The Prince of Wales’ SMI Fashion Taskforce has announced that its members will immediately begin rolling out a Digital ID. This is a “transformational technology that uses data to inform customers of the sustainability credentials of their purchases and facilitate the delivery of circularity at scale”.

The move comes as part of the Taskforce’s commitment to accelerating the transition to a more sustainable future for the global fashion industry.

The Digital ID was unveiled at the British Embassy in Rome as part Prince Charles’ visit to the G20 gathering.

Giving products a Digital ID, “will allow key players in the fashion value chain — including manufacturers, brands, retailers, resellers and recyclers — to provide unprecedented transparency and traceability of the products they sell”, we’re told. “It will also unlock new circular services for customers, such as care and repair services, as well as ones focused on resale and recycling”.

The lifecycle tracing element of the Digital ID system also “aims to extend the longevity of products and enable brands to scale circular business models”.

Federico Marchetti and the Prince of Wales
The members have “committed to begin the Digital ID rollout process within their brands, along with the adoption of a circular data protocol with immediate effect”.

That should impact the products from a wide range of luxury names. The Taskforce includes a number of senior leaders, such as the CEOs of Mulberry, Chloé, Vestiaire Collective, Johnstons of Elgin, Burberry, Stella McCartney, Selfridges, Zalando and Brunello Cucinelli, among others.

And the Taskforce is also creating a permanent Steering Committee that will “work collaboratively to solve relevant challenges, and to openly share knowledge and best practices with regards to the Digital ID implementation”.

Former YNAP CEO Federico Marchetti, who’s also Chair of the Fashion Taskforce, said: “The time for only talk is over. In such a highly competitive industry it is unprecedented for so many different brands and platforms from all around the world to work together on a single innovative solution, and I am delighted to say this commitment is the result of an incredible group of companies and their leaders who recognise there is no time left to lose in transitioning the industry to a more transparent and sustainable footing. This Digital ID provides a genuine opportunity for consumers to make truly sustainable choices when they are making their purchases.”

And the Prince of Wales added that with the fashion industry being “one of the biggest polluters on the planet… we need to make clothing production much more sustainable. To do this correctly, we need cross-industry collaboration that goes beyond borders and brands”.

By Sandra Halliday