Implementation Programme for Textiles (UNEP GFC), positioning ZDHC as the accepted best practice example for sustainable chemical management in the sector.
- Successfully transitioned the ZDHC Academy to a new team, ensuring continuity of platform operations and improved alignment between Academy curriculum and ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme content. This transition also integrated Academic and Multilateral Partnerships into the Impact Team.
- Extended ZDHC's visibility and implementation reach through strengthened collaboration with multilateral partnership organisations, including Solidaridad, CBI, ITC, and ILO Better Work, co-delivering webinars and in-person sessions on sustainable chemical management.

Challenges

- The transition of the Academy to the new team required significant operational support and parallel management of a full team set-up, creating competing demands on team capacity throughout the year.
- Internal focus shifts and updates to ZDHC tools created uncertainty and required the team to adapt plans mid-year, particularly during the transition period.
- Taking on new, complex projects without fully established handover processes increased risk and required additional time to achieve full operational effectiveness.

Metrics

- Academic Engagement model approved and in development, creating a structured pipeline for university-level collaboration with researchers and students, increasing ZDHC's visibility at the university level.
- Creation of a team for AFD Bangladesh and signing of the Terms of Reference and the RFP, enabling the solution provider tender and project kick-off.
- UNIDO Southern Africa project implementation is supporting the scaling of ZDHC in a region with no ZDHC representation. ZDHC is engaging with new stakeholders and building case studies to showcase best practices. Sustainable chemical management and wastewater training were delivered to beneficiary companies across four countries; train-the-trainer sessions were conducted for local task force members.
- UNEP GFC: ZDHC included as a best-practice example in the GFC Sector Implementation Programme for Textiles.
- Multilateral partnerships: webinars and in-person sessions delivered in collaboration with Solidaridad, CBI, ITC, and ILO Better Work.
- The transition of the ZDHC Academy to a new team closer to the Competence Centres improves alignment between the platform, guidelines content, and curriculum, while strengthening understanding of supply and demand.
- Extended ZDHC's visibility and implementation reach through strengthened collaboration with multilateral partners, including shared resources for webinars and events on sustainable chemical management.

Key Initiatives and Projects

UNIDO Southern Africa

Objective	Promotion of a circular economy in the textile and garment sector in Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa and Ethiopia, through the sustainable management of chemicals and waste and by phasing out the use of hazardous chemicals, especially the phase-out of POPs.
Impact	• Delivered ZDHC chemical management training and wastewater management training to the project's beneficiary companies • Completed train-the-trainers for local task force members of the four countries • Provided on-site visits at the beneficiary companies to provide direct support and advice on the development and implementation of a Chemical Inventory List (CIL) based on ZDHC templates and to assess the chemical management practices and ensure compliance with the ZDHC MRSL. As well as on how to adopt and use the ZDHC Gateway and InCheck Solutions • Conducted gap analysis for scaling up of existing testing laboratories in the region
Status	In progress.
Challenges	Limited awareness in the region on ZDHC and sustainable chemical management, no ZDHC Signatory Brand involved and limited ZDHC Signatory Brands present in the region, budget limitation for project execution, and no ZDHC Approved Solution Provider present in the region.
Lessons Learned	At the initial stage, it is important to clearly define delivery pathways and required resources prior to project launch.

AFD Bangladesh

Objective	Protecting biodiversity and water resources through sustainable chemical management and wastewater pollution reduction in the textile, apparel, and leather industry in Bangladesh, directly linking project outcomes to ZDHC's 2030 Impact Strategy biodiversity goals.
Impact	• Full project team established and Terms of Reference and RFP signed • Pathway established for solution provider tender and project kick-off • Project designed to deliver supplier baseline assessments, Chemical Inventory List development, Performance InCheck, ClearStream, and Supplier to Zero progress • Includes collaboration with University of Bordeaux researchers on biodiversity impact measurement, and linkage of supplier progress to financing behaviour and opportunities
Status	Ramp-up phase.
Challenges	Changes by transition to Impact Team during set-up; political instability in Bangladesh; geopolitical considerations affecting project planning.
Lessons Learned	Early and inclusive communication with all necessary partners is essential to project resilience.

UNEP Sector Implementation

Objective	Establish ZDHC as the accepted best practice example for sustainable chemical management in the textiles sector within the UNEP Global Framework for Chemicals Sector Implementation Programme.
Impact	• ZDHC included as best practice example in the GFC implementation framework • First input to the sector implementation programme provided, and updates shared with Signatory Brands • Raises industry awareness of the GFC Framework and its implications for ZDHC's signatory base
Status	Ongoing in 2025, first input for sector implementation programme given and updates shared with brands.
Challenges	Communication at the GFC level was complex; materials were not always ready to be shared with industry stakeholders in a timely manner. Time for engagement was often limited due to staff constraints.
Lessons Learned	A more proactive approach to creating the link between ZDHC and UNEP for key stakeholders is needed to build broader buy-in.

Academic Engagement

Objective	Strengthen ZDHC's strategic influence, build future talent pipelines, foster stronger industry and academia collaboration, enable research that supports innovation, and support long-term regional capacity building.
Impact	• New Academic engagement model developed and approved, providing a structured and sustainable framework for university-level collaboration • Podcast produced as a first outreach deliverable under the new model
Status	In progress.
Challenges	The breadth of the academic network and the range of potential engagement pathways made prioritisation difficult. Finding strategic focus across multiple opportunities remains a key challenge and should be prioritised in 2026.
Lessons Learned	Without a clear focus, engagement risks being project-based and short-term rather than sustainable. Prioritisation of the most strategically valuable academic partnerships will be a key task for 2026.

Gender and Chemicals

Objective	Explore opportunities to address occupational health and safety and other chemical-related issues for workers at the factory level, across genders. Identify directions for chemical-related EHS/OHS concepts and promote women's empowerment. Empower women to take a more active role in improvements on the ground through training, education, and bridging knowledge gaps.
Impact	• Delivered webinars and women's breakfast sessions • Created awareness within the ZDHC Community by developing a campaign for 2026 and doing one large-scale session with the Gender & Chemical Partnership about gender and toxicity
Status	Closed.
Challenges	The topic is not a high priority for stakeholders, and it is a challenge to get them involved. Only a handful are currently interested in the topic.
Lessons Learned	The intersection of gender, toxicity, and women's empowerment is still a niche topic within the industry and requires a longer-term investment in awareness before it can become a mainstream ZDHC workstream.

Funded Projects Evaluation Framework

Objective	Establish a robust project evaluation framework to improve oversight, accountability, and cross-departmental alignment across ZDHC's implementation projects.
Impact	• Launched the Leadership Circle Meeting for Funded Projects • Completed mapping of current projects and their challenges and opportunities
Status	In progress.
Challenges	Receiving timely input from all relevant departments was challenging.
Lessons Learned	Communication about the importance of the framework and how it interconnects with different departments is essential to securing participation and buy-in.

Transition ZDHC Academy to a New Team

Objective	Ensure a smooth transition of the ZDHC Academy to the new Academy team, maintaining continuity of operations and programme quality.
Impact	• Weekly alignment calls established between the Impact Team and Academy Manager throughout the transition • Step-by-step handover of Academy-related topics completed • Strategic input and support provided by the previous Academy Director to inform future Academy direction
Status	Closing phase.
Challenges	A fully new Academy team was onboarded at the same time as significant programme changes happened; multiple competing priorities created time constraints throughout.
Lessons Learned	Keeping all parties informed and prioritising team welfare enables effective management of complex, concurrent transitions.

Multilateral Partnership Engagement

Objective	Extend ZDHC's visibility and implementation reach by strengthening collaboration with multilateral partnership organisations through shared resources, webinars, and in-person events on sustainable chemical management.
Impact	• Webinars and in-person sessions in collaboration with multilateral partners such as Solidaridad, CBI, ITC, and ILO Better Work • Follow-up collaborations planned with several partners into 2026
Status	Ongoing (depending on organisation, follow-ups are planned)
Challenges	None identified.
Lessons Learned	Alignment, collaboration and shared resources strengthen the implementation and global scaling of sustainable chemical management worldwide.

Future Goals

- Launch the AFD Bangladesh project on the ground in Bangladesh, delivering the first phase of supplier engagement, baseline assessment, and biodiversity impact measurement.
- Launch a Gender and Chemicals campaign, building on the awareness work of 2025 and engaging a broader segment of the ZDHC Community in the intersection of gender, toxicity, and worker safety.
- Organise the first academic engagement event and launch a new academic engagement signatory category, creating a formal, repeatable structure for ZDHC-academia collaboration.
- Extend ZDHC visibility and implementation reach through continued collaboration with multilateral partnership organisations via implementation projects, events, and webinars.

Looking Ahead

The year 2025 provided ZDHC with an opportunity to pause, reflect, and refocus. It highlighted both the progress achieved through the Roadmap to Zero Programme and the increasing complexity of the journey ahead.

Across the industry, regulatory developments such as the CSRD and CSDDD are moving firmly into implementation, raising expectations for transparency, data quality, and measurable impact. In response, ZDHC strengthened its approach to impact measurement, expanding beyond implementation tracking to better reflect real-world outcomes, including nature, societal, and health impacts. Insights from the ZDHC-Quantis study further reinforced both the progress made and the critical data gaps that remain, particularly in human toxicity and biodiversity.

Continued investment in digital tools such as the Air Emissions Module, the digitalised Supplier Roadmap to Zero, Zeddy, and the Community Forum enhanced accessibility, engagement, and decision-making capabilities throughout the value chain.

Marking ten years of the ZDHC Foundation, 2025 also underscored the strength and impact of a global community built on collaboration, science-based approaches, and long-term commitment.

Looking ahead, addressing data gaps, expanding participation, and strengthening impact measurement will be essential. With the relaunch of the ZDHC Gateway, the launch of Supplier to Zero V2 in 2026 and the continued evolution of its tools and ecosystem, ZDHC is well-positioned to support the next phase of industry transformation.

Together, these efforts advance a shared ambition: safer chemistry to enable healthier ecosystems, more resilient supply chains, and better outcomes for people and the planet.