



from opaque **to open**

Untangling Apparel Supply Chains
with Open Data

Report Funded by



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introducing the **Open Apparel Registry**

The Open Apparel Registry (OAR) is a neutral, open source tool mapping garment facilities worldwide and allocating a unique ID to each.

Data in the tool is contributed and used by organizations all over the world, including major global brands, civil society organizations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, certification schemes, factory groups and more. As well as many other efficiency and process benefits, the way the OAR organizes and presents data ultimately improves the lives of some of the most vulnerable workers in global supply chains.

Our strategy is to open up supply chain data for the benefit of all. The power of the OAR's approach lies in transforming messy, inconsistent data into structured datasets, made freely available to all stakeholders under an open data license. When everyone working in global supply chains enjoys equal access to quality data, opportunities rapidly open up to shift the industry onto a more sustainable and equitable path.



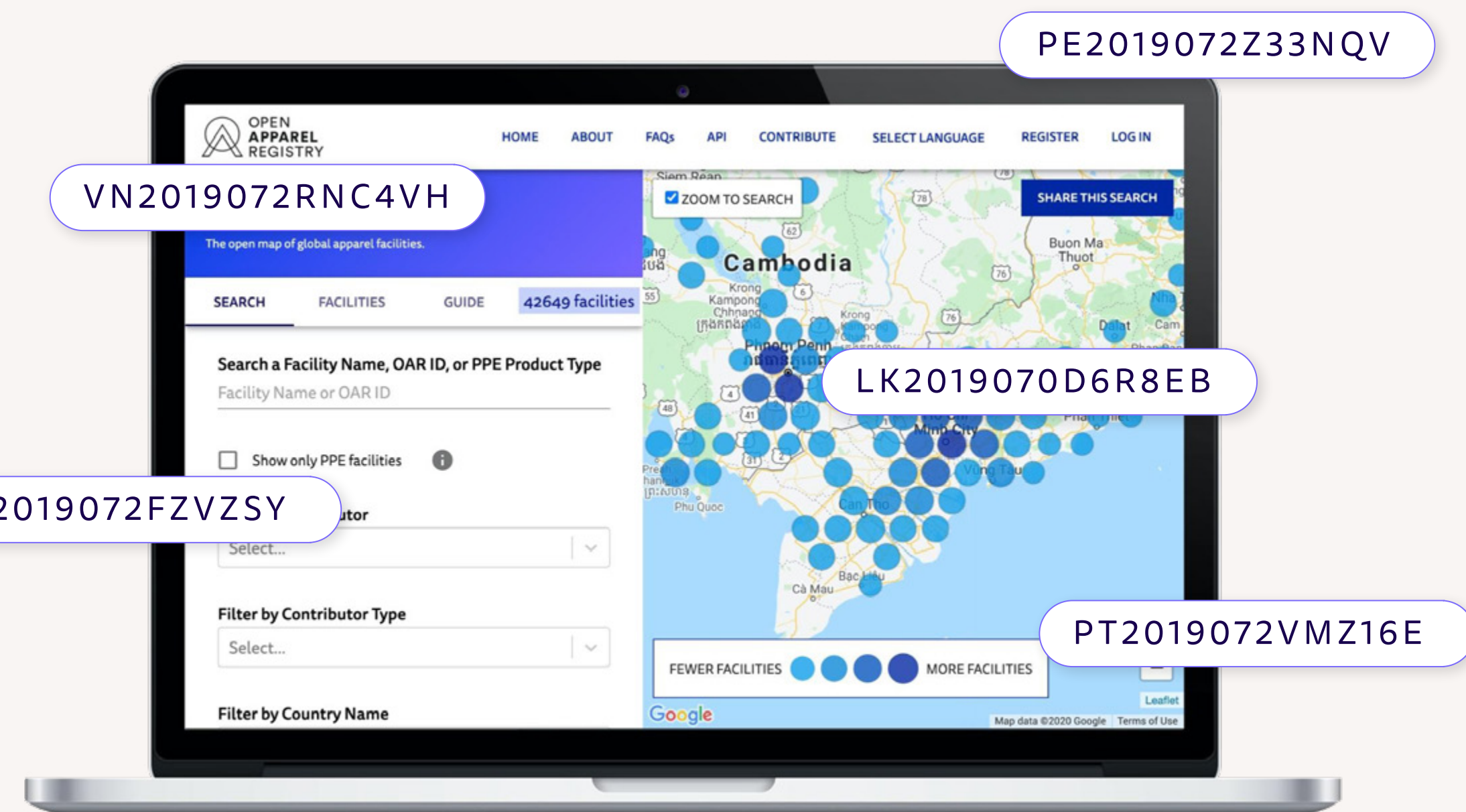
[Watch the explainer video](#)



[Visualisation of the OAR](#)

How the OAR works

Powered by a sophisticated name- and address-matching algorithm, the OAR creates one common, open registry of global facility names and addresses, with an industry standard facility ID.



These OAR IDs do not replace any existing ID schema, rather they serve as a “central source of truth,” enabling interoperability across systems and creating a collective understanding of shared connections at the facility level.

In 2021, as part of a learning grant from Humanity United, we wrote a report mapping our journey of building and growing the Open Apparel Registry. The report is written in the spirit of everything we do at the OAR: to be open, to share, to learn and achieve, collaboratively, together. It covers:

- Context on the sectoral challenges the OAR was built to address
- Why we established the OAR as a neutral data institution
- Technical details of how the open data platform was developed
- Our growing community and what we’ve learned along the way
- OAR’s stories of impact
- Our plans for the future, how we intend to grow our reach and how you can get involved

Eleanor Roosevelt once famously said, “Learn from the mistakes of others. You can’t live long enough to make them all yourself.”

Given the urgency of the issues facing the apparel sector and similar supply chains, we share the lessons we’ve learned in building and growing the Open Apparel Registry in the hope that our experience can be helpful for early stage nonprofits, stakeholders in the apparel sector and beyond, and funders looking to support new ventures like ours. Read the full report [here](#).

WAGEINDICATOR

WageIndicator works extensively to track changes in apparel supply chains, including facility closures and relocations. The process of collecting and managing supply chain data was manual and time consuming. Making use of the data in the Open Apparel Registry (OAR) enables WageIndicator to crosscheck facility name and address information more efficiently.

In addition to this, WageIndicator was able to make use of OAR data as part of its work during the COVID-19 pandemic. By cross-checking against OAR Contributor data for the facilities surveyed in WageIndicator's COVID-19 Impact Survey, the organization was able to work on comparative studies looking at whether facilities that produce for global brands have changed working conditions during the pandemic.




Through its partnerships with local trade unions, this data has been used to more effectively advocate on behalf of workers at both the factory level and the national level.

“Using OAR data as part of our COVID-19 Impact Survey has enabled trade unions in 42 different factories to advocate for the rights of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic”



“As a free, public registry, the OAR has become a vital tool for corporate transparency and accountability, for us, and partners. It brings immediate benefits to our work. For instance, we use the OAR to track back the abuse reported to us in apparel factories to ensure brands are informed of violations in their supply chains, and to seek accountability – due diligence to end abuse, and remedy for those harmed. We see enormous gains for the entire industry. Human rights advocates inside companies, civil society, investors, and governments can use it to help drive the change needed to achieve sustainability and respect for human rights throughout apparel supply chains”

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