

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kering, Plug and Play launch joint venture to accelerate textile innovations

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The search is on for textile innovations; Create image courtesy of Kering

By STAFF REPORTS

France's Kering Group is aiming to fast-track sustainable innovations in the luxury and apparel industries by becoming a founding anchor partner of an ideas accelerator.

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Kering has come on board in support of the "Plug and Play - Fashion for Good" accelerator, a collaboration between Fashion for Good and the C&A Foundation. Plug and Play is a global innovation platform that supports and accelerates the development of startups in the retail and fashion sector.

Textile innovations

The partners for Plug and Play – Fashion for Good will work together to identify innovative startups and lend their support in terms of technologies, methodologies and business models.

Plug and Play – Fashion for Good's overall goal is to assist Kering and its brand stable to spark disruption innovations that will transform traditional luxury processes. Also, the innovations will further Kering's commitment to the widespread adoption of sustainable business practices.

In its first phase, Plug and Play – Fashion for Good has already named a short list of early-stage innovators. These startups have been invited to pitch their ideas, technologies and projects March 30 at the Fashion for Good Center in Amsterdam.



Collaborate. Image courtesy of Kering

From the presentations today, Kering and its partners will select 10 finalists who will be announced in early April. Once accepted into the accelerator program, the startups will participate in a three-month mentoring program.

Both Kering and Plug and Play will work with the startups by providing training, mentorship, networking opportunities and other valuable resources.

The Plug and Play – Fashion for Good accelerator will take a 360-degree approach to supply chain innovation, an important objective for Kering.

Supply chain innovation will concentrate on three areas: raw material sourcing; fabric and garment production and end of use. Priorities include improvements in the textile industry's water use, energy use, waste, chemical use and labor practices.

"The accelerator's launch follows our recent announcement of a three-pillar sustainability strategy ([see story](#)), including a focus on innovation via the Crate pillar," said Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability officer and head of international institutional affairs at Kering, in a statement.

"The future of luxury is dependent on innovation to help weave sustainability into every niche of our industry, from raw material sourcing and manufacturing processes to end of use," she said.

"Collaborations like the Plug and Play – Fashion for Good accelerator will allow the textile industry to move more rapidly toward finding essential solutions to the challenges we all face."



Care. Image courtesy of Kering

Plug and Play also works with French department store chain Galeries Lafayette.

Galeries Lafayette's startup incubator kicked off its first program in October 2016 with 10 startups it believes have the potential to change the fashion and retail industries.

The Lafayette Plug and Play innovation platform received more than 200 applications, with 55 percent from France and the rest representing other countries. With a rise in digital technology being used in retail, supporting these startups may help Galeries Lafayette innovate as well ([see story](#)).

"In Plug and Play's 10 years of investing in startups, we have helped more than 7,000 innovators build their dreams" said Saeed Amidi, founder and CEO of Plug and Play, in a statement.

"Now, we want to build our dream: a world of innovators committed to improving our global community and environment," he said. "It will be an honor and a pleasure to work with major luxury groups like Kering to help build

and grow that vision."

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