

Higher-Impact Projects (HIP) Definition and Criteria

Reaching 2030 targets requires adopting advanced solutions. To guide Aii's contributions to this fast-approaching goal, we have prioritized Higher-Impact Projects. These projects build on the foundational best practices of programs like Clean By Design and similarly require a collective effort between brands, suppliers, experts, and financial institutions to scale.

Our goal is to demonstrate that industry collaboration can drive Higher-Impact Projects forward. Our focus is industry replicability and scalability.

1. Definition

Higher-Impact Projects are higher-carbon impact projects in wet processing facilities that move beyond foundational energy efficiency and need incentives and support to take place.

We chose this definition to reflect Aii's focus on high-emitting parts of the supply chain, where technical, financial, or industry alignment barriers prevent decarbonization projects from moving forward.

This is not to say that other projects aren't good or cannot have a high impact; this definition helps us to prioritize our work as an organization.

2. Core Criteria

To complement this definition, we have a set of criteria that all higher-impact projects must meet:

A. Climate Impact	
GHG Reduction	Has clear, quantifiable GHG reductions of at least 1,500 tCO ₂ e/year and/or ≥5% of the facility's total emissions.
Energy Transition	Shifts the facility towards renewables and electrification, either by reducing thermal load in preparation for electrification or actually partially or fully electrifying a factory's thermal energy needs.

Facility profile	Facility demonstrates meaningful abatement potential (e.g., factories that have room for improvement in their benchmark).
B. Scalability & Replicability	
Technically replicable	• Applies to other facilities with similar processes and conditions. • Exhibits strong potential for wider adoption across wet processing facilities.
Cost effective	• Is financially viable with ROI / payback of ≤5 years (before any grants or concessional funding). • Offers a “bankable” structure so that banks and green finance partners can easily support the project.
Proven	Aii-reviewed pilots and case studies. Aii has confidence in the solution’s climate impact and lack of adverse consequences.
Implementable	Can be implemented either directly with the solution provider or with third-party support where necessary.
C. Innovation & Co-benefits	
<i>These criteria are not required for all projects, but will be tracked when applicable.</i>	
Technology leadership	Moves the industry forward in its modernization and long-term climate goals (electrification, automation, AI, etc.).
Worker & community benefits	Improves worker and community conditions (e.g., lowers working temperatures or reduces local air & water pollution).
Resource efficiency & circularity	Reduces waste or reuses water, chemistry, or fabric.
D. Governance & Transparency	
Delivery model	Aii helps create collaboration between suppliers, brands, technology providers, financiers, and other stakeholders.
Monitoring, reporting & verification	• Includes a robust system to track KPIs. • Aii conducts quality assurance to validate savings and impacts.

3. Categories of Higher Impact Projects

Higher-Impact Projects typically fall into one or more of the following categories

A. Advanced Energy Efficiency Tech Retrofits

Examples: stenter heat recovery, boiler upgrades, process optimization (first right time dyeing), steam delivery optimization

B. Renewable Heat & Electricity

Examples: solar thermal, electrification of thermal processes

C. Process Innovation/ Reducing Thermal Load

Examples: digital dyeing, waterless finishing, ozone bleaching, etc.

If you are interested in the practical application of Higher-Impact Projects, either for your brand or manufacturing facility, please get in touch: info@apparelimpact.org.