

The Future Fashion Factory's Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge

Powered by



1: Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge

The Challenge

It is claimed that the global fashion industry is responsible for 2.1 billion metric tonnes of greenhouse gases (GHG) annually. It is claimed that the industry also produces 20% of the world's wastewater. Similarly, it is claimed that the global fashion industry produces one fifth of the world's plastic, much of which ends up in landfill due to 'fast fashion' business models that discourage repair, reuse, and recycling of clothes. The UK alone generates c.300,000 tonnes of textile landfill and incineration waste per annum, which equates to £140 million worth of garments dumped every single year.

Fast fashion not only generates environmental issues. It can exacerbate global inequalities as it relies on unregulated labour in the Global South, often with poor working conditions, to produce mass quantities of garments. At the garment's end of life, vast quantities of textile waste are shipped back to the Global South to be dumped in colossal landfills.

As the industry wrestles with its damaging environmental and social impact, consumers have an increasingly important role to play through scrutinising how brands operate and applying pressure to develop more robust sustainability credentials. But if fashion consumers are to be change-makers, they must be equipped with knowledge of how the choices they make affect the planet – and how they can reduce their fashion footprint.

The Opportunity

The Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge from Future Fashion Factory – in association with the Applied Games Lab – is an ambitious competition to harness the awesome potential of game design and game technologies to innovate novel solutions to a global societal challenge: empowering fashion consumers to encourage the fashion and textile industries to develop more robust sustainability practices and credentials.

We believe applying game design techniques, tools and technologies to real-world problems and societal challenges can make the world a better place. Game design and technologies are transforming the world. Games are the sandbox for our near future. Game experiences and technologies are powering Web3 and its Metaverses. Game technologies provide synthetic environments for improving health and wellbeing, reducing environmental impact, boosting productivity and empowering radical innovation. And game design techniques not only entertain us but motivate us to be happier, healthier and more productive by playfully designing meaningful incentives into non-game experiences.

The IFSF Challenge will give participants the funding opportunities and unique insights required to enter a new, exciting and still digitally under-explored sector and market. Combining these insights with their game design and technologist superpowers will empower them to unlock significant new commercial opportunities. The global fashion industry is worth up to \$2.5 trillion annually. And the move towards more sustainable fashion practices is widespread and growing: digital fashion alone is forecast to grow nearly 96% annually from a \$120 million base in 2021.

Perhaps more importantly, successful participants will innovate novel solutions that help solve a global societal challenge by increasing understanding and awareness, driving positive behavioural change and enabling the widespread adoption of sustainable practices in the fashion and textile industries that are kinder to our planet and our future.

The competition is open to gamemakers and media enterprises across the UK. Up to 10 applicants will be selected to participate in the Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Lab. These participants will receive £5K to develop concepts over two weeks. After pitching, four teams will be selected and will receive £25K investment to prove their concept in an eight week prototyping phase. So, if you also believe game design and technologies can transform the world – and want to prove it – apply to win the Future Fashion Factory's Interactive Futures £30K Sustainable Fashion Challenge today!

The Offer

The Interactive Futures for Sustainable Fashion Challenge has two core elements:

1. Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Lab

a. Sustainable Fashion Workshop

Up to **10** shortlisted participants will be funded to attend this one-day upskilling workshop led by Future Fashion Factory. Participants will gain unique and actionable insights into the workings of the global fashion supply chain – a complex ecosystem with a significant impact on both planet and people – and be empowered to understand why sustainable development that creates viable circular economies is now the top priority for industry.

b. Interactive Futures Catalyser

During this one-day event participants will work with innovation experts to frame and develop initial concepts. These concepts will be articulated in a Lightning Pitch to the Challenge Investment Panel (CIP) – featuring experts from Future Fashion Factory, the fashion and textile industries and the Applied Games Lab. The panel will provide rapid and actionable feedback. Participants will then have **10** working days to respond, developing a full pitch to win a place in the Interactive Futures for Sustainable Fashion Incubator.

- **Scheduling** – IFSF Lab takes place in February 2024
- **Duration** – complete IFSF Lab process runs for **12** working days:
 - 1 day for the Workshop
 - 1 day for the Catalyser
 - 10 days for Pitch Development
- **Funding** – Shortlisted participants receive **£5,000** per team for their participation.

2. Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Incubator

Up to **four** winners receive a **£25,000** investment each to participate in the IFSF Incubator. This is an **eight-week** programme where participants develop their concepts into compelling prototypes. The focus will be on getting from the ‘big idea’ to something that proves the concept which can be meaningfully interacted with. These will be pitched to the CIP before being showcased to industry leaders in **June 2024**. Incubator participants will be supported throughout the process by the Applied Games Lab and Future Fashion Factory.

IFSF Challenge participants will benefit from:

- **Insights** into how fashion and textile supply chains operate, understanding the complex and interdependent global systems

- **Access** to scientifically validated data that enables 'real life' interactive scenario simulations
- **Connectivity** with academic expertise in sustainable fashion, circular economies, carbon accounting and other the causes of environmental impacts
- **Connectivity** with the Future Fashion Factory [industrial ecosystem](#) that includes companies throughout the fashion and textile supply chain (from manufacturer to retail to end-of-life) and micro-SMEs through to global multi-nationals
- **IP development**/co-development and commercial opportunities.

Future Fashion Factory has extensive connections to fashion designers, manufacturers and brands. This provides potential follow-on commercial connections and opportunities for successful participants. In addition, Incubator participants will be eligible to become members of the UKRI circular fashion and textile programme 'Network Plus' ecosystem which brings further opportunities for follow-on funding and investment.

2: Challenge Mission

Fashion and textiles are all around us. But not everyone understands where the clothes on our back come from, what they are made of, or how items of clothing transition from raw materials to being ready-to-wear garments in our shops and online stores. About 300,000 tonnes of fashion and textile waste is incinerated or landfilled every year in the UK – even though the majority is recyclable. The fashion industry is in the news for all the wrong reasons, including dependency on non-renewable resources, environmental pollution (including up to 8% of global carbon emissions), use of microplastics, poor working conditions, large amounts of waste and high use of water and fossil-derived energy. We urgently need to explain why this is happening, and crucially, what everyone can do to change this in a compelling, accurate and readily accessible way.

The mission of the Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge is to help improve society's general understanding of the fashion and textile sector. To explain how everyday choices people make about what they wear impact our planet. And crucially, to explore new options, solutions and scenarios that inform and improve that decision-making, making a transformative difference to how the fashion sector operates.

Mission Objectives are to:

- **Promote understanding** – highlight the impacts of consumer fashion choices on the planet and people
- **Increase engagement** – leverage game design and technologies to bring consumer scenarios and choices to life in novel, compelling and playful ways
- **Encourage behaviour change** – provide options to explore more (or less) sustainable decision-paths and understand their consequences
- **Transform industry** – explore and promote next generation fashion supply chain structures and methods of operation.

3: Challenge Objectives

The Interactive Futures for Sustainable Fashion Challenge will empower **all** participants to:

- Develop and deepen their understanding of the global fashion and textile ecosystem and its urgent need to become more sustainable
- Empower the application of their transferable, game-based superpowers to new challenges and opportunities in other sectors
- Develop and practice new innovation competencies and capacities
- Enhance strategic communication and investment pitching competencies in a competitive environment.

The Interactive Futures for Sustainable Fashion Challenge will empower the **four incubated** participants to:

- Design, develop and validate their concepts, evolving them into prototypes with feedback and support from fashion, innovation and applied games experts
- Enhance development competencies, capacities and way-of-working in a funded, time-boxed environment
- Further develop and practice new innovation competencies and capacities around the application of game design and technologies
- Further develop and practice strategic communication and investment pitching competencies in a competitive environment
- Showcase outputs and outcomes to industry leaders and potential investors.

4: Challenge Outputs

The Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge is a four phase process. Each phase has its own deliverables. It is expected that from Phase 2 onwards, all deliverables will be useful and meaningful to the fashion and textile sector.

Phase 1 – Application

- **IFSF Expression of Interest**
 - A lightweight application form and high-level pitch deck. This will be judged by the Challenge Investment Panel, who will select **10** winners to receive investment and participate in Phase 2.

Phase 2 – IFSF Lab

- **Lightning Pitch**
 - Articulation of an initial creative concept developed as a creative response to learning from the Upskilling Workshop. This will receive actionable feedback from the Challenge Investment Panel.
- **Full Concept Pitches**
 - Persuasive articulation of the full concept developed after feedback over a timeboxed period. This will be judged by the Challenge Investment Panel who will select **four** winners to receive investment to participate in Phase 3.

Phase 3 – IFSF Incubator

- **Project Management Assets**
 - These may include (but are not limited to) a project canvas, working agreement, development roadmap and risk log.
- **Prototype**
 - This will be a tangible evolution of pitched concepts that can be interacted with. It should compellingly prove the concept and demonstrate its potential to the Braintrust and relevant stakeholders. Prototypes should provide the foundation for possible commercial exploration, follow-on investment or future funding applications.

- NB – there may be additional interim milestones and deliverables in the form of iterative builds agreed during the planning of Phase 3.
- **Final Pitch**
 - A pitch and demonstration of prototypes to the Challenge Investment Panel.
- **Retrospective**
 - A fastrack retrospective to assess outputs and capture learning.

Phase 4 – Demo Days

- **Enhancement**
 - There is an expectation that further polishing and refinement work will be carried out after the Incubator concludes in preparation for formal demonstration and dissemination to the wider fashion and textile sector. The exact form of this engagement activity will be determined nearer the date.

The strategic expectation is that these prototypes will progress to commercial exploration, follow-on investment or future funding by leveraging known interest from across the Future Fashion Factory network.

5: What Makes a Challenge Respondent?

We're looking for superstar, high-performing game designers, gamemakers and interactive/immersive content creators with advanced, relevant core competencies. We welcome all creators with a credible track record, a genuine passion for communication and the vision to respond to our global challenge and make a real difference. We are seeking creative problem-solvers with experience of developing fun and interactive environments that can be easily explored in accessible formats. We welcome everyone from the smallest micro to the largest multinational, plus from adjacent media entertainment sectors that have the required core competencies and superpowers.

Desirable superpowers include:

- Adaptability
- Agility
- Ambition
- Collaboration

- Communication
- Creativity
- Interdisciplinary – ability to work across domains and specialisms
- Curiosity
- A Designer’s Mindset
- Flexibility
- Professionalism
- Project Management
- Resilience
- Storytelling
- Strategic Design and Planning
- Technical Competencies
- Translation – ability to synthesise complexity into simplicity.

6: Eligibility

The Interactive Futures for Sustainable Fashion Challenge is open to:

- Sole traders and companies of all sizes from across the **United Kingdom**. Organisations must be registered with a main place of business and/or operational activity in the UK.
- Future Fashion Factory welcomes applicants from across the videogames and immersive content sectors plus adjacent media industries.
- All applicants need to prove eligibility, capacity and demonstrate their track record as requested. Applicants will be judged against evidence of the desirable superpowers (see Section 5) throughout the application process.
- Applicants must be available to participate in all required workshops, labs, briefings and meetings, plus other challenge related events detailed in the Timeline below or scheduled as the Challenge progresses.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Leeds is committed to being a diverse, supportive and inclusive place to work and this Challenge Call is fully aligned with these core values. Further information can be found [here](#).

7: Timeline and How to Apply

Phase 1 - Application

- Deadline for applications: **17:00 Wednesday 31st January 2024**

Phase 2 - IFSF Lab

- Shortlisted applicants will be notified by **Wednesday 7th February 2024**. Up to **10** winning teams will be invited to participate in Phase 2. Each receives **£5,000**.
- The Sustainable Fashion Workshop requires between **2-5** participants from each winning team. It will run **Thursday 15th February 2024**.
- The Interactive Futures Catalyser requires between **2-5** participants from each winning team. It will run **Friday 16th February 2024**.
- Following the Lightning Pitches the Challenge Investment Panel will provide actionable feedback to each team. All teams will receive the feedback by **Wednesday 21st February 2024**.
 - **Revised: Wednesday 21st February 2024**
- Teams will develop their Full Concept Pitch within a **two-week** timebox. This will run **Monday 26th February to Friday 8th March 2024 inclusive**.
- Pitches will be delivered on **Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th March 2024**.
- The Challenge Braintrust will judge the Full Concept Pitches. The successful teams will be notified by **15:00 Friday 15th March 2024**. Up to **4** winning teams will be invited to participate in Phase 3. Office Hours will be offered for unsuccessful teams.

Phase 3 – IFSF Incubator

- Each of the **4** winning teams will be awarded **£25,000** for the duration of Phase 3.
- Activity begins **Monday 11th March 2024** and runs for **eight weeks** until **6th May 2024**.
 - **Revised: Tuesday 2 April – Tuesday 28th May 2024**
 - Pitches and demonstrations to the Challenge Investment Panel will be held **w/c 3rd June 2024**.
- Throughout Phase 3 each team will be supported by the Applied Games Lab, Future Fashion Factory and experts from our wider network.
- There will be inception activities held at the beginning of Phase 3 that will output specific project management deliverables.

Phase 4 – Demo Days

- Incubator outputs and insights are demonstrated and disseminated to the fashion and textile industry at curated Demo Days (tbc).

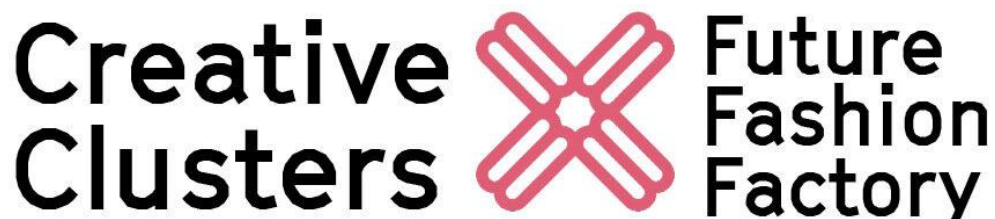
These events will occur in mid-late **June 2024**

8: About the Challenge Sponsor – Future Fashion Factory

The Interactive Futures Sustainable Fashion Challenge is funded by the Future Fashion Factory (FFF). We are positioned within the Leeds Institute of Textiles and Colour and act as the gateway to all things textiles, colour and fashion within the University of Leeds.

FFF is a 5-year, £6.1m industry-led project supporting innovation in the fashion and textile industry. It is part of the [Creative Industries Clusters Programme](#), an £80 million initiative led by the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) (AHRC) as part of the [Industrial Strategy](#). The Programme is led by the University of Leeds in partnership with the University of Huddersfield and the Royal College of Art.

Future Fashion Factory is a central pillar of the Leeds Institute of Textiles and Colour (LITAC), which is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary University of Leeds research institute addressing global challenges in fashion, textiles and colour through research and innovation, as well as teaching.



9: About The Applied Games Lab

The Applied Games Lab (AGL) is a pop-up innovation catalyser. Our core purpose is to solve wicked problems and drive positive societal change by harnessing the awesome innovation

potential of videogames. AGL works with any sector to deliver transformational change. Using our proven innovation processes we empower talented people to apply their game making superpowers to a wide range of challenges and innovation opportunities.

The Applied Games Lab is a spin-out initiative from InGAME, the UK's dedicated centre for research and innovation in games and media enterprise. Funded by the UK government as part of the Creative Clusters Programme, an £80 million initiative led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of the Industrial Strategy, InGAME is embedded at the heart of Dundee vibrant games cluster. In its five year lifecycle, InGAME has generated nearly £86M in GVA for Scotland and delivered a 16X return on every public pound invested, according to an [independent impact report](#).

11: FAQs

- **How and where do I apply?**
 - Applicants should request their Phase 1 Expression of Interest application via the Future Fashion Factory email address contact@futurefashionfactory.org This is a short application outlining how you plan to respond to this challenge and providing information on the applicant, relevant experience and skills present within the development team.
 - Completed applications need to be submitted, via the Future Fashion Factory email address, not later than **17:00 on Wednesday 31st January 2024**.
- **What is interactive data-based content?**
 - The Future Fashion Factory requires applicants to build into their concepts existing scientifically validated data on the environmental impact of fashion and textile supply chains. This data will be explained and presented during Phase 2 workshop and briefing events.
 - Concepts should allow users to explore this data to better understand the impact of their fashion choices on the planet. Ideally this would lead to an understanding of different scenarios and consequences.
 - Methods of incentivising 'good' environmentally positive decisions, or punishing 'bad' environmentally negative decisions, would be welcome.

- **What is the on-demand R&D expertise and support available during the Incubator?**
 - The Applied Games Lab team will provide strategic, production and operational support and guidance to participants through check-ins, office hours and asynchronous assets. It will also identify and broker support from its wider academic and industrial network as necessary.
 - Future Fashion Factory will provide guidance, access to data sources, and sustainable fashion thinking / expertise support throughout Phase 2 and Phase 3 through agreed check-ins and tailored interventions.

- **Who owns the IP?**
 - Neither InGAME / The Applied Games Lab nor the Future Fashion Factory / University of Leeds will retain IP on prototypes developed.
 - Applicants and academic partners will retain their background IP – in the case of the University of Leeds this will include ownership of fashion and textile data sources as appropriate.
 - Challenge Responders and participants will retain:
 - All background IP (knowledge, networks, products, services, assets, tools, and data they bring to the project).
 - Foreground IP created during the project, including the right to commercialise.
 - Challenge Responders and participants are required to agree to a royalty-free exclusive license, of outputs completed under this funding for a fixed period of 24-months to the University of Leeds.
 - There is no obligation on either party to negotiate terms on joint development, production and/or future exploitation of Foreground IP.
 - Alternative IP arrangements may be considered where appropriate.

- **Is there a technical specification?**
 - No. We only ask that your IP utilises game design, game or game-adjacent technologies and/or immersive technologies that enable compelling and engaging interactive experiences.
 - By the beginning of Phase 3 we expect tech specs to be fixed for each prototype after discussion with AGL and FFF.

- **What can the funding be used for?**
 - The funding can only be used for costs which are directly connected to the development of your challenge response concept and/or prototype. You cannot fund general business running costs within this award.

- **When do we get paid?**
 - Successful Phase 1 teams will receive £5,000 investment for team members to take part in Phase 2. Funds will be awarded on completion of Phase 2, following Phase 2 Pitches.
 - Successful Phase 2 teams will receive £25,000 investment for them to develop their IP and create a working prototype or demonstrator. Funds will be released in agreed stages through March – May 2024 and matched to milestones and deliverables tailored to each individual project.
 - Payments will be processed by the University of Leeds and a due diligence process will be required to set funding recipients up on the University systems prior to payment.

- **Are the dates flexible?**
 - No, there is no flexibility possible. The Challenge must be fully complete by aforementioned deadlines.
 - Teams will need to commit to all events, dates and deadlines stated in the contract before receiving any payments.

- **I am a solo gamemaker, can I apply?**
 - Yes. We want this challenge to attract the most talented gamemakers and be as inclusive as possible. As long as you can demonstrate the core competencies, capacities and superpowers required in this document, we'd love you to apply. The only caveat is due to the conditions of our funding you must have legal status in the UK as an entity, but that can be anything from a sole trader to a multinational.

- **We're not 'officially' game developers. Can we apply?**
 - Yes! If you are from an adjacent media entertainment sector – eg software development, design and advertising, film and television, architecture, etc – that uses game design or technologies, you can apply if:
 - You can prove you have the relevant core competencies.
 - You can demonstrate a credible track record in relevant projects.

Contacts for further information:

Future Fashion Factory - for questions around fashion and textile context

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The Applied Games Lab – for game-related and technical questions

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