em lyon business school

COMMUNICATING VALUE TO CONSUMERS ABOUT CIRCULARITY, HERITAGE PRODUCTS AND CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAIN

INTERTWINING CULTURES

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Executive Summary

This AlpTextyles deliverable explores how textile producers in the Alpine region can strategically communicate the value of products rooted in circularity, cultural heritage, and collaborative value chains. It emphasizes the role of marketing communications as a key enabler for consumer engagement.

Context and Objectives
Many producers engaged in sustainable and heritage-based textile practices struggle to make their value proposition visible and intelligible to consumers. Traditional product labeling often fails to convey the depth of cultural, ecological, or territorial significance embedded in these goods. This deliverable investigates how to bridge this gap by:
- Identifying effective communication strategies
- Evaluating consumer perceptions of origin, heritage, and sustainability claims
- Highlighting innovative practices, from narrative labelling to crowdfunding
- Offering actionable insights for small-scale or community actors across Alpine areas.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Heritage and Circularity Must Be Narrated to Be Valued

Consumers rarely perceive heritage, sustainability, or local origin unless these qualities are explicitly communicated. Heritage must be translated in contemporary narratives, focusing on the people, processes, and places behind the product. Similarly, circularity benefits from storytelling and educational approaches, explaining for example how to extend product life, care for natural fibers, or support local communities and biodiversity.

2. Cross-border Value Chains Can Be a Narrative Strength

Alpine textile producers often rely on cross-border collaborations, combining resources and expertise from multiple partners and taking advantage of territorial specialization. Rather than being perceived as fragmented, these value chains can be framed around shared heritage and common identity elements, exploiting the resonant image of the Alps and the similar environmental challenges.

3. Certifications can reassure consumers of product quality and compliance with standards

Many certifications exist dealing with origin, sustainability and to some extent also heritage claims. Being typically verified by independent third-parties, they can reassure consumers of the veridicity of these claims resulting in greater trust. Some of these certifications are however little known or understood, and limited research exist on the impact of combining multiple certifications on consumer behavior.

4. Certifications and Message-driven approaches are complementary

While third-party certifications remain useful for signaling quality and compliance to standards, they are often complex and less emotionally resonant. Message-driven approaches, when well-executed, can engage consumers more directly, especially when integrated into broader communication strategies that include labels and packaging, web sites and social media, events, personal selling, and direct to consumer approaches.

5. Beyond Short-Term Promotional Goals, Educating Consumers is Key

Educating consumers is essentially to ensuring that circular and heritage-based products are properly understood, valued, and cared for. Many consumers lack the knowledge to recognize the authenticity, quality, or environmental benefits of products. Producers must therefore invest in simple, enganging and accessible communication, explaining for example how to recognize handmade goods, extend product life through proper case, or why supporting some products contributes to cultural, social or environmental sustainability.

6. Narrative labels, Crowdfinding and Symbolic Adoptions can drive consumer engagement

Innovative approaches can contribute to educate consumers, cultivate relationships, and drive emotional engagement. Narrative labels beyond legal requirements can humanize the product and tell its story. Crowdfuning campaings and symbolic adoptions of animals and plants can encourage consumers to feel personally connected, permitting to obtain significant financial resources.

Recommendations for Alpine Textile Producers

- Select wisely among the many possible certifications those which are better known, understood and resonant with targeted consumers. Combine them wisely.
- Leverage origin and heritage in storytelling. Frame products not just as goods, but as experiences, stories, and acts of care, aligned with slow fashion, circularity, and regional resilience.
- Communicate your value chain, highlighting its strengths. Consider emphasizing fiber origin or place of production. Promote cross-border Alpine value chains as an advantage based on common values, do not hide it as a liability.
- Invest in educational messaging to teach consumers how to recognize, care for, and value your products
- Use affordable but high-engagement tools such as narrative labels, adoption schemes, crowdfunding, and behind-the-scene storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Context
Across the Alpine space, numerous small-scale textile producers and community-based initiatives are striving to create goods that embody principles of circularity, sensitivity to cultural heritage, and territorial embeddedness. These products often emerge despite the complexity and fragmented states of textile value chains, which span national borders and rely on knowledge and skills that are at risk of disappearing, neglected natural fibers from local plant varieties (example, flax, hemp) and animal breeds (example, wool from autochthonous sheep breeds), and resource-efficient production methods. Yet, despite their intrinsic cultural, ecological, and territorial value, these goods frequently fail to achieve sufficient market visibility or consumer recognition.

One critical challenge lies in communication. Existing labelling systems and certification schemes, though valuable, often prove insufficient to fully articulate the richness of heritage-sensitive or circular textile products. The technical or legal nature of these tools may overlook the deeply symbolic, affective, or experiential dimensions manifested in such goods. Moreover, consumer perception of origin, authenticity, or sustainability and circularity are often shaped by entranches imaginaries, cognitive biases, and information gaps, all of which hinder meaningful engagement with these products.

At the same time, the Alpine region's textile landscape is characterized by extensive cross-border collaboration. Producers often rely on geographically dispersed networks of partners, drawing on specialized expertise from different regions. These cross-border value chains at the Alpine or European scale are still virtuous when compared to globalized value chains. Rather than being a liability, their transnational nature offers an opportunity to craft powerful narratives of shared cultural identity, resilience, and environmental stewardship – provided that it is communicated coherently and compellingly.

In this context, persuasive communication becomes not only a promotional tool, but a key enabler for cultural valorization, environmental awareness, and economic viability. Understanding how to communicate heritage, origin, and sustainability is ways that resonate with contemporary consumers is therefore essential.

Objectives
This AlpTextyles deliverable seeks to investigate and propose concrete strategies for enhancing the visibility, intelligibility, and resonance of textile producers grounded in sustainability, heritage, and territorial embeddedness, by:
1. **Identifying effective communication strategies** capable of conveying the cultural, ecological, and symbolic value of products from circular and heritage-sensitive value chains in Alpine regions
2. **Evaluating consumer perceptions** of origin, tradition, and circularity claims, with particular attention to how these perceptions influence purchasing behavior;
3. **Highlighting innovative practices** empowering producers to connect emotionally with consumers
4. **Offering actionable insights** for small-scale or community-based actors operating in Alpine regions, helping them navigate the complexities of market communication and position their products as meaningful alternatives in the marketplace.

Methodological Considerations
The insights presented in this report are grounded in a multi-method approach that combines conceptual enquiry with illustrate empirical cases. The core of the analysis is an extended literature review covering academic and other relevant contributions across three interrelated domains: the communication of circularity; heritage-sensitive products; and origin in cross-border value chains. This review not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also highlights conceptual gaps and emerging themes.

Complementing the literature review, several case studies are analyzed to illustrate how communication strategies are implemented in practice. These examples are drawn from both established firms and smaller or community-based initiatives, providing a broad perspective on the diversity of communication approaches currently in use.

While this report offers a comprehensive analysis, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, although grounded in an extensive review of available literature, the report's empirical elements remain illustrative rather than exhaustive. The selected case studies, while insightful, cannot fully capture the diversity of practices across the entire Alpine region or beyond. Second, the insight presented may not be generalizable across all market segments, cultural contexts, regions, or product categories. Finally, given the focus on smaller-scale and community-based actors, the relevance of certain identified approaches to larger enterprises with mature marketing functions might be limited.

Structure of the report
The deliverable is structured in three main sections, preceded by an executive summary and this introduction, and followed by conclusions, references, and an appendix presenting selected empirical results.

Section 1: The Value of Heritage-sensitive, Circular Textile Products from Cross-border Value Chains
This section presents an extensive literature review establishing the conceptual foundation of the report. It covers how circularity, heritage-sensitivity, and place of origin are perceived by consumers, and how these attributes can be effectively communicated. Subsections address each of these dimensions individually, culminating in a summary of shared challenges and communication opportunities.

Section 2: Best Practices and Case Studies
This section analyses concrete examples of communication strategies and solutions, differentiating between third-party certifications and message-driven approaches. It critically evaluate how these tools can be used alone or in combination and explores their strengths and limitations in fostering consumer trust and engagement.

Conclusions and Recommendations
This final section offers recommendations aimed at producers, collectives, and policy actors. It reflects on the implications of the findings and suggests communication approaches adapted to Alpine contexts.

Appendix: Quantitative Research Findings
The Appendix includes preliminary findings from quantitative studies exploring how consumers perceive heritage and circularity claims, particularly in relation to Alpine textile products. These studies help ground the report's recommendations in empirical evidence.

1. THE VALUE OF HERITAGE-SENSITIVE, CIRCULAR TEXTILE PRODUCTS FROM CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When evaluating purchase alternatives, consumers make their choices based on **product attributes** and/or **benefits**.
- Attributes are observable characteristics - such as material, origin, or design.
- Benefits refer to the functional, emotional, or symbolic value that consumers derive from these attributes.

Clear and credible communication of attributes and benefits is essential to shape perceptions and influence consumer decision-making. As a starting point, we assumed that:
- **Circularity** (linked to sustainability) and **heritage** elements (linked to authenticity and cultural value) would be perceived positively by consumer if adequately communicated;
- **Place of origin**, despite its centrality in regional branding and 'Made in' narratives, could potentially penalize products from **cross-border value chains**. These products require ad hoc promotional strategies, for example emphasizing the **fiber origin** when processing capacity is not locally available, or **place of production** when raw materials are sourced externally.

Before addressing communication strategies, this chapter lays the conceptual foundation by reviewing academic literature on how value is constructed and perceived in relation to:
1. Circularity
2. Heritage-sensitivity
3. Place of origin

Overview of the literature review

Circularity

- Refers to the reintroduction of materials into the production system through recycling, reuse, and renewable energy, treating waste as a raw material for new growth. Key benefits include driving innovation, improving supply-chain efficiency, enhancing competitiveness, and creating new jobs.
- Businesses are increasingly shifting from conceptualizing circular economy (CE) principles to implementing them, particularly in the environmental domain. **Consumers need to do their parts for circular approaches to work**.
- Communicating the value of circularity is challenging due to limited consumer awareness, low trust, and misconceptions regarding product quality and cost. The complexity of circular processes can also hinder understanding. Overcoming these barriers requires transparent messaging, clear explanations, and a focus on tangible benefits.

Heritage Products

- According to UNESCO's 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of **Intangible Cultural Heritage**, heritage relies on intergenerational transmission and is threatened by over-commercialization, decontextualization, misrepresentation, and loss of community control, all of which can undermine its meaning, viability, and value.
- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) conceptualizes heritage as **traditional knowledge** (TK) and **traditional cultural expressions** (TCEs), advocating the forms of legal protection that are possible under the current IP regime that favors innovation over tradition.
- In marketing, heritage is often framed through concepts like **brand heritage** and **authenticity**. Although less studied, **traditional products** are valued by consumers for their perceived authenticity, handmade nature, and contribution to cultural preservation. Interest in traditional products has surged recently, driven by nostalgia and a renewed interest in heritage.
- However, traditional products face risks such as cultural appropriation, homogenization through mass production, and skill erosion. **Heritage storytelling** is a promising strategy to communicate their symbolic and cultural value while reinforcing emotional resonance.

Place of Origin and Cross-border Value Chains

- The **Country-of-Origin** (COO) effect influences consumer perceptions through pre-existing associations with a product's national origin, often involving stereotypes. A favourable COO enhances perceptions of product quality, performance, and desirability. Conversely, products from cross-border value chain might be viewed less positively, especially by consumers who prefer goods entirely made in a single country or region.
- To counteract this bias, an 'ingredient origin' approach, emphasizing the provenance of raw materials (e.g., **fiber origin**), can generate positive associations even when processing occurs elsewhere.

While circularity, heritage sensitivity, and cross-border value chains are often addressed separately in the literature, their overlaps are evident in contexts such as **Alpine textile production**. Strategic storytelling and product communication can selectively foreground one or more of these dimensions, helping to construct coherent narratives that align with consumer values and overcome perceptual barriers.

1.1 COMMUNICATING CIRCULARITY

What is circularity?

The circular economy is a model where all materials flow back into the cycle after consumers end using them (i.e., through being kept for longer, reselling, donating, and recycling)
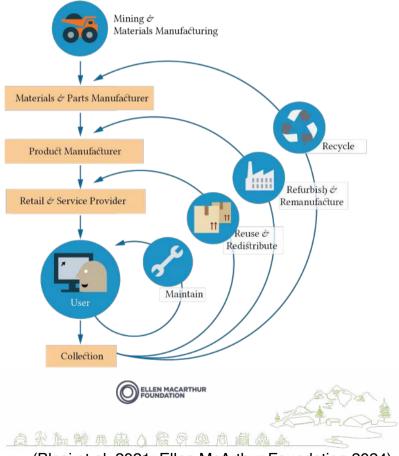
Waste becomes the source of growth for something new. This model conceives waste as a raw material, based on the reintroduction of materials in the system, combining recycling, reuse and renewable energy and biomimicry.

Products and materials are therefore re-used until they reach the end of life.

Main advantages of circularity:
- Drives innovation
- Improves the efficiency of the company and the entire supply-chain
- Generates competitive advantage
- Creates new jobs
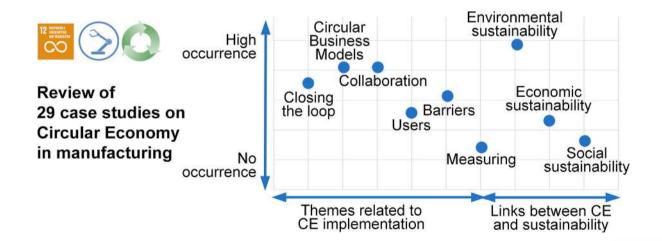
(Blasi et al. 2021; Ellen McArthur Foundation 2024)

How do companies approach circularity?

In their systematic review of the circular economy (CE) in the manufacturing industry, Bjørnbet et al. (2021) show that there has indeed been an evolution from concept to development to verified implementation in the industry. However, the sustainability impact of CE practices is typically addressed only through the environmental dimension, neglecting the social and economic dimensions.

Review of 29 case studies on Circular Economy in manufacturing

(Bjørnbet et al., 2021)

Consumer response to circular products (i):

Knowledge of the Textile Industry and Related Emotions: Consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental issues caused by the textile and clothing industry, including the significant waste it generates. This awareness often leads to eco-anxiety and, in some cases, a sense of paralysis regarding sustainable choices.

Awareness and Understanding of Circularity: Consumers generally lack a clear understanding of circularity, a challenge further complicated by the existence of multiple definitions. This ambiguity makes it difficult for consumers to grasp the concept and its implications fully.

Responses to Circular Products: Although consumers often express a preference for sustainable products, including circular ones, their purchasing behaviour does not always align with their stated intentions. Our findings highlight this contradiction: consumers are less inclined to buy wool products when they are made from upcycled wool (sourced from sheep breeders who would otherwise discard it) or recycled wool (derived from fibers of old wool garments).
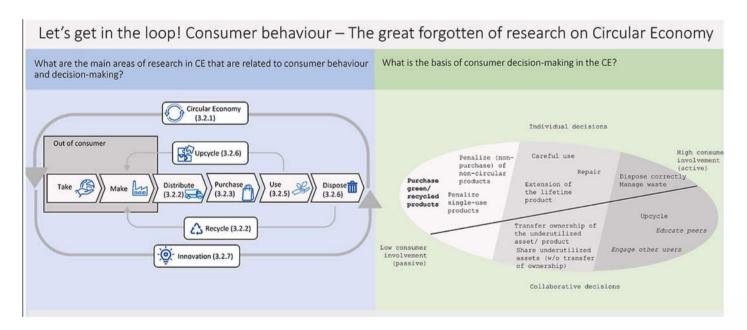
Circularity in the Alps: While Alpine production is instinctively associated with sustainability, the concept of circularity is rarely linked to products labelled as "made in the Alps." Interestingly, when comparing upcycled and recycled wool garments from the Alps, consumers tend to show a stronger preference for recycled wool.

(Testa et al., 2021; AlpTextyles 2024a)

Consumer response to circular products (ii)

In their review of the consumer behaviour literature on circularity, Vidal-Ayuo et al. (2023) highlight that consumer' education is a key antecedent of consumer decision-making.

Let's get in the loop! Consumer behaviour – The great forgotten of research on Circular Economy
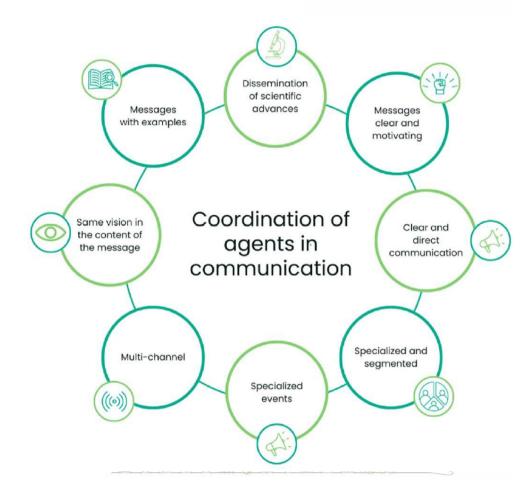
Key aspects when communicating circularity

Carbonell-Alcocer et al. (2025) interviewed representatives of four stakeholder groups (public administration; private enterprises; university professors; and scientific personnel) to understand perceptions of circular economy initiatives. All stakeholders concur that communication is crucial.

Stakeholders believe that "*improving public awareness of the circular economy involves improving communication and education*" (p.8).

Key communication-related themes emerging from the qualitative research are summarized in the **Figure on the right**, which highlights the main areas identified by participants as critical for fostering understanding and engagement.

1.2 COMMUNICATING HERITAGE-SENSITIVE PRODUCTS

UNESCO's conceptualization: products as expressions of intangible cultural heritage (ICH)

The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Living Heritage defines Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as "*the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage*". ICH is expressed through oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, knowledge of nature and traditional craftmanship.

- ICH is *transmitted across generation* and is continuously recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history. It fosters a sense of identity and continuity, while promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.
- *Traditional craftmanship* is one recognized form of ICH. The Representative Lists of the ICH of Humanity, established under the 2003 Convention, includes 415 elements of traditional craftsmanship worldwide. Some pertain directly to textile heritage – for example, the traditional handloom weaving of Taqueté brocade textiles in Lamphum, Thailand, inscribed in 2023.
- National inventories maintained by State Parties include many more elements. In France, for instance, entries include "The know-how of the Briançonnais: the cultivation of textile hemp" and "Bobbin lace from Puy-en-Velay".

While the 2003 Convention does not focus on **products** per se, products can be seen as **tangible expressions** of ICH. Raising awareness (a concept closely linked to education and promotion) is considered essential to safeguarding and ensuring intergenerational transmission of ICH.

(UNESCO, n.a.)

A typology of heritage-sensitive products

Building on UNESCO's framework, Deacon et al (2025) propose a typology of **heritage-sensitive products**, which distinguishes between different relationships to traditional knowledge and practices.

- **Survivals** are products made using methods that have remained unchanged over time. While production contexts may vary – from family use in peripheral areas to tourist showcases, educational workshops, or small businesses run by senior artisans – the techniques remain traditional. *Example: Handwoven wool blankets produced on traditional looms by elder craftswomen.*
- **Retro-innovations** are new products created by reviving aesthetics, skills, or know-how that are no longer in active use. They often draw on historical artifacts, community-held tools, museum collections, archival photos, ethnographic research, or oral histories. *Example: A contemporary winter coat inspired by 19th-century shepherd garments, recreated using museum pieces and local oral accounts.*
- **Living heritage products** are based on traditional methods adapted over time to shifts in lifestyle, market demand, technology, or regulation. Manual techniques may be mechanized, and designs updated to appeal to new audiences. These products align with UNESCO's view of living heritage as dynamic and continuously reinterpreted. *Example: Hand-dyed scarves using natural dyeing techniques, now produced with eco-certified processes and modern color palettes for urban consumers.*
- **Radically new products** combine traditional and contemporary techniques, often involving substantial changes in form, function, or production. These can still be heritage-sensitive when they help safeguard essential knowledge or support cultural transmission. *Example: Felted wool sneakers made from local Alpine wool, co-developed by designers and traditional felters, supporting endangered sheep breeds and landscapes shaped by pastoralism.*

This typology demonstrates how ICH can inspire a **diverse portfolio of market offerings**, catering to different segments, purchasing contexts, and price levels, while contributing to the safeguarding and transmission of heritage knowledge.

WIPO's conceptualization: products based on Traditional Knowledge and incorporating Traditional Cultural Expressions

The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** conceptualizes heritage through the frameworks of **Traditional Knowledge** (TK) and **Traditional Cultural Expressions** (TCEs).

- TK refers to "*knowledge, know-how, skills, and practices that are developed, sustained, and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity.*"
- TCEs are "*the forms in which traditional culture is expressed; they are integral to the cultural and social identities of Indigenous peoples and local communities, embodying know-how and skills, and transmitting core values and beliefs*". TCEs may be oral, visual, musical, or performative, and can include arts and crafts, including those in the textile domain.
- Examples of TK and TCE in textiles are Saint Gallen embroidery in Switzerland, Cantù lace making in Italy, traditional dress (tracht) weaving and embellishment in Austria.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) provide only limited protection against the misappropriation or unauthorized use of TK and TCEs. Because such knowledge is typically communal, intergenerational, and lacks the criteria of **novelty** or **individual authorship**, it often falls outside the scope of conventional IP regimes.

Nevertheless, a combination of legal instruments, such as **copyright**, **trademarks**, **certification marks**, **patents** (when traditional knowledge leads to innovation), and **trade secrets**, can offer partial protection. WIPO also advocates for the development of **custom legal frameworks** that better reflect the communal ownership, perpetual duration, and cultural significance of TK and TCEs.

(Al Sabah, 2025; WIPO, 2025; WIPO, n.a.)

Heritage-sensitive products in marketing

The marketing field has developed its own conceptualization of heritage-sensitive products independently from the UNESCO and WIPO frameworks. Two main streams of literature addressing heritage-sensitive products can be identified.

Studies on **brand heritage**.
- Brand heritage is a core element of brand identity, rooted in the brand's history and characterized by attributes such as a proven track record, longevity, core values, symbolic continuity, and an organizational commitment to preserving its legacy.
- This literature emphasizes that invoking heritage is a strategic promotional decision that can differentiate producers in competitive markets. Highlighting brand heritage has been shown to foster favorable consumer responses, including greater trust, more positive attitudes, stronger attachment, lower perceived risk, and higher perceived value and satisfaction.
- Although this literature focuses on individual brands, its insights are also relevant to collectives of producers promoting a shared heritage or developing heritage-sensitive narratives.

Studies on **traditional products**.
- While traditional craftmanship lacks an agreed-upon definition, it is commonly associated with partially handmade production, the use of old machinery or traditional techniques, a long-standing production process, and the limited use of modern technologies.
- Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in traditional products, particularly in the food sector, driven by nostalgia for the past and a desire to preserve traditions. This trend has contributed to the democratization of traditional products, making them accessible to a broader consumer base.
- Emphasizing the traditional techniques use in production or the heritage of ingredients has been shown to increase consumer acceptance and purchase intention.
- .

(Beudaert & Lambert, 2020; Eichinger et al., 2021; Hakala et al., 2011; Pecot et al., 2017; Urde et al., 2007; Wilkox et al., 2024)

Common Elements in UNESCO, WIPO, and Marketing Conceptualizations

Despite emerging from distinct institutional and disciplinary contexts, the UNESCO, WIPO, and marketing perspectives on heritage-sensitive products converge on several key elements. These shared dimensions form the conceptual backbone for understanding, promoting, and safeguarding heritage-linked production in both policy and market settings.

1. **Knowledge, skills, and practices are fundamental to the creation of heritage-sensitive products.** All three frameworks emphasize that heritage-sensitive products are fundamentally rooted in specialized knowledge, skills, and practices. These know-how-intensive processes distinguish heritage-sensitive products from generic goods and can offer a key point of differentiation in the marketplace.

2. **Community and Cultural Embeddedness.** A second commonality is the embeddedness of heritage-sensitive products within specific communities and cultural environments. This cultural and communal anchoring reinforces the symbolic and emotional value of heritage products for both producers and consumers.

3. **The Significance of the Past and Intergenerational Continuity**. Finally, all three approaches underscore the importance of historical depth and intergenerational transmission in defining heritage-sensitive products. This shared temporal dimension imbues heritage-sensitive products with credibility, emotional resonance, and perceived authenticity, all of which are central to their value proposition.

These shared foundations underscore the importance of education, communication and storytelling as essential tools for raising awareness and conveying the cultural significance, authenticity, and value of heritage-sensitive products.

Communicating heritage-sensitive products to consumers (I)

The existing literature consistently shows that communicating a product's connection to culture and traditional skills and practices (including, but not limited to, handmade production), is essential for fostering positive consumer's attitudes towards heritage-sensitive products. Several key effects have been identified:

- Handmade production, artisan methods and traditional techniques increases the **perceived authenticity** of the product.
- Consumer view the purchase of products made using traditional methods as a way to **support the safeguarding of endangered skills and cultural practices**, thus benefitting society.
    - *Many consumers are also willing to learn traditional techniques and work with their hands. Traditional weaving workshops, for instance, invite participants to spin, dye, and weave natural fibers using time-honoured methods. This experiential element is particular significant given that the erosion of traditional knowledge and the difficulty of intergenerational transmission pose major threats to intangible cultural heritage.*
- Traditional methods increased **perceived quality** and **credibility** of the product.
- Traditional production also satisfies the human need of **feeling grounded**, creating a symbolic connection to the physical, social, and historical environment.

(Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020; Eichinger et al., 2021; Gaytan, 2019; Wilkox et al., 2024)

Communicating heritage-sensitive products to consumers (II)

The literature identifies several effective strategies for communicating the value of heritage-sensitive products to consumers.

- **Storytelling**: Narratives that highlight the people, places, and production phases behind traditional products help humanize the offer and foster emotional engagement. Storytelling can convey not only technical know-how but also intergenerational transmission and community values.
- **Appropriate distribution channels**: Selling through artisan or farmer markets, rather than mass retail outlets, strengthens perceptions of authenticity and reinforces the local, small-scale nature of production.
- **Media selection**: The use of traditional media (e.g., television commercials) may diminish perceived authenticity. In contrast, intimate or context-sensitive media, such as documentaries, social media storytelling, or direct producer-consumer encounters, are more effective in conveying the uniqueness of heritage products.
- **Serviscape and retail atmosphere**: The physical retail environment should reflect the values of craftsmanship and tradition. Elements such as traditional interior design, curated product assortments, and historically inspired aesthetics contribute to a coherent sensory experience that supports the product's heritage positioning.
- **Typography and visual cues**: The use of handwritten typefaces has been shown to increase perceptions of human presence, leading to more favorable product evaluations and reinforcing a sense of personal connection.
- **Cultural events and rituals**: Celebrating traditional festivals or historical commemorations serves as a reminder of the product's cultural roots and connection to the past.
- **Layered messaging on ethics and locality**: Traditional methods are often communicated in tandem with messages of local production, ethical sourcing, and sustainability, appealing to values of pride, belonging, and environmental consciousness.

(Bruckberger et al., 2023; Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020; Eichinger et al., 2021; Rivaroli et al., 2021; Schroll et al., 2018)

Current threats to heritage-sensitive products

Despite renewed interest in tradition and authenticity, heritage-sensitive products face several structural and cultural threats that compromise their distinctiveness, market relevance, and long-term viability.

Loss of uniqueness and authenticity: Over time, some traditional products have undergone processes that dilute their distinctive qualities. Examples include;
- Mass-produced souvenirs sold in tourist areas that bear little resemblance to authentic craftsmanship;
- Corporate acquisitions of small, independent producers leading to industrial scaling of formerly artisanal products;
- Craft-washing, when industrial producers mimic crafts production without adopting artisanal techniques to exploit consumers' positive association with hands-made goods.

Decline in appreciation: Some consumer segments are less sensitive to traditional products:
- Erosion of cultural literacy: a growing number of consumers lack the knowledge or cultural context needed to recognize and appreciate traditional craftsmanship. As a result, these products risk becoming niche goods, appreciated only by a small group of experts or cultural connoisseurs.
- Tensions between tradition and modernity: While conservative consumers might be more attracted by traditional products, viewing them as expression of cultural identity, continuity and rootedness, more liberal consumers may perceive traditional goods as backward-facing, preferring innovative designs allowing them to escape from the past.

(Beudaert & Lambert, 2020; Biraglia et al., 2022; Eichinger et al., 2021; Finkelstein & Rios, 2022; Rivaroli et al., 2020)

Current threats to heritage-sensitive products (II)

As emphasized by the UNESCO and WIPO frameworks, which stress safeguarding measures and legal protection, the production and use of traditional products by individuals or brands outside their cultural group can result in cultural appropriation and exploitation. In the age of social media, such cases are far more visible than in the past and often trigger intense public debate. Key patters are as follows.

Trivialization of a cultural meaning
Example: Gucci launched an expensive turban resembling the Sikh *daastar*, a sacred religious symbol, with no apparent regard for its spiritual significance or the history of discrimination faced by Sikhs for wearing it.

Commercial exploitation without fair value
Example: Louis Vuitton's 2012 menswear collection included accessories inspired by the Maasai *shuka* blanket from Kenya and Tanzania, sold at luxury prices without any known compensation for the community – despite the fact that nearly 80% of the Maasai population in these countries live below the poverty line.

Lack of compensation
Example: Carolina Herrera's 2020 resort collection featured indigenous designs from the Tenango de Doria, Hidalgo, Saltillo, and Coahuila communities in Mexico. Critics raised concerns over profit sharing; the brand defended the collection as a tribute rather than an act of exploitation.

Negligence and disregard for documented histories and failure to seek permission
Example: Luxury brand KTZ reproduced a sacred Inuit caribou-skin parka originally created by a shaman for spiritual protection. The designer failed to seek permission or consult the Nunavut family of the original maker, who received neither recognition nor compensation.

(Finkelstein & Rios, 2022; Hogans & McAndrews, 2022)

Consumers between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation

Consumer engagement with heritage products often involves navigating a tension between two contrasting discourses:

Cultural appreciation:
Consumption as a way to appreciate and valorise cultural identities, fostering intercultural understanding through the embrace of difference

Cultural appropriation:
Inappropriate or exploitative use of cultural elements by individuals/groups outside the originating culture without consent, understanding, or fair compensation.

Consumers cope with tensions derived from consuming heritage-sensitive product thanks to
four self-authorization strategies:

Reforming:
Consumers acknowledge the risks of cultural appropriation but see themselves as custodians of respectful consumption.

Restraining:
These consumers exercise caution, selectively engaging only with products they perceive as less controversial, often avoiding items with contested symbolism.

Recontextualizing:
Consumers define their appreciation for specific heritage-sensitive products within the broader appreciation of the culture from which such products come from, including language, food, history, etc.

Rationalizing:
Often aligned with cosmopolitan values, these consumers downplay the issue of appropriation by emphasizing cultural exchange and defining themselves as members of a global community.

(Cruz et al., 2024; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018)
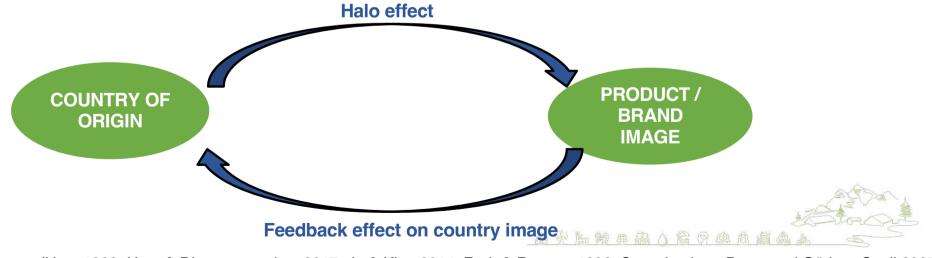
1.3 COMMUNICATING CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS

The Country-of-Origin effect (I)

One of the most relevant concepts in international marketing for understanding the communication challenges associated with cross-border value chains is the **Country-of-Origin (COO) effect**. COO is defined as the «*overall perception that consumers form on a product from a particular country, based on their prior perception of the country*».

The COO effect transfers the image or reputation of a country (or place), often shaped by stereotypes, to the products produced there. It serves as an **extrinsic cue** in the consumer decision-making process, subtly influencing perceptions of quality, authenticity, and desirability. Many consumers are either **unaware of COO's influence or unwilling to acknowledge it**, with studies suggesting that up to **30% of consumers** do not consciously recognize its role in their choices.

Halo effect

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

PRODUCT / BRAND IMAGE

Feedback effect on country image

(Han, 1989; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Jo & Kim, 2014; Roth & Romeo, 1992; Swaminathan, Page, and Gürhan-Canli 2007)

The Country-of-Origin effect (II)

Favourable COO positively influences consumer reactions to products «Made In»

Characteristics of a favourable COO

- Local brands
- Foreign brands locally produced
- Cultural similar countries
- Geographical proximity of the country
- Country domain of expertise
- Country stereotypes ("warmth" vs. "competence")
- Affective associations with the country

Consumer reactions

- ✓ Perceived product quality
- ✓ Perceived product performance
- ✓ Willingness to pay
- ✓ Risk perception
- ✓ Intention to purchase
- ✓ Reactions to corporate crisis

(Balabanis et al., 2019; Bandyopadhay & Banerjee, 2002; Barbarossa et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2014; Cuddy et al., 2008; Jo & Kim, 2014; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Samiee & Chabowski, 2021; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999)

Promoting products based on place of origin

Companies often highlight the national or regional origin of their products. However, this strategy is effective only when the country has a favorable image and there is a strong fit between the country and the product category. For example, Italy enjoys a positive reputation in fashion, making origin a valuable marketing asset. In contrast, Italian mechanical engineering lacks similar associations, so companies in that sector should focus on other attributes or benefits. Building on COO literature, the following matrix outlines suggests possible communication strategies.

1. Favorable Place Image / High Product-Country Fit → *Emphasize COO*
Actively promote origin as a marker of quality and tradition. *Example:* Austrian producers of Tracht (traditional dress) emphasizing cultural continuity

2. Favorable Place Image / Low Product-Country Fit → *Downplay COO*
Highlight other product features or beneifts the country isn't associated with expertise in the category. *Example:* A Bavarian brand focusing on minimalist design, eco-innovation, or global aesthetics rather than promoting "Made in Germany.

3. Unfavorable Place Image / High Product-Country Fit → *Educate consumers*
Reframe or educate consumers about the region's textile strengths. *Example:* A Slovenian wool cooperative promoting local sheep breeds and natural dyeing methods through storytelling.

4. Unfavorable Place Image / Low Product-Country Fit → *De-emphasize COO*
Avoid focusing on origin; stress other elements such as global design, collaboration, or innovation. *Example:* products marketed under a cosmopolitan, craft-forward brand identity rather than by national origin.

Product-Place Fit

Place Image	Low	High	
	2. Downplay COO	1. Emphasize COO	Favorable
	4. De-emphasize COO	3. Educate Consumers	Unfavorable
	Low	High	

The Value of Alpine origin (i)

Studies from the *TRICK* (Testa et al. 2021), *ARPAF Made in the Alps* (Rinallo, Pizzetti et al., 2023a,b), and *AlpTextyles* (2024a,b) projects highlight key insights into consumer perceptions of Alpine textiles:

Limited Awareness of the textile heritage of the Alps: Consumers primarily associate the Alps with food; the region's textile production and rich material heritage remain largely overlooked.

Limited knowledge of native textile resources: French consumers are relatively familiar with merino d'Arles wool, but awareness of other resources, such as sheep from other breeds or dye-producing plants like Alchemilla, is very low.

Consumer Interest and Preferences: Consumers express a willingness to purchase locally sourced products from the Alpine region, demonstrating a preference for natural fibers over synthetic alternatives. Alpine products are more attractive than non-Alpine for consumers. Consumers value that Alpine production may require more efforts and work and perceived it as symbolically imbued with love.

Alpine production as handmade: Consumer tend to spontaneously associate Alpine product to handmade and sustainable production. Notably, despite also the machine-made production in the Alps is appreciated, consumers tend to prefer handmade and artisanal production of textile items. Our studies suggest that this preference does not vary depending on the textile fiber.

Good potential with adequate communication: When made aware of native materials, consumers perceive Alpine products as more authentic, sustainable, and of higher quality.

The Value of Alpine origin (ii)

As discussed before, **country or place of origin** can shape consumer perceptions. In the case of the Alps, two contrasting imaginaries coexist:

Natural and pure environments: Our preliminary research suggests that the Alps are seen as pristine, romantic, and pure landscapes symbolizing harmony with nature.

Rugged and demanding environments: The Alps are also perceived as harsh environments, where humans, animals and plants must endure demanding conditions and adapt to survive.

These dual associations influence how consumers interpret Alpine products. To explore this further, we conducted two preliminary studies* examining whether the Alpine environment in which sheep are raised affects consumer perceptions of wool products ((see Appendix for methodology and more detailed research findings).
- Products described as originating from harsh Alpine environments were perceived as stronger—but not necessarily more attractive—than those without place-of-origin information ($p < .05$).
- Surprisingly, describing the origin as a mild, fertile environment also enhanced perceptions of strength ($p > .05$) and significantly improved attractiveness over the control group ($p < .05$).

In sum, **the environmental context of the Alps matters**—but not always as expected. Harshness adds symbolic value, while milder environments may support more emotionally appealing narratives.

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* The studies and results described in the Appendix are part of a larger academic project conducted by Marta Pizzetti, Verena Gruber and Mia Birau

Cross-border value chains

Recent developments in COO studies reflect the growing complexity of global value chains, where production often spans multiple countries. Traditionally, COO referred to the country where a product is designed, but this is now complemented by the Country-of-Manufacture (COM), the location where the product is assembled or produced (Arora et al., 2016). COM also shapes consumer perceptions and contributes to the overall product image.

- When COO and COM are congruent, meaning they share a similar image or reputation, products are seen as more authentic and are perceived to be of higher quality (Arora et al., 2016; Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013).
- Conversely, mismatched COO and COM can create confusion and lower product evaluations (Johnson et al., 2016).
- Despite this, consumers tend to place greater weight on the COO (Arora et al., 2016; Ahmed & d'Asous, 1996; Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013), and companies often prioritize it in their branding strategies (Johnson et al., 2016).
- However, when production is relocated—e.g., through offshoring—and the COM no longer aligns with the COO, brands risk alienating loyal consumers (Felix & Firat, 2019).

A further layer of complexity is introduced by the origin of raw materials, which plays a particularly important role in luxury markets. The provenance of materials can signal quality, rarity, and authenticity—attributes that enhance consumer perceptions (Cheah et al., 2016). This is for example the case of a fashion producers using soft merinos wool from Australia.
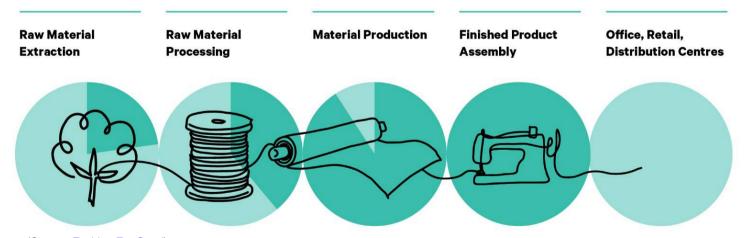
The fragmented value chain of textile products: Communication challenges

The fragmented nature of textile value chains—often involving different countries for fiber sourcing, design, manufacturing, and branding—creates significant communication challenges. Deciding which origin to emphasize becomes complex: should a brand highlight the origin of raw materials (e.g., Alpine wool), the place of manufacturing (often outsourced), the location of design, or the brand's national identity? Each conveys different meanings to consumers, ranging from authenticity and craftsmanship to innovation or sustainability, but may also generate confusion or skepticism if the narrative appears inconsistent. This complexity demands strategic coherence and transparency in communication, especially when targeting consumers sensitive to provenance, ethics, or heritage. In a previous research report, the AlpTextyles project identified different communication models linking products to place in textile value chains (see next page).

Raw Material Extraction **Raw Material Processing** **Material Production** **Finished Product Assembly** **Office, Retail, Distribution Centres**

(Source: Fashion For Good)

Brands and the Alps: Communication models

The Alps as a place of production

Made In
Brands that produce their goods in the Alps

Fiber origin
Brands that use fibers from the Alps

Brand Origin
Brand that were founded in the Alps

The Alps as a place of consumption

The Alps as a postcard landscape

Source: AlpTextyles (2024b)

Communicating origin in textile and fashion

"Made In" Approach

Emphasizes local production while fibers are sourced internationally. This strategy promotes territorial know-how and rootedness and is common among brands operating in areas with textile manufacturing infrastructure. Traceability and sustainability certifications are often used to reinforce quality claims.

"Fiber Origin" Approach

Focuses on the use of locally sourced fibers, such as Alpine wool or flax, to highlight authenticity and support local breeds and farmers. Even when full processing must occur abroad due to infrastructure gaps, emphasizing native material origin enhances perceptions of sustainability, prestige, and cultural depth.

"Brand Origin" Approach

Leverages the brand's founding location, which might be in Alpine regions, to evoke trust, heritage, and reputation, even when production is offshored. This strategy appeals to consumer emotions through narratives of tradition and longevity, while supply chain transparency is typically addressed through corporate channels, not consumer-facing campaigns.

"Alps as Postcard" Approach

Uses Alpine landscapes as symbolic backdrops in advertisements and media to evoke nature, luxury, and adventure—even without any production ties to the region. This image-based strategy enhances brand storytelling but does not claim geographic authenticity. The Alps are represented as places of consumption, not as places of production. Examples include promotional campaigns to support luxury brands' ski collections.

Alpine cross-border value chains

Textile value chain in Alpine regions are often highly fragmented, relying on cross-border collaborations to leverage regional expertise and compensate for limited local infrastructure. A prime example is the production of textiles made from merino d'Arles wool: the wool originates in Provence (France), is washed in Lombardy (Italy), and spun in Germany (see next section). This might however complicate consumer understanding.

Intrinsic Link Between Raw Material Origin and Production Location: Consumers tend to perceive the origin of raw materials and the place of production as inherently connected. The fragmented nature of the value chain complicates their ability to assess the authenticity and locality of a product, making it harder for them to recognize it as truly 'Alpine.'

Stronger Consumer Preference for Alpine-Origin Raw Materials: Consumers prioritize products whose raw materials are sourced directly from the Alps, as these materials embody the symbolic and cultural essence of the region. Conversely, products manufactured in the Alpine region but using raw materials from elsewhere tend to be met with skepticism. Non-Alpine materials weaken the perceived authenticity of the product, as they do not align with consumers' expectations of 'Alpineness'.

Conclusive remarks (i)

Marketing and consumer behaviour literature (and our discussion in this document) has traditionally treated circularity, heritage, and cross-border value chains as distinct and separate topics. However, in the Alpine region, these elements are deeply and intrinsically interconnected, reflecting a unique interplay of cultural, historical, and environmental factors.

The Alpine region's national borders have been reshaped numerous times over centuries, often as a result of wars, with the current borders solidified only in the last century. Despite these shifting boundaries, the region's shared cultural heritage and traditional practices transcend national lines, creating a rich tapestry of interconnected traditions and values.

Circularity and waste minimization have been integral to Alpine life for centuries. In a region historically defined by its scarcity of resources, communities developed ingenious practices to maximize efficiency and minimize waste. These traditions, rooted in necessity, resonate with modern principles of sustainability and circularity, offering valuable lessons for contemporary production strategies.

Textile products from value chains located in Alpine regions are more expensive, as they tend to be those that incorporate heritage elements and more sustainable/circular production processes. Consumers who say that they value origin, heritage, or sustainability might suffer from the so-call attitude-behavior gap: they might end up purchasing cheaper alternatives. Communicating how these product differ from these rival market offerings is therefore of the utmost importance.

Conclusive remarks (ii)

When it comes to communication approaches, several orientations emerge from the studies and frameworks reviewed in this section.

- Most marketing studies are conducted with a goal of proposing message-based strategies that individual producers or brand can adopt to generate favorable consumer responses, including positive attitudes towards products, purchase intention, and willingness to pay a premium price. These approaches are based on the principle of differentiating products from competing offers in ways that are valuable for consumers.
- UNESCO highlight that raising awareness is important for the safeguarding of ICH elements. The 2003 Convention on Living Heritage emphasize that communities and groups (and only rarely individuals) are bearers of ICH, thus emphasizing collective actions that are often the result of broader mobilization processes and private-public partnerships.
- WIPO emphasizes legal protection from misuse and unauthorized use of TK and TCEs. Some IPRs, such as geographical indications and certification are collective in nature, whereas others – such as trademarks, can be both collective and individuals.

Accordingly, in the section that follow we propose practical recommendations, based on our studies and review of relevant literature, that can be followed both by individual and collective actors.

2. BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNICATING CIRCULAR, HERITAGE SENSITIVE, & CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAIN PRODUCTS

Introduction

In this section we discuss individual and collective promotional approaches, covering both third-party certifications and message-driven approaches not based on independent certifications.

Third-party certifications are based on an independent validation and the respect of verifiable product specifications. This should enhance credibility by reducing consumer skepticism. Moreover, certifications:
- Guarantee consistent standards, backed by audits and/or legal frameworks
- Can be endorsed by governmental or authorities, which in some cases can lead to greater trust and willingness to pay premium prices.

Message-driven approaches are based on narratives developed by individual or collective organizations to promote their products.
- While they need to respect laws protecting consumers from misleading advertising, these promotional claims are not verified by independent third parties.
- This can lead to increased consumer scepticism, but if well-executed based on a good understanding of effective promotional storytelling, message-driven approaches can affect consumer perceptions resulting in purchase behavior.

Certifications and message-driven approaches are complementary and can build on each other.

2.1 THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATIONS

THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATIONS

Sustainability certifications have emerged to help consumers make informed decisions and reduce time and effort used to find sustainable products.

- These certifications exist for various topics (example: environmental labels, social welfare labels, animal welfare labels) and across various industries such as food (biological agriculture, Fair Trade); household products (EU Ecolabel), IT and multimedia (Energy Star); forestry (Forest Stewardship Council, FSC); and textiles (GOTS, Global Organic Textile Standard).
- They can communicate properties that consumers may want to avoid (e.g. cruelty free) or properties that may attract consumers (e.g. organic or FairTrade).
- They can be voluntary or mandatory and vary in the number of issues they address and the depth of information they provide.
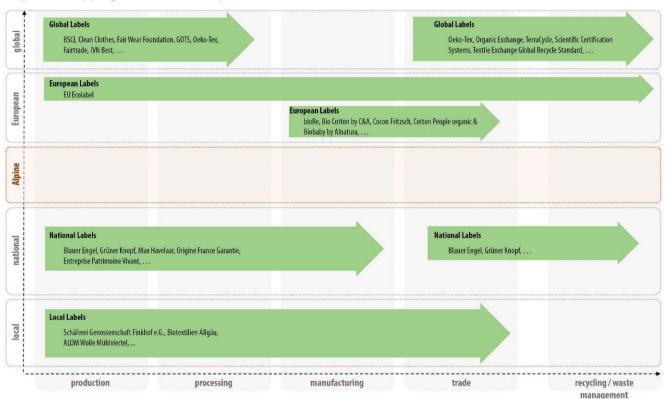

For what concerns the certification of **origin**, labels referring to the entire Alpine space do not exist. There are however many labels certifying origin at the European, national (i.e., made in France or Switzerland), and regional/local level, some of which are specific to the textile sector. Some examples (see next page for more details).

(AlpTextyles 2024c)

> Figure 11 | Mapping of Labels in the Alpine textile sector.

global

Global Labels

BSCI, Clean Clothes, Fair Wear Foundation, GOTS, Oeko-Tex, Fairtrade, IVN Best, . . .

Global Labels

Oeko-Tex, Organic Exchange, TerraCycle, Scientific Certification Systems, Textile Exchange Global Recycle Standard, . . .

European

European Labels

EU Ecolabel

European Labels

bioRe, Bio Cotton by C&A, Cocon Fritzsch, Cotton People organic & Biobaby by Alnatura, . . .

Alpine

national

National Labels

Blauer Engel, Grüner Knopf, Max Havelaar, Origine France Garantie, Entreprise Patrimoine Vivant, . . .

National Labels

Blauer Engel, Grüner Knopf, . . .

local

Local Labels

Schäferei Genossenschaft Finkhof e.G., Biotextilien Allgäu, ALOM Wolle Mühlviertel, . . .

production　　processing　　manufacturing　　trade　　recycling / waste management

Mapping of textile brandings and labels in the European Alps

Data: based on sector reports and own research
Project: AlpTextyles, 2023 & 2024
Concept & Visualisation: M. Lambracht, R. Sachs and T. Chilla,
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, **2024.**

FAU Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

Interreg Co-funded by the European Union

Alpine Space

AlpTextyles

(AlpTextyles (2024c)

Certifying heritage:
France's Living Heritage Enterprise label

As discussed in our literature review, many companies use brand heritage approaches to promote themselves. UNESCO, particularly in the context of its 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, also promotes inscriptions of living heritage elements in the lists it maintains. These however cannot be considered labels in a strict sense.

A noteworthy example comes from France with its State-sanctioned *Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant* (ETP, or Living Heritage Enterprise), awarded by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and recognizing companies that possess exceptional artisanal or industrial know-how rooted in tradition, innovation, and excellence.

- Created in 2005, it is awarded to companies that represents excellent in both craftsmanship and industry, in areas such as haute couture, luxury goods and fine arts; gastronomy and food production; architecture, mechanics, and metallurgy. Some textile firms, working in embroidery, silk weaving, lace making, benefit from it.
- Eligibility criteria include the possession of rare or ancestral savoir-faire; the use of specialized techniques requiring a high degree of skills and not widely practiced; strong commitment to heritage safeguarding, training and inter-generational transmission of skills.
- Benefits to EPV-holding firms include not only enhanced visibility and prestige, but also access to public support schemes (notably in export and innovation).

Geographical indications: Protecting origin and heritage, from foodstuffs to craft and industrial products

Geographical Indications (GIs) are collective intellectual property rights that safeguard products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics essentially linked to that origin. The GI system was originated in France to offer legal protection from counterfeiting to terroir-based food products, and was later extended to the EU and other parts of the world. They are recognized in international law following the TRIPS Agreements.

Originally developed for food, GI can also be used for agricultural by-products, including textile fibers. While this is still very uncommon, an interesting case regards the wool produced by the sheep breeds native of the Shetland Isles (UK), used to produce tweed and traditional knitting. In November 2011, Shetland wool produced in Shetland gained GI status with the protected designation of origin (PDO) "Native Shetland Wool".

More recently, the EU Regulation 2023/2411 established a unified framework for the recognitition of GI for craft and industrial products within the EU. This is an opportunity for textile products to benefit from origin and heritage legal protection similar to that of agricultural goods. An example from India, where GI can be extended to non-food products already, is that of Pashimna, which was registered in India already in 2008. The Pashmina GI safeguards shawls made from wool of the Changthangi goats in Ladakh, which are then hand-spun and hand-women using traditional techniques.

Certifying Fiber Origin (i)

As previously explained, the 'Fiber Origin" approach focuses on the uses of locally sourced fibers, which is particularly suited to cases when production cannot be realized locally due to the complex and geographically disperse nature of the textile value chain. Some collective trademarks and certifications exist that guarantee consumers of the origin of fibers included in the product, including those from specific animal breeds or plant varieties, as an 'ingredient brand'.

Examples include:
- **European Flax ™** is an internationally registered trademarks of the Alliance for European Flax/Linen and Hemp, that certifies flax grown and scutched in Western Europe (France, Belgium, Netherlands, which represent 75% of the world's flax fiber production). The trademark guarantees no irrigation (except in exceptional circumstances), no GM seeds, rotational crops, low use of fertilisers and pesticides, and no defoliants; natural dew rotting in the field; zero-waste, as all parts of the plants are used and valorized), and traceability verified by an independent third-party. In 2025, European Flax was renamed and relaunched as **Masters of FLAX FIBRE™**, with a revised standard enhancing its sustainability focus.
- **Merinos D'Arles Selection ©** trademark certifies products made exclusively from purebred Merino D'Arles wool, ensuring traceability and authenticity. The trademark is authorized by UPRA, the organization tasked by the Ministry of Agriculture with overseeing the genetic selection, registry and promotion of sheep breeds in France.

Certifying Fiber Origin (ii)

Another noteworthy case study is **British Wool's Shepherd's Crook Mark**, a certification mark launched in 1972 by British Wool, the farmer-owned cooperative and marketing board which collects, grades, and sell British-grown wool on behalf of UK sheep farmers, providing traceability services, quality control and market access for wool producers and promoting the use of British wool both domestically and internationally.

The mark serves as an «ingredient branding» device, reassuring consumers that products using it use traceable British wool grown by British wool farmers. Only companies that have been vetted into the British Wool's licensing scheme can use one of the logos certifying that the products is entirely made with British wool (100% logo) or that at least 50% of the wool used is British (blended logo). A separate set of logo can be used for Welsh wool.
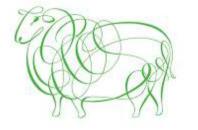
Various marketing campaigns and activities ensure that these logos are recognized and understood by consumers, including the annual campaign for wool, supported by His Majesty King Charles III.

BRITISH WOOL 100%

BRITISH WOOL Blend

THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL

Narrative Labels: The Slow Food approach

The **Narrative Label** is a project started by Slow Food in 2011 encouraging farmers and food processors to go beyond law requirements for labels and also provide precise information on producers, their firms, the plant varieties or animal breeds employed, cultivation techniques, breeding and processing, animal welfare and areas of origin.

- Information typically reported in labels, as dictated by law, sometimes do not permit smaller producers to 'stand out' and communicate their differentiating factors (e.g., origin, heritage, more sustainable practices) compared to larger-scale producers who often use the same elements in their marketing communications.
- According to Slow Food, "the quality of a food product is first and foremost a narrative, which begins with the origins of the product (the territory) and includes cultivation techniques, processing, preservation methods and, of course, the organoleptic and nutritional characteristics. Only a narrative can restore a product's true value" (Slow Food, 2014).

The narrative label model can easily be translated to textile and fiber products, for example:
- Documenting the animal breeds (e.g., merino d'Arles) or plant varieties (e.g., Alpine hemp) involved in the fiber production
- Detailing farming or breeding traditions (e.g, festive events for flax harvesting, sheep grazing and shearing) as well as processing techniques (e.g., spinning and weaving, local scouring, dyeing techniques).
- Providing information on traceability and sustainability impacts for producers and fibers processors, animals, ecosystems and biodiversity.

(Slow Food 2014)

Slow Food's Narrative labels

PROS AND CONS OF LABELS & CERTIFICATIONS

There are advantages and disadvantages of labels/certifications.

On the **positive side**…
→ Labels have been shown to be effective, in particular for consumers who care (Onwezen et al., 2022)
→ They can enhance consumer trust and can increase their interest for responsibly made products

However, the proliferation of labels and certifications has led to downsides. On the **negative side**…
→ With several hundred different labels and certifications, consumers get easily lost. A study of the European Commission (2020) highlighted that 53.3% of environmental claims were found to be "vague, misleading or unfounded" and 40% were "unsubstantiated".
→ As a consequence, willingness-to-pay for sustainability labels remains low and does not help increase sales volume (Janßen and Langen 2017)

COMBINING LABELS

With the proliferation of certifications available today, companies often resort to combining multiple labels to signal sustainability, heritage-sensitiveness, or origin (see example in the next page). The limited available research suggests that combined labels, in some cases, can enhance consumer preference and willingness to pay – more than when they are used in isolated manners. However, these effects vary by product category and are sometimes mixed.

Given the limits of consumer attention, the impact of additional labels may follow a pattern of diminishing returns. Beyond labels, more effective outcomes may result from a strategic mix of place of origin, heritage, and sustainability messages, delivered at different touchpoints (e.g., websites, social media, personal selling) and tailored to specific market segment sensitivities. This narrative approach leveraging multiple communication tools can build stronger consumer engagement and purchase motivation than labels alone.
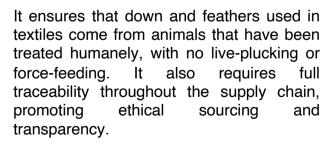
(Tobi et al., 2019; Rondoni and Grasso, 2021)

COMBINING LABELS (II)

Vaude is a German company founded in 1974 by Albrecht von Dewitz. It is a family business focusing on sustainable outdoor products and is a Fair Wear Leader since 2015. Vaude has the following certifications:

CERTIFIED BY CU 843201

CERTIFIED BY CU 843201

It ensures that down and feathers used in textiles come from animals that have been treated humanely, with no live-plucking or force-feeding. It also requires full traceability throughout the supply chain, promoting ethical sourcing and transparency.

It certifies textiles made from organic fibers while ensuring environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing. It covers the entire supply chain, from organic raw material sourcing to ethical labor practices and restrictions on harmful chemicals in processing.

Vaude own label and line of products to indicate timeless and long-lasting products, produced in a more sustainable way (less chemicals, less water and CO2), with fair working conditions.

2.2 MESSAGE-DRIVEN APPROACHES

Message-driven approaches

Organizations, large and small, utilize a wide array of tools to communicate their origin, sustainability practices, and heritage. These includes websites, packaging design, social media, traditional advertising and events. Large, market-oriented firms often benefit from dedicated marketing teams and significant budgets to develop integrated campaigns, typically collaborating with agencies. In contrast, smaller or community-based practitioners must rely on limited resources, often developing in-house storytelling with the available means.

Amont these tools, labels are useful storytelling tools that can be used by individual organizations or the collective actors backing them to promote themselves and their products. Since they are not backed by third-party audits, these message-driven claims may face consumer scepticism or be accused of greenwashing (or craft-washing, heritage-washing, place-washing…) if not rooted in real practices.

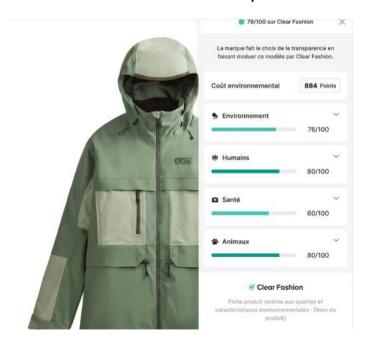(Slow Food 2014)

COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY:
The role of transparency

Picture is French company from based in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It is a snowboard, ski, surf, and outdoor clothing brand focusing on sustainability and circularity. It was founded in 2008 by three friends and today have a head office in Gerzat and another one in Annecy, employing over 50 people. Picture focuses on sustainable fabrics but also offer a rental program since 2021 in an effort to make the textile industry more sustainable.

One of its main strengths is the commitment to transparency:

Environmental & Social impact

To sum up: 80% of a t-shirt's value benefits the local economy.

Value creator	Value	% of value creation	Use of the added value
Supplier	€7	20% – abroad	Operating costs, purchasing raw materials, employees, taxes
Brand	€12.50	20% – France	Employees, rent, taxes, logistics, R&D, operating costs, income taxes
Retailer	€24–€25	40% – France	Employees, commercial lease, taxes, logistics, operating costs, income taxes
Value Added Tax	€32–€33	20% – France	Taxes

Transparency on pricing strategy

COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY:
Making the past salient

Consumers might be sceptical about circular/sustainable products, because of their limited understanding of recycling and upcycling process, but also of circularity in general. Some studies (Kamleitner et al., 2019; Kamleitner & Thürridl, 2022) suggest that when the past–identity of a product is communicated to consumers, they easily infer the past of the product, which increases its attractiveness and boosts consumer demand.

Informing consumers about the past of the materials used for a product is a simple but effective communication strategy. Here some examples of communications meant at making salient the 'past life' of products:
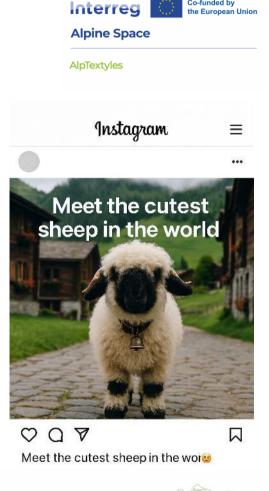

(Kamleitner et al. 2019)

COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY:
Using Cuteness

Cuteness is defined as an appealing quality that evokes affection or endearment. It has been shown to enhance feelings of warmth in consumers, positively influencing their behaviour. Consumers are more likely to retain and care for cute products, thereby extending their lifespan. This quality is often employed to promote social causes and eco-friendly products, as it encourages altruistic behaviours. Cute designs can also be instrumental in increasing interest in circular products by reducing negative emotions associated with sustainability efforts.

Sheep have a huge potential for cuteness. For example, the Valais Blacknose sheep, a breed native to the Swiss Alps, are often called "the cutest sheep in the world", due to their distinctive black facial markings, fluffy fleece, and gentle expression. Sheep content in social media can evoke affection and warm feelings, positively influencing viewer sentiment.

Sheep imagery (real or stylized) on labels, packaging, and social media can thus be used to foster emotional connections, thus promoting wool as an ingredient bran and encouraging product longevity. Cute heritage animal characters can be integrated into digital campaigns and educational materials, making sustainability messaging more engaging and memorable.

(Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Jia et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2016)

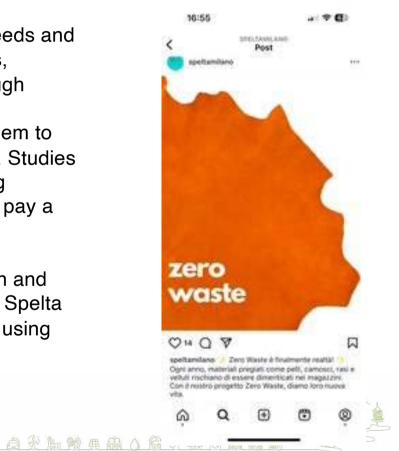Instagram post created with Dall-E.

COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY:
Personalizing products

Personalization involves tailoring a product to meet the specific needs and preferences of the customer. While common in handmade products, personalization has also been adopted in mass-market goods through customization platforms and social media.
Customers appreciate personalized products because they allow them to express their creativity and identity while owning something unique. Studies show that personalization enhances emotional experiences, making consumers feel proud of their customized items and more willing to pay a premium price for them.

Personalization is also an effective strategy for increasing interest in and acceptance of products made from circular materials. For example, Spelta Milano, a shoe brand, minimizes waste by personalizing ballet flats using otherwise discarded leather.

(Franke et al., 2010; Kaiser et al., 2017)

COMMUNICATING HERITAGE

Alpine textile heritage includes also traditional items who are still produced in the same way as in the past – what the marketing literature calls 'survivals'. Some companies keep such heritage-sensitive products alive and, with their communications, emphasize their authenticity and historic roots. Some examples:

Lodenwalker is an Austrian company founded in 1434 (the oldest loden mill in the world) which produces blankets and clothing 100% made in the Austrian region of Styria. They use 100% new wool that comes from live animals and is obtained by shearing. Flagship product is the Loden, often used for traditional costumes in Styria.

Les Tricots Marcel is a French company based in Roanne that produces the iconic Marcel Tank Top. The story of these tank tops goes back to Marcel Eisenberg, a hat maker from Roanne, was the first to mass-produce the tank top to protect dockworkers from the cold. In 1980, the Marcel tank top entered the dictionary, and in 2019, the whole production moved back to Roanne, "*which bears the DNA of heritage and textile excellence*", where the tank tops are produced 100% locally.
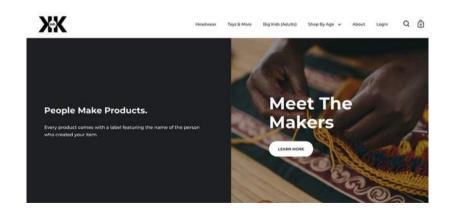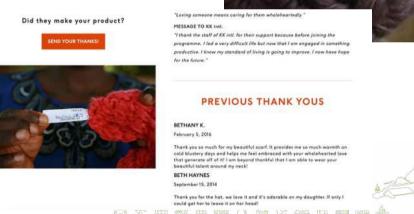

LES TRICOTS
MARCEL

ROANNE

COMMUNICATING HANDMADE PRODUCTION

Consumers often lack knowledge about the production processes and the people involved in creating the products they buy and use. However, they are frequently curious to learn what happens behind the scenes and to know who is responsible for crafting or delivering these products. Storytelling is one powerful tool companies can use to communicate value and showcase the "human face" of their brand.

While videos and detailed narratives are commonly employed to evoke emotions and build attachment to a company, some businesses are opting for simpler methods. These include displaying photos of employees involved in the product's creation or delivery, or even just mentioning the employee's name.

Krochet Kids International sells products that are always signed by the person who made it. On the website, you can click on "Meet the Makers" to get a picture, profile, and some more information on the person who made the product. Customers can also leave thank you notes on that site.

COMMUNICATING LOCAL FIBERS AND A PAN-ALPINE VALUE CHAIN

A collaboration between Maison de la Transhumance, Naturfasern Michael Dal Grande, and a collective of transhumant shepherds, La Routo was launched to valorize Merino d'Arles wool. The project was made possible by the founding in 2018 of CPMA (Collectif pour la Promotion du Mérinos d'Arles, which brought together 25 shepherds resulting in the collection in 2020 of 100 tonnes of wool and the structuring of a pan-Alpine value chain. After shearing and sorting in Valensole (FR), greasy wool travels to Biella (Italy) for washing, carding, spinning and, for fine-skin garments, blending with Falkland merino wool. Finished products (sweaters, jackets, T-shirts, leggings) are made across Biella, Troyes (FR), and Baden-Württemberg (DE). Launched in 2022, the brands positions this heritage fiber under «the finest merino in Europe», improving shepherd income by granting them better prices for wool, and ensuring regional sustainability with a Franco-Italian-German supply chain.
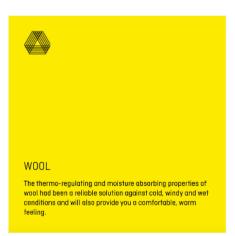
COMMUNICATING LOCAL FIBERS

The Alps have a strong textile heritage centered on wool, flax, hemp, and silk, but industrialization and globalization have led to a decline in locally produced fibers in favor of imports. To counter this, initiatives are working to revive local fiber production, and brands prioritizing local fibers communicate them to consumers.
Some examples:

WOOL

The thermo-regulating and moisture absorbing properties of wool had been a reliable solution against cold, windy and wet conditions and will also provide you a comfortable, warm feeling.

On its website, Salewa highlights hemp's key characteristics (natural, breathable, strong, and thermo-regulating) that make it an ideal fiber for outdoor activities. While hemp cultivation has a long history in the Alpine region but has largely disappeared, Salewa is committed to supporting its revival in the area

MESSAGE-DRIVEN APPROACHES: TOOLS FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION

Message-driven communication is not only about promotional storytelling: it can be a powerful instrument to transfer valuable competences to consumers. With the globalization of textile value chains, consumers have lost important skills that were once quite diffused (think of sewing or knitting). Educational approaches can empower individuals to take an active role in shaping more sustainable and culturally aware consumption practices.

Educating for circularity and heritage. Through labels, websites, packaging, events, or social media content, it is possible to:
- Teach consumers how to extend product life (through care, repair, reuse, or repurposing), thus contributing to circular economy goals.
- Help consumers recognize differences between artisanal and industrial products, fostering a deeper appreciation for skill, time, and provenance;
- Raise awareness about textile heritage, safeguarded techniques, and the cultural and environmental value of materials and processes.

By shifting communication from short-term promotion to consumer education, message-driven strategies can contribute to a culture of care and responsibility towards material goods; skill transmission across generations (e.g., mending, fiber knowledge); and strengthened connections between people, products, and places.

EDUCATING CONSUMERS:
Taking care of products

Products made with passion also need special care in order to maintain their characteristics and extend their life. Companies engaged in helping consumers to take care of their products

Guide and tips by Rifò

How to Wash and Care for Wool and Cashmere Sweaters? Six Practical Tips

Instructions and Tips by Vaude

Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 | Step 4 | Step 5

Observe care label

For the washing process, 30 °C in the gentle wash cycle applies to this product.

On the smaller label are the symbols for the Nikwax functional detergent. We recommend Nikwax TX-Direct Spray for possible re-waterproofing.

Expert Tip

Our eco-friendly, water repellent Eco Finish does away with harmful fluorocarbons, but not without proper care.

Guide by Gaia Segattini

COME SI RIPONGONO I CAPI

EDUCATING CONSUMERS
The importance of repairing

Repairing is one of the key pillars of circular economy, because it allows to extend the life of products instead of trowing them away. While some consumers grouped together in the Right to Repair Movement, many other consumers still underestimate the importance of repairing or do not know how to take care of their products.
Here some examples of communications and offers by companies encouraging repairing:

Example of instructions for repairing a loose Velcro. On Vaude's YouTube channel, they also present video for repairing items (see here for example)

Vaude also offers a repair service

Rifò has some videos on how to repair their garments from common issues

Picture offers a lifetime repair warranty and has 14 repair centres around the world. Customers can request the repairing service simply by filling out a form

EDUCATING CONSUMERS
Workshops to transfer skills

Examples of workshops to engage consumers. Rifò organized a workshop on creative mending.

Laines d'Ici organizes various workshops to teach consumers how to use wool. Some workshops are dedicated to kids. Vaude presented a workshop on upcycling.

EDUCATING CUSTOMERS
Recognizing authentic products

Some consumers lack the skills to assess the quality and authenticity of heritage-sensitive products. Guidance becomes essential to help distinguish between genuine artisanal products and mass-produced ones. A telling example is Friulane shoes: originally handcrafted in the Friuli region (IT), later embraced by Venetian and Milanese aristocracy. Their rise as a fashion trend in the early 2020s led to a flood of imitations, threatening the survival of traditional hand-craftmanship. Traditional Friulane are handmade using recycled or repurposed materials (e.. fabric offcuts, bicycle tires, and jute sacks for coffee beans). Producers like [Creazioni Fratta](#) and [Telerie Spadari](#) have responded with educational content to inform consumers about the materials, construction techniques, and visual markers that distinguish the original shoes.

Vuoi un consiglio per scoprire se è una Friulana originale o no?

Tira leggermente la suola con il pollice: se vedi una cucitura che unisce la suola alla tomaia, sei di fronte a una vera Friulana!

Translation: Do you want a tip to find out if it's an original Friulana or not?
Slightly pull the sole with your thumb: if you see a seam joining the sole to the upper, you are in front of a real Friulana!

Rinforzo tallone
solo **cucite**

Sottopiede
solamente **cucito**

37

La suola è solamente **cucita** all'intersuola, non incollata. Per questo è così confortevole

Cucitura tra intersuola e tomaia realizzata a **mano**

EDUCATING CUSTOMERS
Raising awareness on local textile heritage

The **coperta poschiavina** is a traditional blanket from the Poschiavo Valley, located in the canton of Graubünden, Switzerland.
Typically owned by local families, it is characterized by alternating wide and narrow stripes with a herringbone pattern. The colours and weave of the blanket have been passed down through generations, making it a valuable testament to Alpine textile craftsmanship.
Traditionally, the blanket was woven at home as part of the dowry for future brides, but the tradition and the awareness on this old tradition risked to disappear.

A noteworthy initiative by the **Musei Valposchiavo** : They asked families of the valley to bring their own blanket to the museum in order to classify, and document the diverse blankets from the valley.
This initiative, not only helps preserving the different pattern, but also raises awareness on an important local tradition.

FAI RIVIVERE LA STORIA DELLA **COPERTA POSCHIAVINA**

PORTA LA TUA **COPERTA DI FAMIGLIA** ALLA FESTA DE LO PAN NER

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMERS APPROACHES: CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding enables individuals and small businesses to secure funding for new projects through the participation of small investors—typically regular consumers—who contribute modest amounts of money. These investors often receive returns, which can be financial or intangible, such as enhanced social status, esteem, or a sense of identification with the project.

The key advantages of crowdfunding include:
- Low Risk for Investors: Minimal financial commitment reduces exposure to significant loss.
- Emotional Engagement: Investors experience a sense of fulfilment and connection with the project.
- Co-Creation of Value: Collaboration between investors and creators fosters a shared sense of ownership.
- Access to Capital: Crowdfunding helps small businesses overcome traditional investment barriers.

Sustainable projects, in particular, tend to attract more investors, as demonstrated by the success of Gaia Segattini Knotwear and Giesswein crowfunding campaigns.

(Ordanini et al. 2011; Ranjan and Read, 2016; Calic and Mosakowski, 2016)
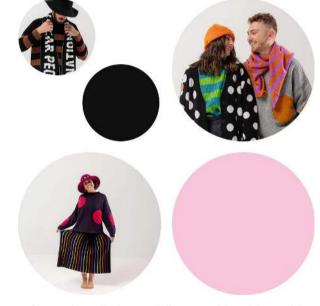
GAIA SEGATTINI KNOTWEAR: CROWDFUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE KNITWEAR

Founded in 2019 by designer Gaia Segattini in collaboration with a local manufacturer in the Marche region (Italy), the brand focuses on sustainable, zero-waste knitwear, using surplus or regenerated yarns, produced within a 70 km radius to ensure traceability and quality.

In April 2022, the company became a benefit corporation, thus reinforcing its social and environmental mission. One year after, an equity crowdfunding campaign was launched, which attracted around 200 new investors, successfully raising approximately €197,000 which enabled to accelerate growth and expand its community-based business model.

Source: https://gaiasegattiniknotwear.it/en-gb/pages/about

(Video for the Crowdfunding campaign launch available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dySKczjq14).

GIESSWEIN: REVITALIZING A FAMILY BUSINESS THROUGH CROWDFUNDING

Giesswein, a family-owned company based in Tyrol (Austria), was traditionally known for its felted slippers, loden, and wool cardigan. Under the leadership of the third generation – Markus and Johannes Giesswein – the company expanded into athletic and lifestyle footwear.

In 2017, they launched the Merino Runners, a wool sneakers that departed radically from their previous products. The launch was made possible by a crowdfunding campaign on the Kickstarter platform, which reached full funding in just 26 minutes; sold shoes at an average price of €130, despite only prototypes and limited information being available; attracted 5,758 backers, raising €740,890.

Traditional investors or retailers had shown limited interest in the project. Without crowdfunding, the product would not have been launched. Following this success, Giesswein has continued to grow and internationalize, expanding its team and revenues. While the wool is sourced from Australian merino sheep, the project demonstrates how crowdfunding can empower innovation in heritage-based textile companies.

See: https://etailment.de/news/stories/Giesswein-Crowdfunding-Sneaker-22550
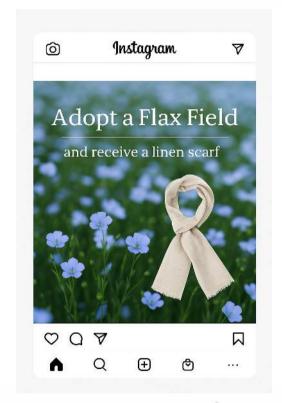
DIRECT-TO-CONSUMERS APPROACHES (II): ADOPT AN ANIMAL OR ADOPT A FIELD

Many organizations, both profit and non-profit, are adopting marketing models that invite consumers to symbolically "adopt" animals (e.g., cows, sheep, wild species), plants (e.g., olive trees, orange groves, vineyards) or material elements (e.g., routes, farms, gardens). In return, consumers typically receive a mix of benefits such as:

- Tangible products (e.g., cheese, honey, olive oil);
- Regular updates (photos, videos, newsletters);
- Access to visits or experiences (e.g., harvest days);
- Certificates, name plaques, or even naming rights.

This approach can be effectively extended to the textile sector. For example, farmers and artisan could offer the opportunity to adopt sheep or flax fields, providing in return artisanal wool or linen products, while building stronger consumer connection through storytelling.

Instagram post created with Dall-E.

CONCLUSIONS

This deliverable has examined how to effectively communicate value to consumers in the case of circular, heritage-based products from cross-border value chains. The analysis, which builds on the analysis of relevant academic literature as well as selected case studies, has highlighted a series of insights for farmers and producers within the Alpine textile ecosystem.

1. Marketing communication is key to making circularity Visible and Understandable to consumers
Circularity, like sustainability more in general, often operate behind the scene (e.g., local sourcing, use of by-products, reduced waste, low impact processing, extended product life). Consumers need accessible narratives to understand and appreciate these efforts. Communication strategies, especially those rooted in storytelling, emotional appeal, and educational content, can translate complex sustainability attributes into clear, desirable product value.

2. Heritage is a market differentiator – but it must be narrated
Cultural heritage, whether embedded in raw materials, techniques, or know-how, constitutes a strategic asset. Yet, its value is not self-evident: it must be carefully communicated and rendered relevant to contemporary consumers. Message-driven approaches, such as narrative labels or "adopt-an-animal" models—can humanize production and build long-term affective bonds.

3. Cross-border value chains must be framed around shared values
Textile value chains often cross national borders. Rather than dilute product or producer identity, cross-border collaboration can be positioned as a strength – anchoring products in a broader territorial narrative, while reinforcing themes of mutual cultural heritage, regional resilience, and shared ecological responsibility. With their evoking image, the Alps can lend themselves to resonant narrations in this respect.

4. Message-driven approaches complement certifications

While certifications play an important role in signalling quality and compliance with standards, message-driven approaches can offer flexibility and emotional depth. When rooted in actual practice and supported by storytelling, they can strengthen perceived value and consumer trust – especially for small producers with limited resources.

5. Consumer education enhances sustainability and heritage-safeguarding outcomes

Beyond short-term promotional goals, educating consumers to recognize the social, cultural and environmental value of products is not just a marketing tactic. Communication can be used to improve consumer skills in various areas, including caring for products and recognizing artisanal quality. Informed consumers are more likely to support heritage or environmentally friendly products and extend product lifespans.

6. Innovative communication tools expand market access and engagement

Model such as crowdfunding or the symbolic adoption of animal or plants demonstrate how communication strategies can go beyond promotion to actively involve consumers in the value chain. These tools can foster trust, co-creation of value, and pre-commitment – which are especially critical for small producers, artisans, and niche brands.

7. Storytelling empowers small producers in competitive markets

In a context where large corporations often dominate the market through volume and marketing budgets, smaller-scale Alpine tetile producers can compete by differentiating themselves. Anchoring storytelling in place, craft, and care, and distributing key messages across targeted digital and physical touchpoints, offers a path to both heritage safeguarding and market success.

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APPENDIX: EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS
The value of Alpine origin (I)

EXPLORATORY SURVEY

SAMPLE: 304 participants (52.5% female; M_{age}= 46.9)

PROCEDURE: participants were exposed to 3 products (out of a list of 10 products) from different regions of the world, which differ in terms of harshness (e.g. rocky mountains, volcanic soil, extreme temperatures, etc.). Such list of products included alpine wool. For each product, participants were asked to indicate how the environment was perceived, and how the core characteristics of the product were perceived. Specifically, for the alpine wool we asked participants to rate how they perceived as warm, breathable, comfortable, durable, functional.

MAIN RESULTS: our analysis demonstrates that the more the environment in which raw materials grow, the stronger are the core attribute of a product (b = .063, t = 5.703, p <.001). Despite the effect is limited (but statistically significant), we found preliminary evidence of the 'heuristic of efforts' elicited by the place of origin of a product.

*** this study and results are part of a larger academic project conducted by Marta Pizzetti, Verena Gruber and Mia Birau***

CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS
The value of Alpine origin (II)

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

AIM: harsh environments influence perceptions related to products, strengthening its core attributes

DESIGN: single factor (environment: mild vs. harsh vs. control) between-subjects design

SAMPLE: 300 participants (37% female; M_{age} = 33.03) from the Italian panel of Prolific Academic

PROCEDURES: participants were exposed to a wool blanket that they were shopping for keeping themselves warm. The product was described as coming from a harsh environment (*vs. mild environment*), which was a rugged, rocky terrain and harsh weather conditions (*vs. fertile soil and abundant vegetation*). In the control group conditions, no information about the environment was provided. The harsh environment was meant at representing the Alpine region.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES:
- Core product attributes, items on 7-point Likert scales ad hoc created
- Gentleness-related and strength-related attributes from Luchs et al. (2010)
- Product attractiveness from Fuchs et al. (2015)
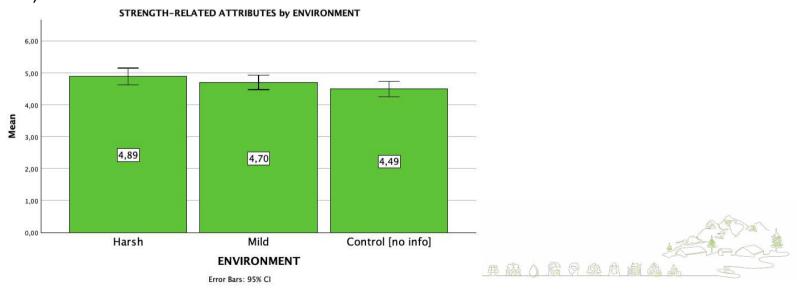- Perceived time and effort from Ziano et al. (2023)

CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS
The value of Alpine origin (II)

MAIN RESULTS (I)

Our findings indicate that communicating that the place of origin of raw materials is a harsh environment, emphasizes the **consumer perception of strength-related attributes**. However, this is especially true in comparison to a product which raw ingredient place of origin is not communicated ($p < .05$). Conversely, also an abundant and fertile environment (i.e. mild environment) enhances the perception of strenght-related attributes ($p > .05$).
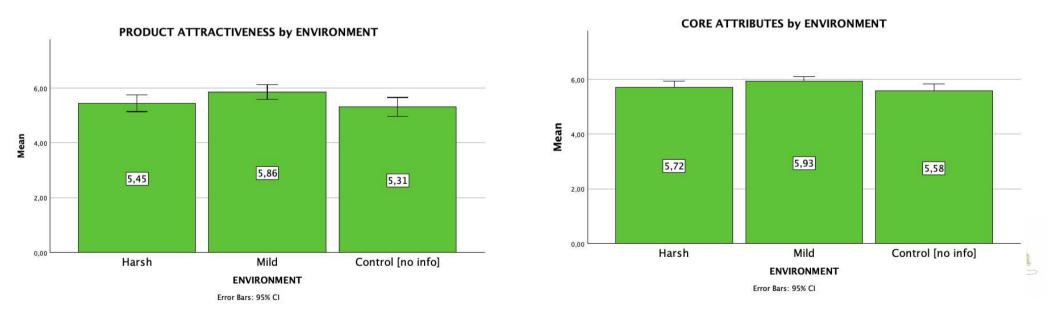

STRENGTH–RELATED ATTRIBUTES by ENVIRONMENT

Harsh: 4,89 Mild: 4,70 Control [no info]: 4,49

Error Bars: 95% CI

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CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS
The value of Alpine origin (II)

MAIN RESULTS (II)

We also found that harsh environment communication might be counterproductive in attracting consumers. Despite the difference with the harsh environment is limited (p =.06), wool coming from mild environment is significantly more **attractive** than the control group product (p <.05). Similar results were found about the **core attributes**, which perceptions were maximized by the mild environment.

PRODUCT ATTRACTIVENESS by ENVIRONMENT

Harsh: 5,45 | Mild: 5,86 | Control [no info]: 5,31

Error Bars: 95% CI

CORE ATTRIBUTES by ENVIRONMENT

Harsh: 5,72 | Mild: 5,93 | Control [no info]: 5,58

Error Bars: 95% CI

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