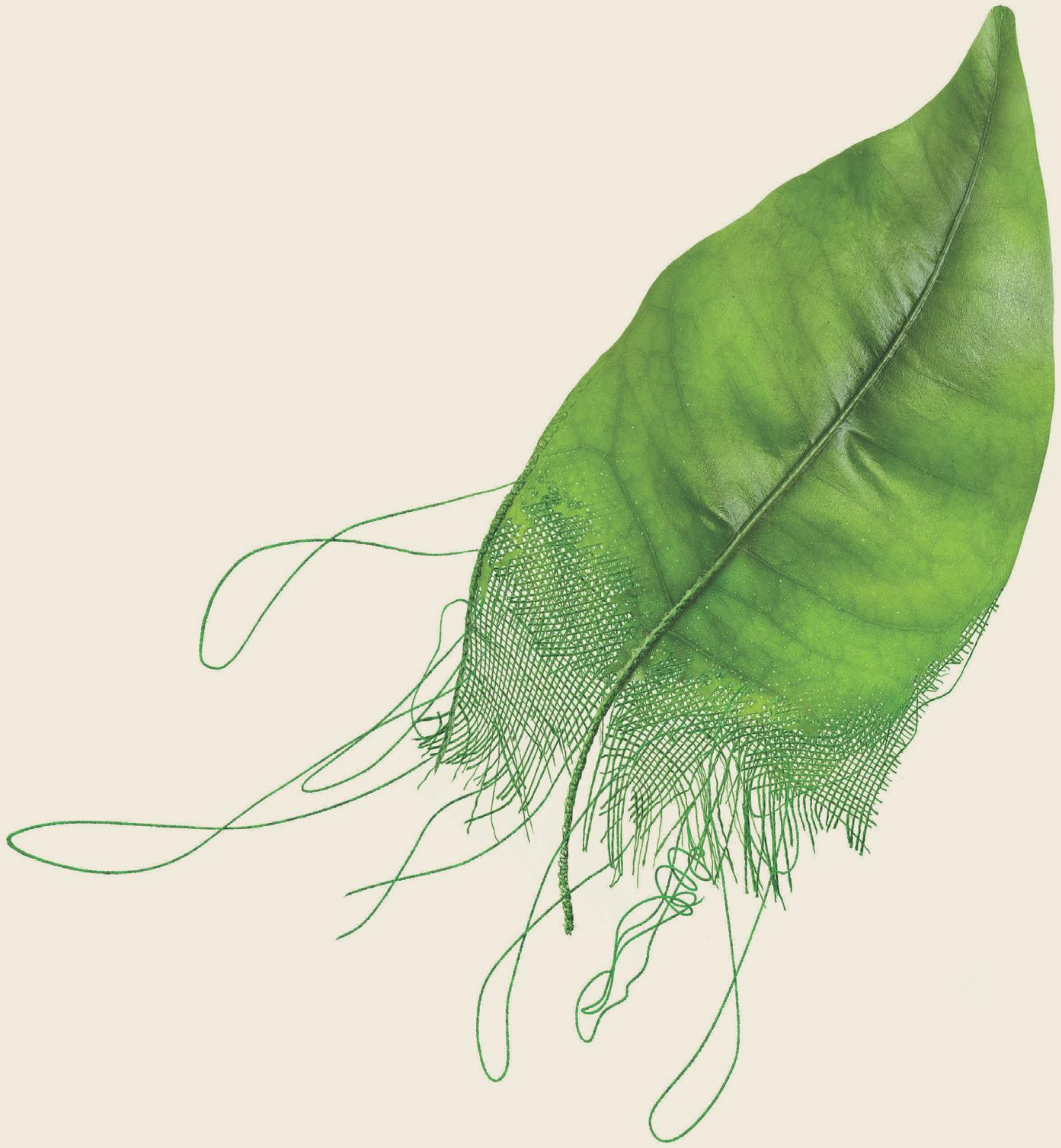
4th EDITION
VENICE SUSTAINABLE FASHION FORUM
OCTOBER 23rd AND 24th, 2025
VENICE, FONDAZIONE GIORGIO CINI

PRESENTATION BY

CARLO CICI



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VENICE SUSTAINABLE fashion

WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF

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THE CORE OF THE NEW STRATEGIC STUDY LAYS ON 2 VALUABLE FOUNDATIONS

JUST PRAGMATISM

The only effective proposals are those that can be implemented.

NARRATIVES MATTER

The way we talk about phenomena influences their outcome.

CHALLENGES

The global sustainability shift's impacts on the fashion industry's transition

- Econometric projections to 2030
- AI-based narrative analysis

READINESS

The consumers, regulators, and EU value chains responses to change

- World-wide consumers preferences
- Supply Chain ESG assessment

SOLUTIONS

The innovation drive to circular economy, clean technology and finance

- Available technologies mapping
- EU Public and private funds analysis

6 Proposals to deliver a European Competitive Fashion Transition

The sources and the analyses the study counts on

PROPRIETARY ASSESSMENTS

1,042 Italian companies
assessed through an ESG questionnaire since 2022

>91 Available technologies
analyzed along the whole fashion value chain

9 Key fashion countries' narratives positioning
assessed on worldwide media and industry literature

PROPRIETARY ELABORATIONS

>3.2K Economic performances
of Italian supply chain companies and main fashion brands analyzed

>22K Global respondents
included in the consumer statistics sample

>1.3K Datapoints
on EU fashion industry performance analyzed to elaborate 2030 scenarios

PUBLIC SOURCES

>50 Scientific articles
papers, and informative reports consulted

32 European policies
measures or frameworks analyzed

>27 Databases
extracted and analyzed at European level

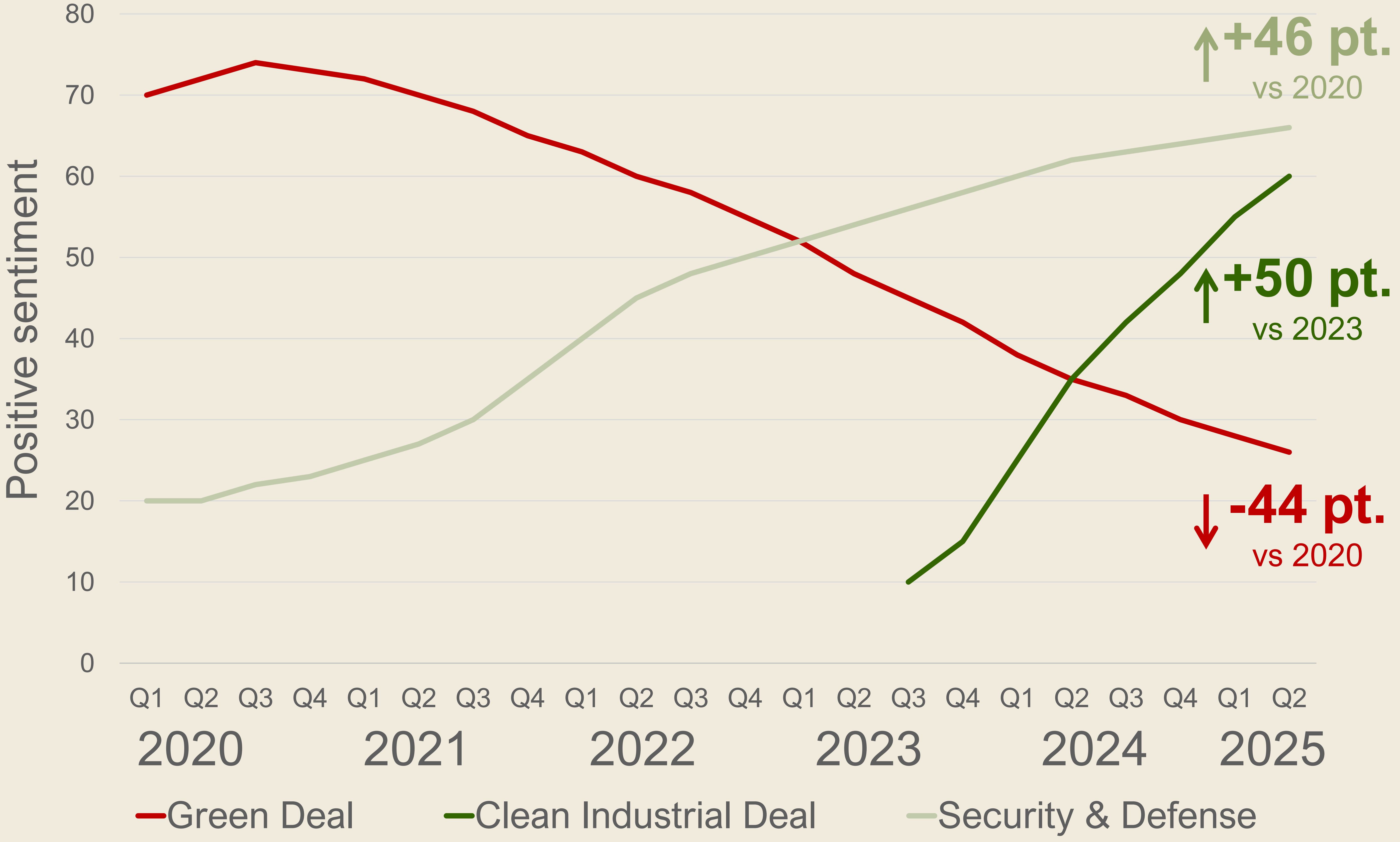
Challenges

The media grammar of transition is being reframed.

Public debate is blaming the lack of competitiveness on the Green Burden[1].

Yet, less discussed constraints – such as "internal tariffs" due to the absence of a Single Market – appear to have already affected growth[2].

Evolution of global sentiment on the Green Deal, Clean Industrial Deal and Defense in world-wide media
(% positive sentiment, Q1 2020 – Q2 2025)[1]



(1) Penta, Penta Live 2025 - analysis of over 25 million pieces of content produced in 120 countries across mainstream media (e.g. Financial Times, Reuters, Guardian, etc.), social media (X, TikTok, Facebook, etc.), institutional documents and primary research. (2) IMF, Europe's Productivity Weakness: Firm-Level Roots and Remedies (14th february 2025);

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Challenges

The health of ecosystems is a crucial enabler of growth: about half of global GDP now relies on biodiversity and ecosystem services[1].

Europe actually shows even higher rates: up to 65% of its Added Value shows a high or moderate dependence on ecosystem services[2].

Key evidences on the dependence of the economy on biodiversity and the health of ecosystems[1]

Textiles

27% of the global yarn market from plant fibers linked to healthy agricultural ecosystems.

Agriculture

35% of global industry turnover ($235–577 bln) linked to the presence of animal pollinators.

Energy

-26% of hydroelectric reservoir capacity by 2050 due to deforestation and erosion.

Building

+250% on raw materials such as timber prices, partly due to the 2021 fires in Canada.

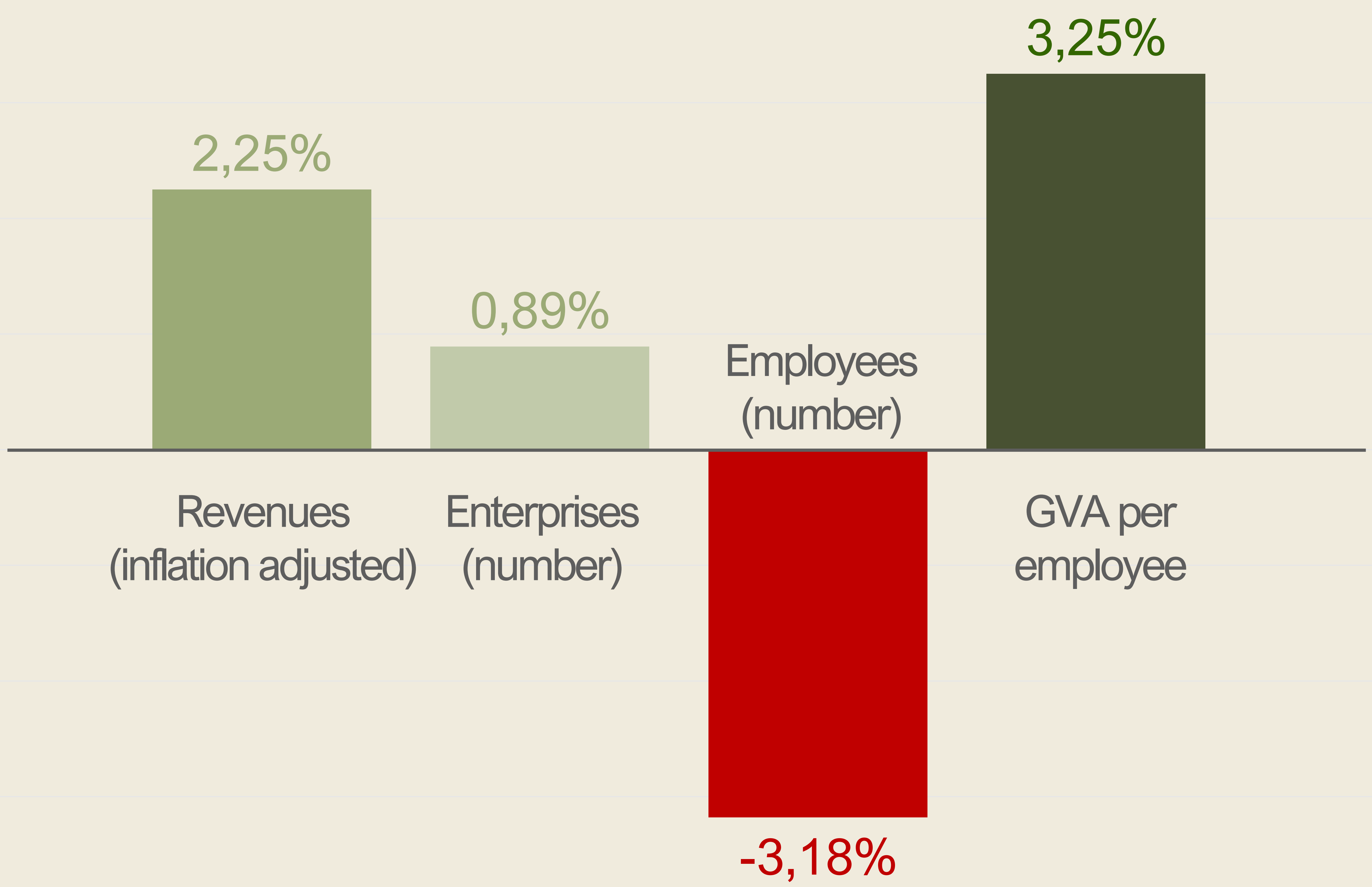
(1) TEHA elaboration on mixed sources such as Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters, WEF (2020); JRC, Working Papers, The EU economy's dependency on nature (2025); Reuters & UN (2023); Materials Market Report - Textile Exchange (2025); The value of pollinators - Bayer (2024); State of the World's Plants and Fungi (2023); Adverse weather curbs Thai, Chinese rubber output, lifting prices to 13-year high - Reuters (2024); Lumber and Timber Price Trends Analysis (2021)

Challenges

EU fashion industry's 2030 trajectories are torn between 2 long-term trends: structural fragmentation and growing labour productivity.

Though the Gross Value Added per employee is set double by the end of the decade, EU Fashion's current productivity lays almost 50% below the EU manufacturing average (40.6k vs 80k)[1].

EU Fashion 2030 projections
Estimated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) per key economic industry dimensions[1]
(Var. % 2023-2030)

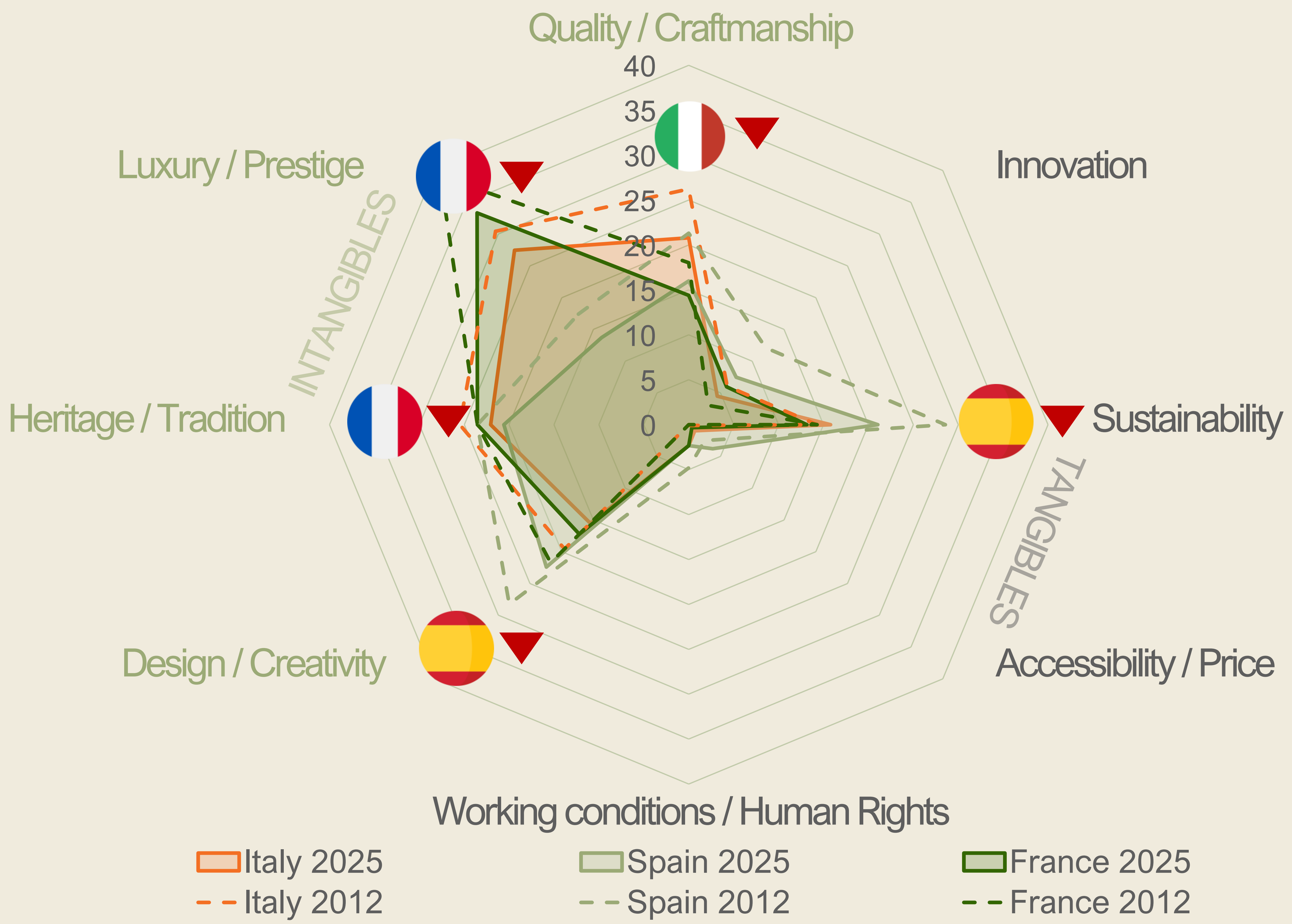


(1) The European House-Ambrosetti elaboration on Eurostat: Annual detailed enterprise statistics for industry from 2018 to 2023 (retrieved on 06/06/24).

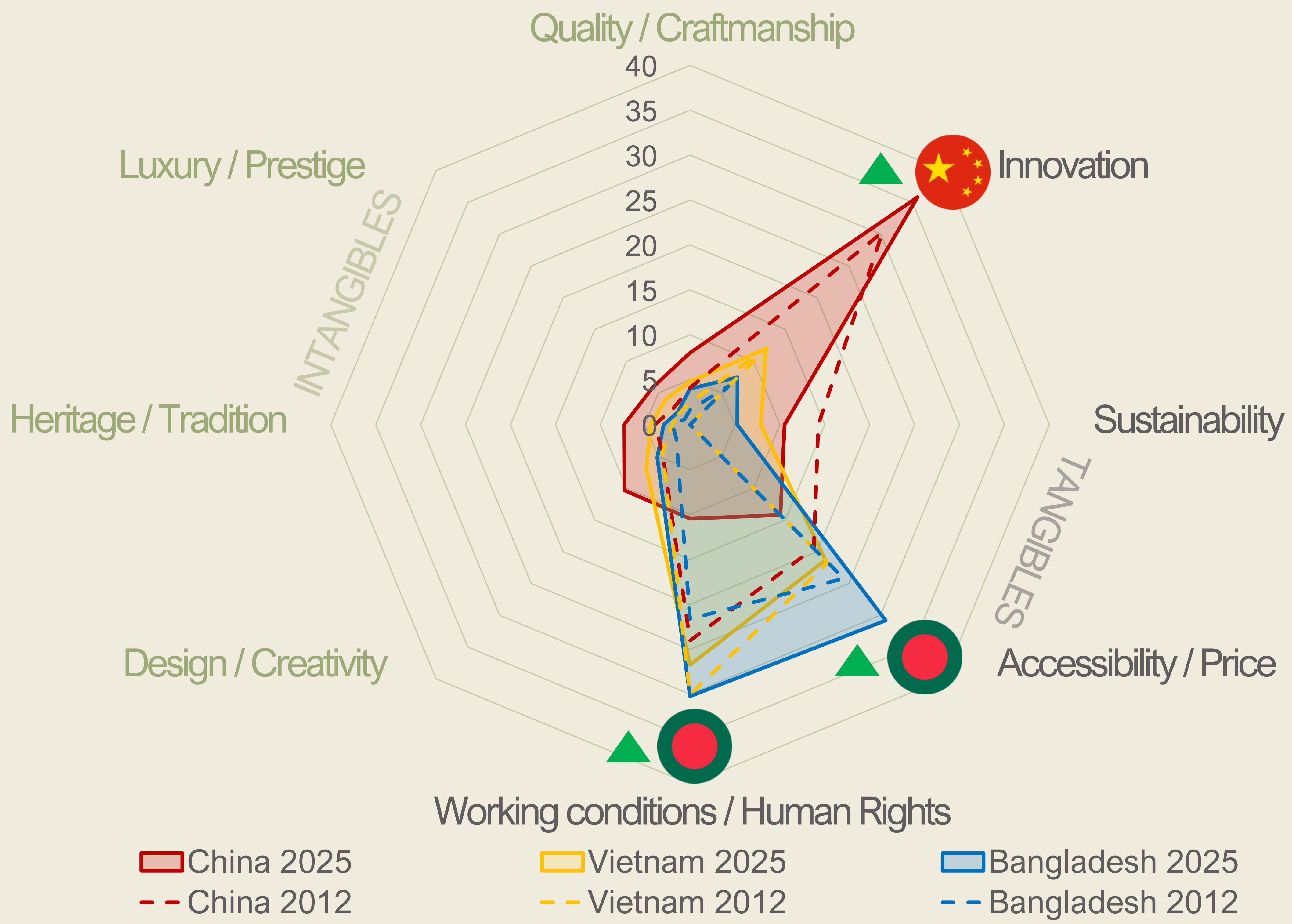
Challenges

The frequency with which different Countries are associated to key fashion attributes of value affects their narrative positioning

"Brand-of-origin" Countries



"Producers" Countries



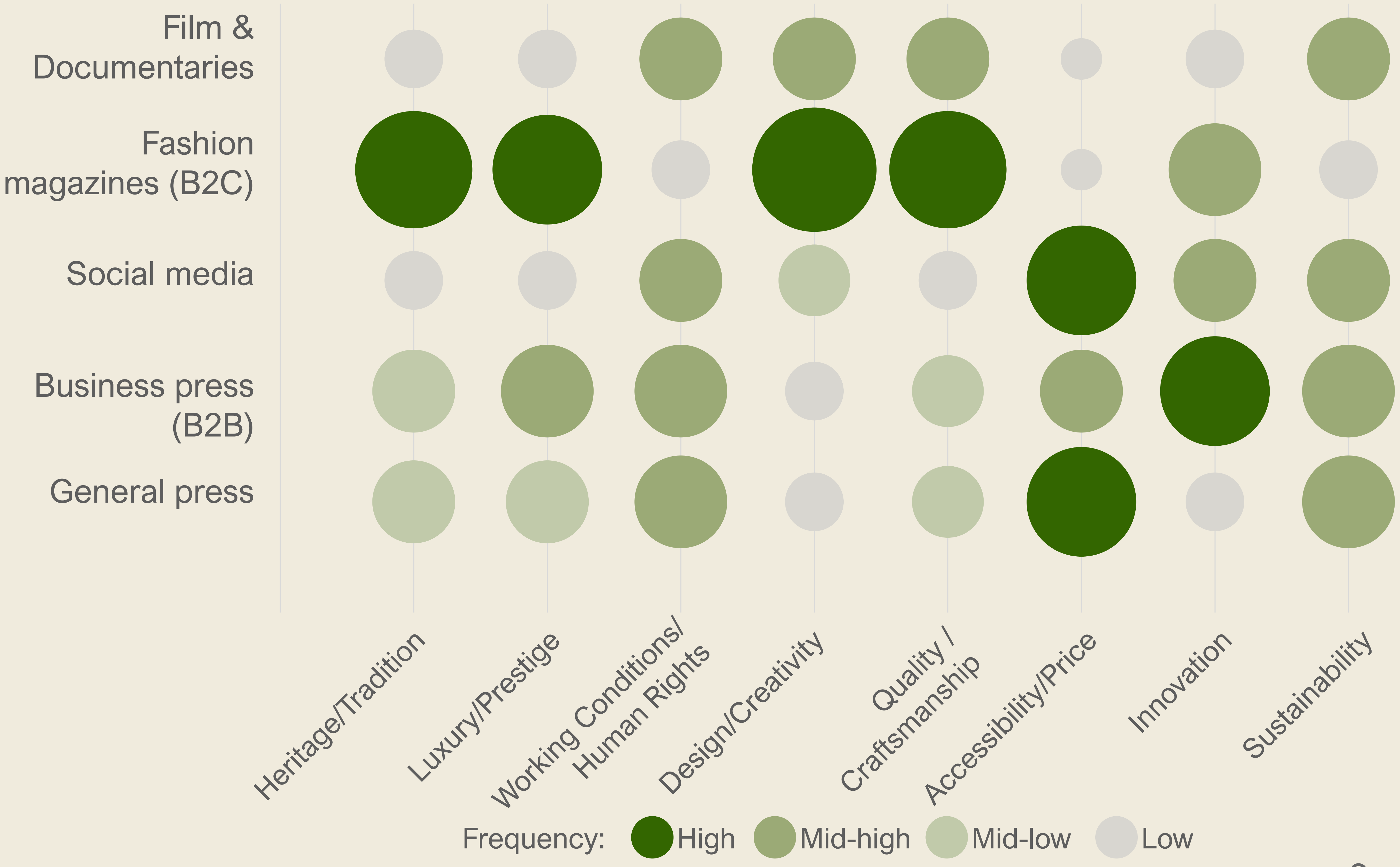
(1) TEHA elaboration through an AI-based algorithm relying on Bilkey & Nes, Country-of-Origin Effects on Product Evaluations (1982); Verlegh & Steenkamp, A review and meta-analysis of country-of-origin research (1999); Samuel, Systematic Review of COO Influence in Fashion (2024); McKinsey & BoF, The State of Fashion (various editions 2017–2024); Bain & Company, Luxury Study (2023); Deloitte, Fashion & Luxury Private View (2022); Ipsos, Global Views on Fashion Sustainability (2021); Statista, Consumer Preferences in Apparel (2023); YouGov, BrandIndex Fashion Perception (2022); Vogue Business (2020–2024); The Business of Fashion (2020–2024); WWD (2020–2024); The Guardian, fashion & sustainability section (2019–2024).

Challenges

Communication channels not only transmit but shape narratives.

An AI-based assessment shows that B2C magazines most frequently communicate heritage and luxury, business press focus innovation and sustainability, while social media amplifies affordability and creativity.

Frequency of mentions of each Attribute of Value by communication channel[1]



(1)) TEHA elaboration - the scores represent the share of mentions (%) by channel within each attribute in the time period January 2020-August 2025. Each column sums to 100. The chart shows relative emphasis, not audience-weighted volumes In other words, each country adds up to 100. Sources: YouTube Data API (proxy for social media), and Wikipedia categories (films/documentaries), GDELT (general/business/fashion press via domain whitelists). Queries combine attribute-specific dictionaries with fashion context terms. Interpret as relative narrative emphasis; coverage gaps (paywalls and short-video platforms) may affect levels. AI-assisted analysis was used to process and classify large-scale unstructured data.

Readiness

Driven by global uncertainty, younger generations show new consumption patterns.

"Doom spending" reflects anxiety about the future – a pessimism which seems to drive Millennials and Gen Z to search in fashion & luxury goods a pain-relieving expressions of identity, purchasing them far more often than older cohorts.

How often do you buy the following products?[1]

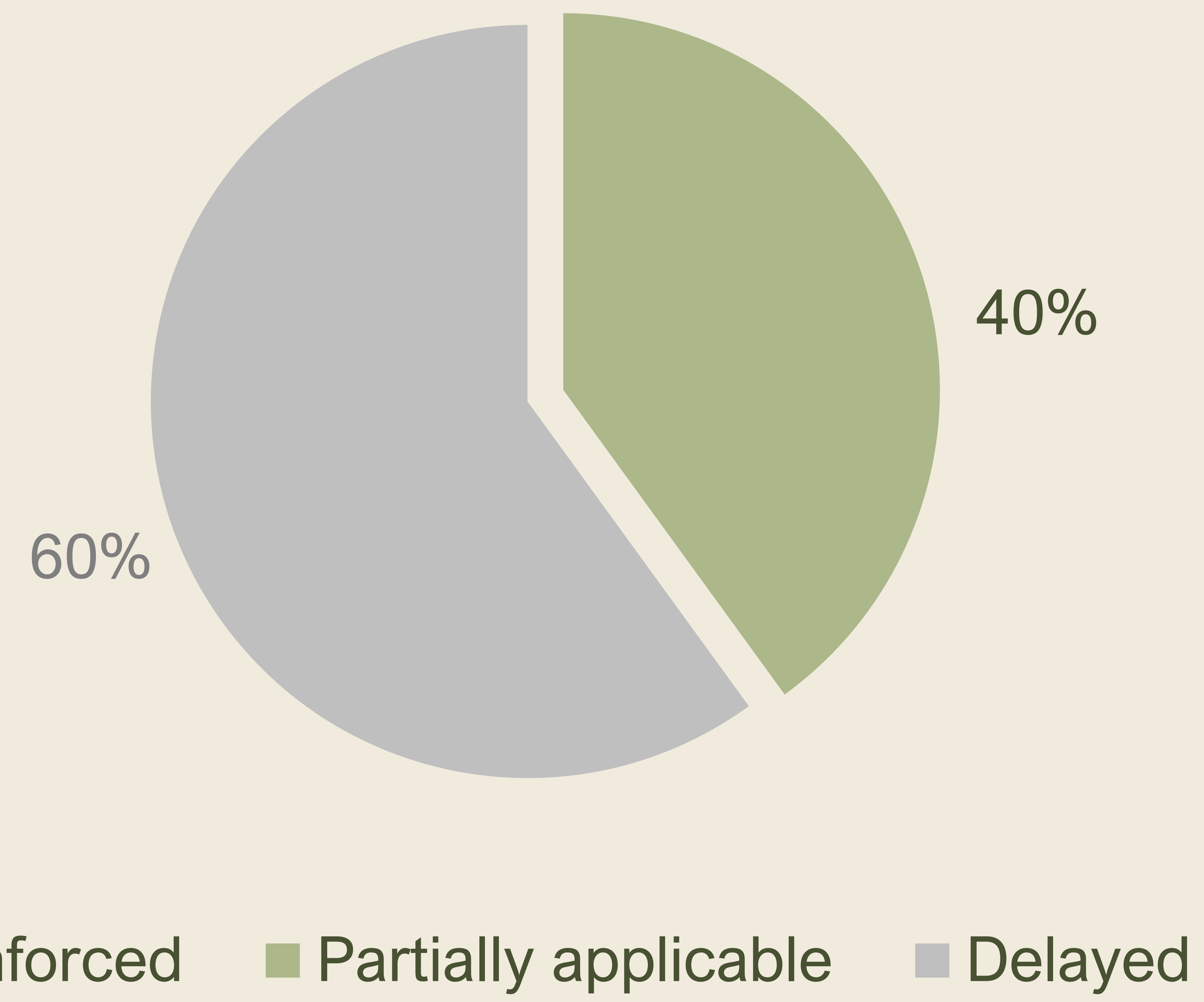
(1) TEHA elaboration on Kantar data (2025).

Readiness

EU streamlining brought by its new competitiveness compass causes delays or rollbacks of over 60% of fashion sustainability legislation.

Despite progress on Extended Producer Responsibility and Ecodesign, this mix of unfinished and postponed measures threatens competitiveness and legal certainty.

Status of EU regulations affecting the Fashion Industry in 2025



(1) TEHA elaboration on Kantar data (2025).

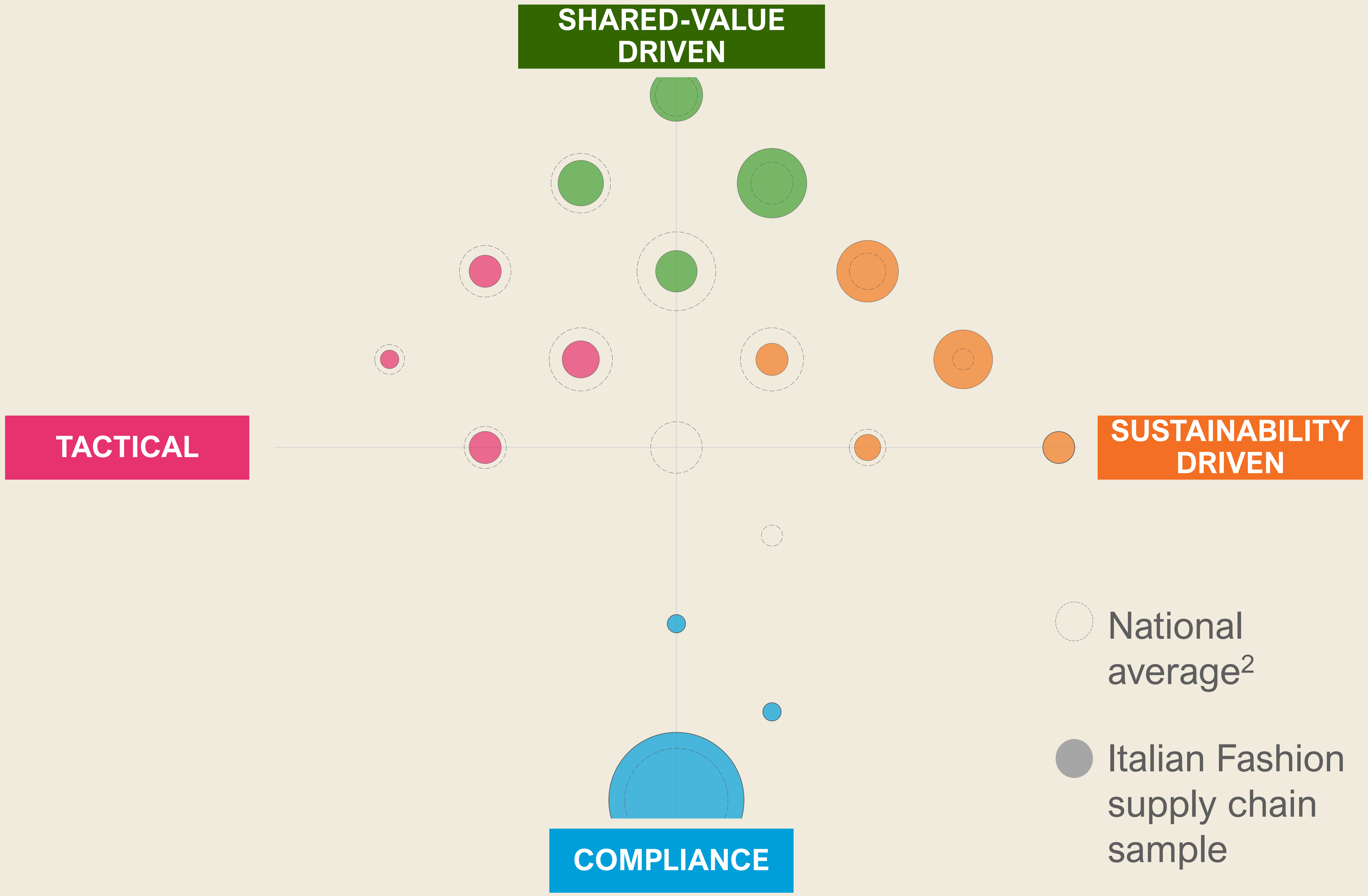
Readiness

According to our annual ESG Assessment, Italian supply chain's oversight on sustainability improved by 13% compared to 2024.

Compliance is the key driver that pushes companies to address sustainability

Yet, when compared to other industries, a tendency to overestimate one's own positioning clearly emerges.

Sustainability orientation of Italian Supply Chain companies and SMEs compared[1]



(1) TEHA elaboration on proprietary data collected through the ESG Assessment on the Italian fashion supply chain (2) A2A, Impact 2025 – L'orientamento alla sostenibilità delle PMI italiane. Survey conducted by SWG on 450 italian SMEs (april 2025).

Solutions

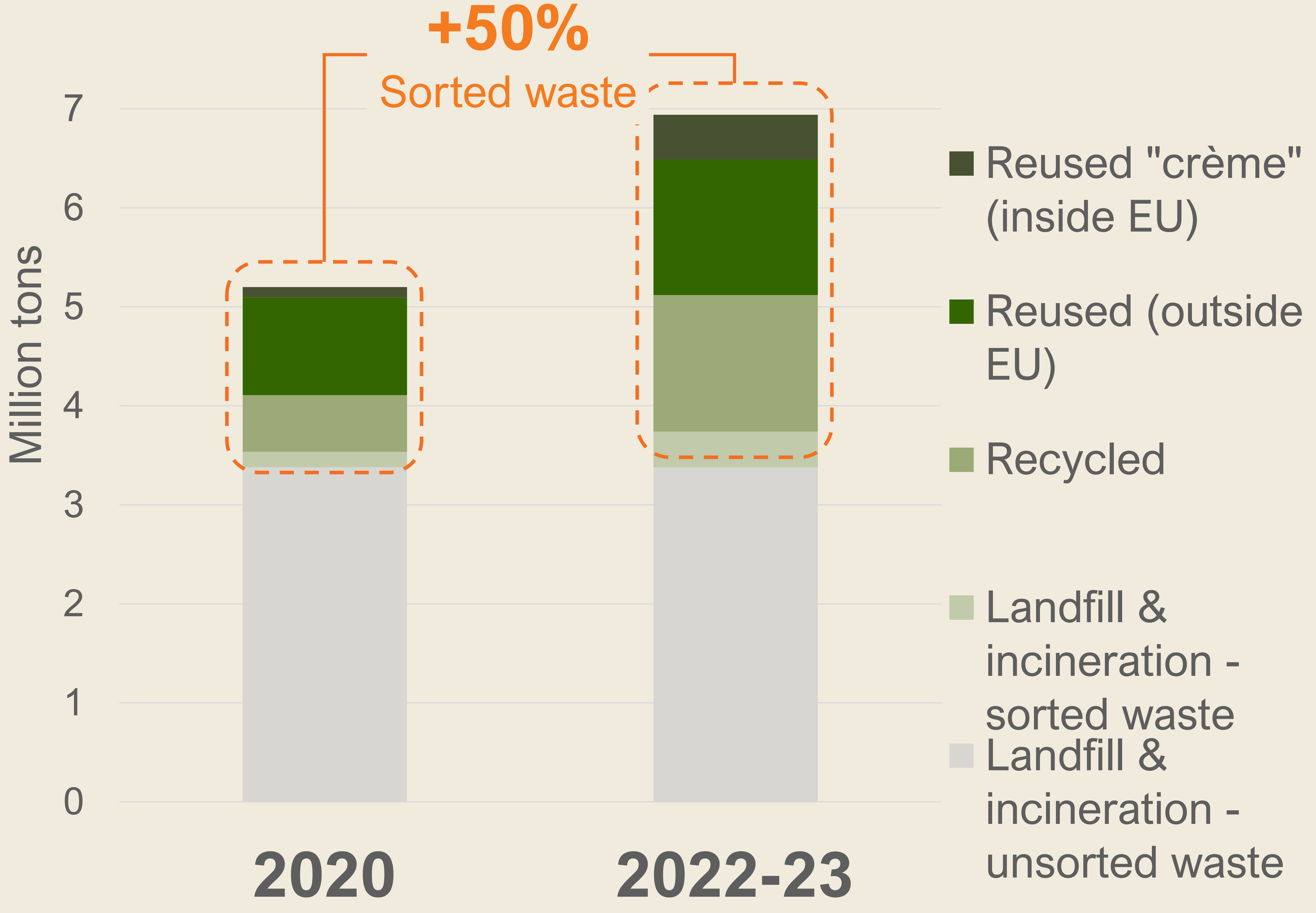
Global fiber output has more than doubled in 2 decades.

EU consumers buy 60% more clothes than in 2000 but keep them for half as long, generating nearly 7 mln tons of waste yearly.

Although recycling rates have improved by 20%, exports for reuse (~1.4 mln tons /year) often shift the problem abroad, with limited traceability and uncertain end-of-life outcomes.

EU Textile waste composition by end-of-life

(% of total tons)[3]



(1) TEHA elaboration on proprietary data collected through the ESG Assessment on the Italian fashion supply chain (2) A2A, Impact 2025 – L'orientamento alla sostenibilità delle PMI italiane. Survey conducted by SWG on 450 italian SMEs (april 2025).

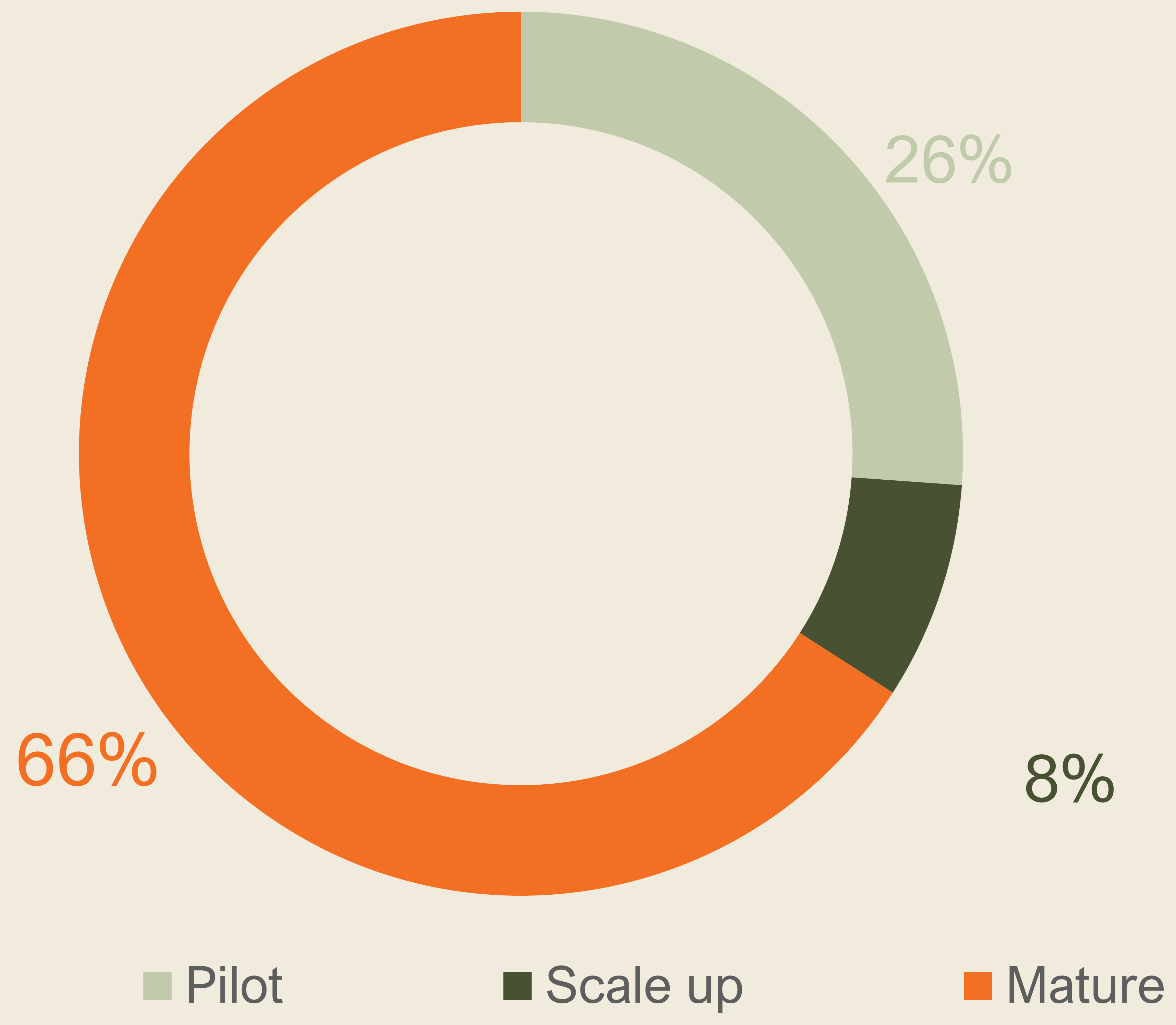
Solutions

Clean technologies are gaining ground across the fashion value chain, with most of the patents (45%) relating to Advanced Sustainable Materials.

66% of the technological solutions available are already mature.

Yet, large scale adoption is still hindered by high upfront costs, slow permitting, and skill shortages, especially in AI.

Clen technologies available for the fashion industry by maturity level
(% out of 91 solutions mapped)



(1) TEHA market analysis of 91 available clean technologies for the fashion industry. Percentages are shown with respect to the total number of technologies. (1) Draghi Report, The future of European competitiveness – A competitiveness strategy for Europe (2024) (2) Cleantech Group, Textile recycling – sector insights (2024) (3) Institute for Renewable Energy, European Academy of Bolzano, Drivers and Barriers in the Adoption of Green Heating and Cooling Technologies: Policy and Market Implications for Europe (2024)

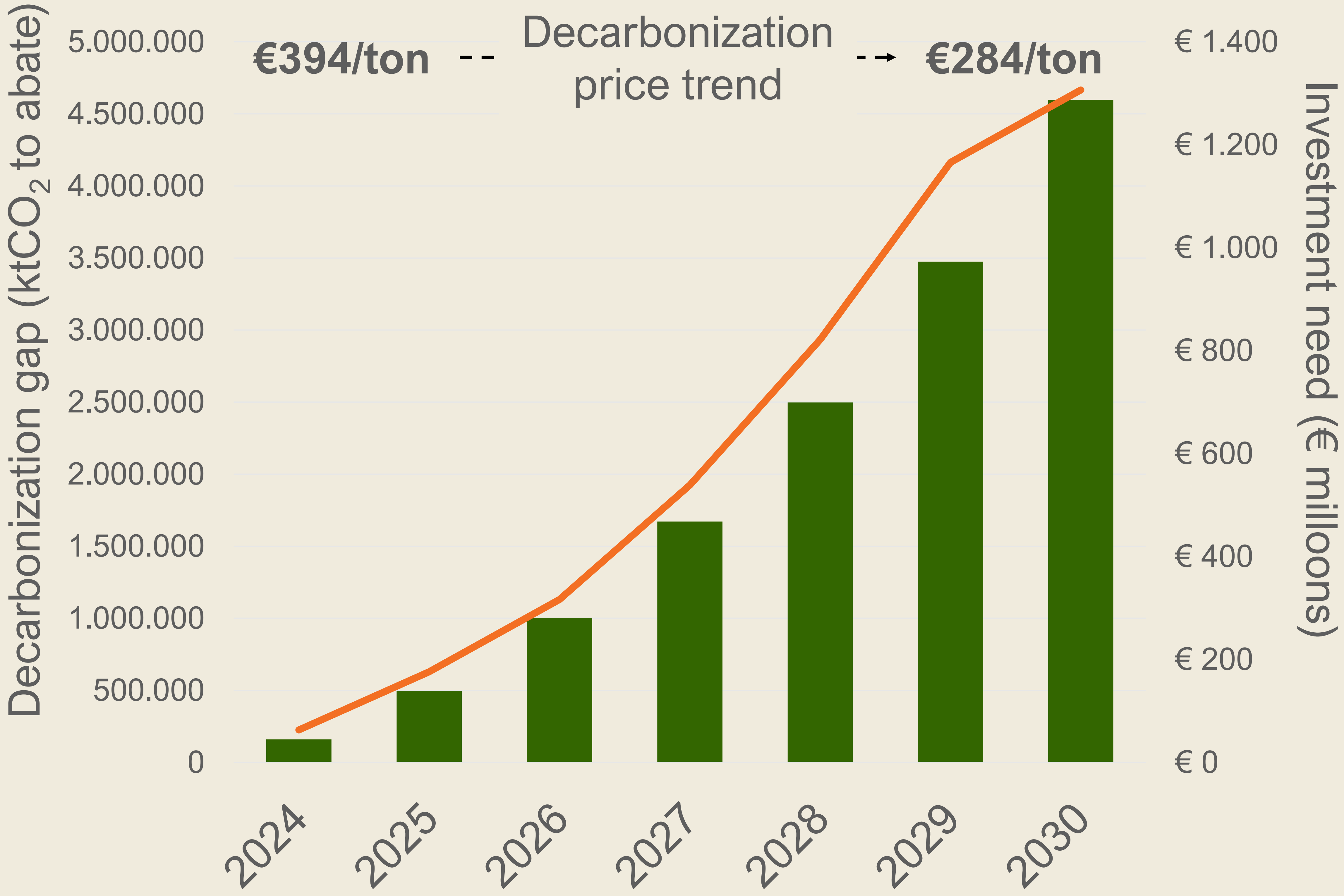
Solutions

The EU fashion industry will need at least €4.4 billion of additional investments to reach its 2030 climate targets on time.

Significant progress were already made in 2023 on the decarbonization pathway, cutting emissions by 37% from 1990.

Yet, to meet 2030 targets, a further reduction of 18% is still required[1].

EU Fashion Industry Decarbonization gap and investment need
(kTCO2, € mln)[1,2]



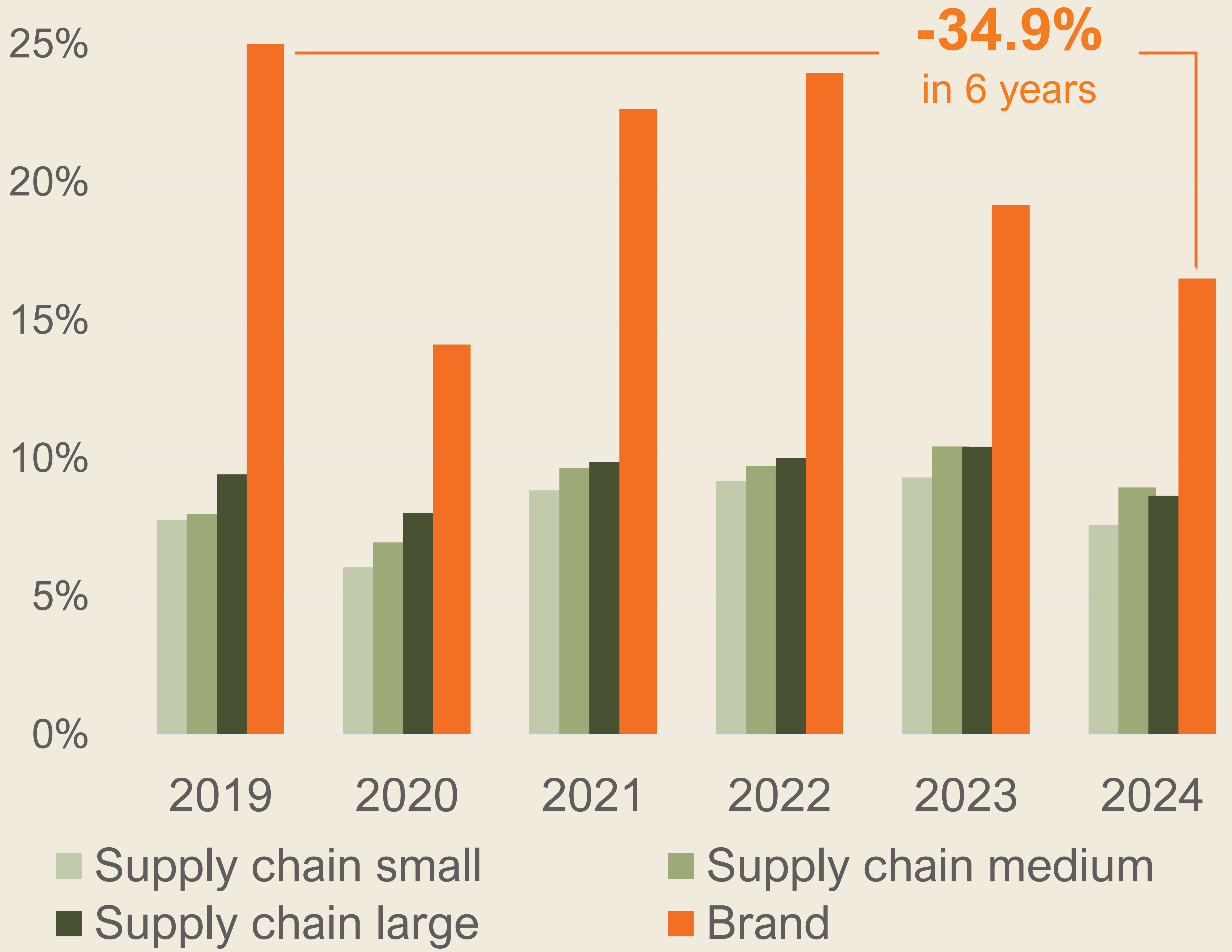
(1) TEHA elaboration of European Environment Agency: EEA greenhouse gases - data viewer from 2018 to 2023 (retrieved on 17/09/25); (2) TEHA elaboration on McKinsey, Fashion on Climate (2020) and various sources (2024-25)

Solutions

Decarbonization investment seems unaffordable for 58% of companies in the Italian Fashion Value Chain.

In 2024, companies reported an average EBITDA margin of 10.6%. Though big brands and large supply chain companies faced the steepest challenge (-34.9% and -8.2% compared to 2019), they still are the only ones in a position to act as aggregators and drivers of supply chains.

EBITDA-turnover ratio in Italian fashion value chain (3,278 companies and brands)[1]



(1) TEHA elaboration of European Environment Agency: EEA greenhouse gases - data viewer from 2018 to 2023 (retrieved on 17/09/25); (2) TEHA elaboration on McKinsey, Fashion on Climate (2020) and various sources (2024-25)

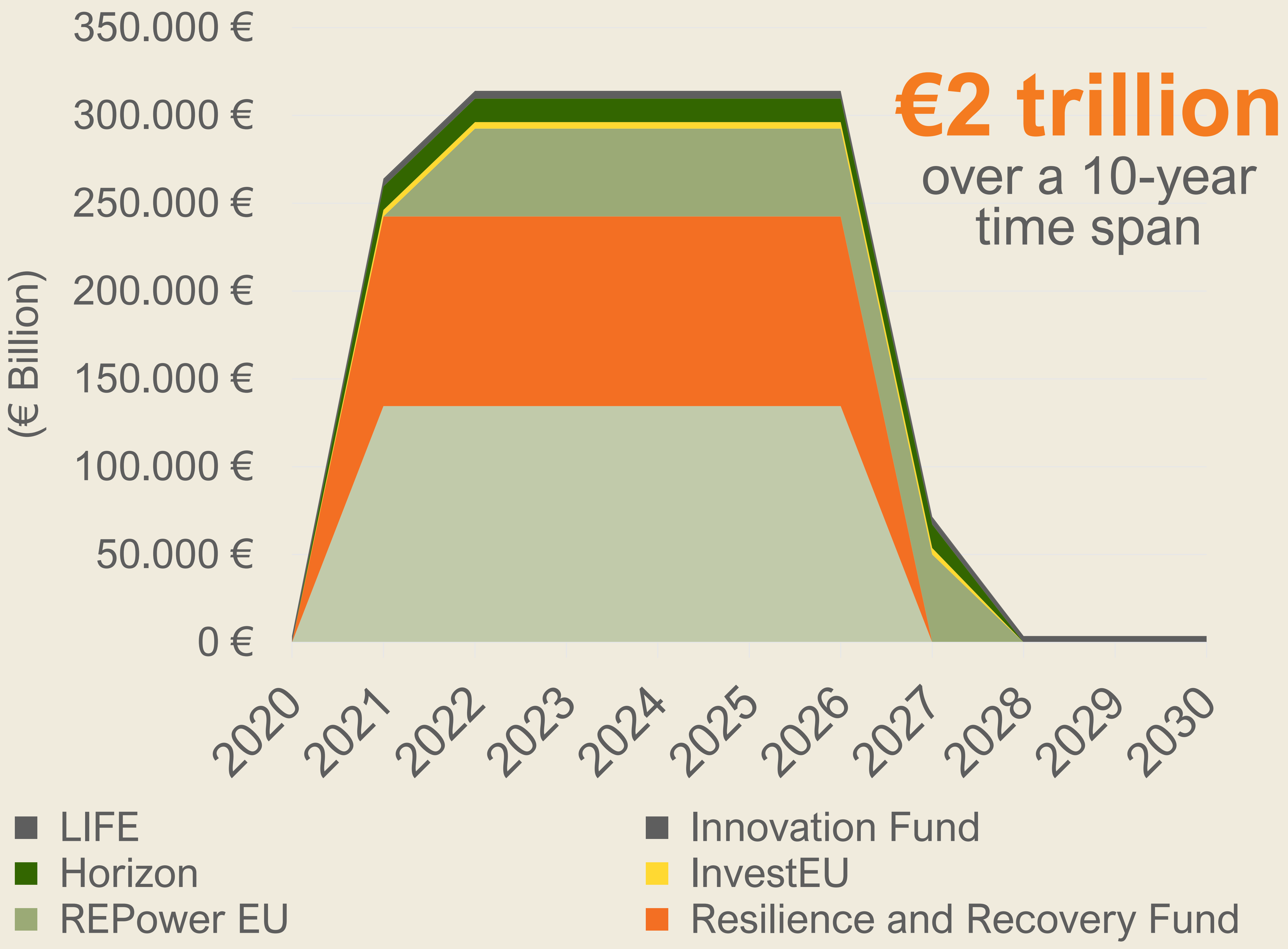
Solutions

With its >€2 trillion in 10 years, EU may count on ready-to-reach public funding opportunities to help the transition, but the window is closing in the next 4 years.

60% of the available funds are accessible to companies and SMEs.

Nationally, €210 million more by 2030 are put in place specifically for the Fashion Industry.

Public European funds for sustainable transition, applicable to companies in the fashion sector[1]



(1) TEHA elaboration of various sources (2025)

Time to deliver
(because nobody thrives in an unsustainable market)

1. Markets and price systems, as of today, do not reward sustainability
2. Change by decree is doomed to fail, it is not fit for the transition
3. The costs of action and inaction cannot be evaluated regardlessly

Reboot Fashion

Proposals for a Competitive Fashion Transition (1/2)

To Institutions

I. Foster innovation.

Increase the resources to accelerate the development of new solutions by creating a single capital market and simplifying access to finance for SMEs.

II. Reward the virtuous.

Develop incentive schemes to drive companies, banks and consumers to perform sustainably, both in environmental and social terms starting from reducing overconsumption.

To Industry Players

III. Be pragmatic.

Focus on few topics to act on, those where technology allows to enhance sustainability performances, while achieving short-term margins.

IV. Lead your chain.

Big companies have what it takes to drive change along their supply chains. Lead by example, through collaboration, investment and best practices sharing.

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Reboot Fashion

Proposals for a Competitive Fashion Transition (2/2)

To both Institution & Industry Players

V. Aggregate to compete.

Size matters when competing on international markets and finding the strength to invest and generate impact. The creation of groups of companies and consortia can facilitate the consolidation of a competitive advantage.

VI. Quantify. Advocate. Be loud.

Concreteness is everything. Measure the industry's contribution to the EU's competitive development, put forward feasible proposals for action to institutions and the market, and focus on media impact to compete in terms of narrative as well.