

# Introduction to THESIS for Suppliers

This document provides an overview of The Sustainability Consortium's THESIS assessments and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to support suppliers in preparing for THESIS and was created per THESIS retailer request. Resources and additional information are available at our [THESIS Support Center](#).

## THESIS

THESIS, or The Sustainability Insight System developed by TSC, is a set of performance assessments that equips retailers, manufacturers, and suppliers to benchmark, quantify, and act on critical sustainability issues within their consumer product supply chains.

*Note: THESIS licenses are purchased annually every August and allow you to share one year's data with your retail buyers.*

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

THESIS assessments deploy a set of science-based KPIs designed to identify environmental and social hotspots across the entirety of a product category global value chain. THESIS KPIs highlight improvement opportunities to help users achieve maximum sustainability impact. THESIS aligns with widely used certifications, standards and tools and is designed to support existing reporting efforts while offering deeper insight.

KPIs have 3 components:

- 1. KPI Question:** each KPI addresses a specific impact or issue that occurs during a specific activity, or set of activities, in the supply chain.
- 2. Response options for that KPI:** response options may be numeric calculation AND/OR qualitative text choices.
- 3. KPI Guidance:** detailed information for completing the KPI. Guidance for each KPI typically includes multiple sections:
  - a. Calculation and scope:** details about how to calculate the response, including what is included and/or excluded
  - b. Certifications, standards, and tools:** resources that are directly useful in completing the KPI
  - c. Background information:** context and useful information about addressing the key issues relevant to the KPI
  - d. Definitions:** descriptions for technical terms used in the KPI



## Scope of assessments

**Product Category:** THESIS assessments cover a large range of common products and require you to collect data from all your products within the product category.

**Global Production:** Assessments cover global production of your product(s) and are not tailored to specific regions, retailers, or buyers unless specified otherwise. The objective of using consistent indicators globally is to enable you to complete assessments once yearly and share the assessment results to multiple of your retailer buyers.

## Preparing for THESIS

Completing a KPI can involve going up the supply chain to collect data from multiple sites and multiple organizations, even those not under the operational control or ownership of the final manufacturer. **57% of THESIS KPIs** require you to collect data upstream into your supply chain in order to answer them.

### Organize your data collection, including:

- Identify all your products and which retail buyer they are sold to
- Identify a process for collecting data by determining any available tools or processes and what works within your organization.
- Create comprehensive facility and supplier lists, including contract manufacturing and all facilities not owned and those not under your operational control. Identify your contacts for data collection

### If you are new to THESIS:

- Understand scope of THESIS assessments
- Identify your timeline for each step
- Identify which teams or partners have access to the data you'll need
- What existing data collection processes can you utilize?

### If you are a returning THESIS user:

- How has your organization historically managed the THESIS assessment process? Who previously managed it?
- How have you previously collected data? Which teams have access to the data you'll need?
- What data collection gaps, pain points and bottlenecks did you face?
- What assessments were submitted previously? What were the results? What actions did you implement to improve?

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## Getting Started on THESIS on Sphera

### If you are new to THESIS:

1. Go to [THESIS](#) and create an account
2. Select your THESIS assessments
3. Select all your retailer buyer(s) on THESIS

**Important:** Ensure to select all your retailer buyer(s) on THESIS

4. Purchase your THESIS annual license

5. Complete your Assessments:

- a. THESIS Start
- b. Product Category Assessments
- c. THESIS Wrap-Up

### If you are a returning THESIS user:

1. Log into your company's [THESIS account](#) (do not create a new one)
2. Click Renew after logging in\*
3. Review your selected assessments and buyers. Make changes as needed.
4. Complete payment to renew your THESIS license
5. Go to your Dashboard and click on an assessment to open it.
6. Complete your Assessments:
  - a. THESIS Start
  - b. Product Category assessments
  - c. THESIS Wrap-Up

\* Important! If you can only view your previous assessments on your Dashboard, you must click "THESIS" on the left-side menu, then select "Renew" to get started.

## Scope of assessments

THESIS has 3 types of KPIs that are defined by the types of data you will need to collect in order to answer them.

Category KPIs	Facility KPIs	Supply chain KPIs
<p>Require data collection from all your products within that product category.</p> <p>For numerical data (e.g., “Recycled content”), you will need to calculate a weighted average of that category of products with the scope of the KPI.</p>	<p>Require you to collect data from each facility responsible for final manufacturing of products within the category.</p> <p>Note that this may include contract manufacturers who provide such operations.</p>	<p>Require you to collect data from relevant suppliers (direct or indirect) within the category.</p>
Example KPIs include:	Example KPIs include:	Example KPIs include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product Design</li> <li>• Product safety</li> <li>• Recycled content</li> <li>• Packaging raw material and end of life</li> <li>• Sustainable packaging design and production</li> <li>• Transportation to retailers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality – Manufacturing</li> <li>• GHG emissions intensity – Manufacturing</li> <li>• Labor rights – Manufacturing</li> <li>• Water use intensity – Manufacturing</li> <li>• Worker health and safety – Manufacturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification – Supply chain</li> <li>• GHG emissions – Supply chain</li> <li>• Water Use – Supply chain</li> <li>• Worker health and safety – Supply chain</li> <li>• Supply chain mapping</li> </ul>

## Steps for completing KPIs

Companies that prioritize supplier engagement and establish a process for collecting data see the best results and get the most value from THESIS.

1. Identify all product types (e.g., SKUs) that fall within the product category and review the Assessment Product Scope before preparing your answers.
2. Identify and work with the manager or subject matter expert who can access and collect the required data for the KPI for all relevant SKUs/facilities/suppliers.
3. Reach out to suppliers or contract manufacturer as needed to collect required information.
4. Identify the quantitative or qualitative attribute that the KPI is requesting. For qualitative attributes, identify the response option that is most common across the relevant SKUs/facilities/suppliers. For quantitative attributes, calculate a weighted average over SKUs/facilities/suppliers.

## Need help?

Reach out with questions to the TSC Help Desk at:  
[help@sustainabilityconsortium.org](mailto:help@sustainabilityconsortium.org)

