

Medium-Term Direction

Strengthening Product Planning and Development

Continuous Launches of Added-Value Products

YKK can provide a “one-to-one” response - that is, understanding the needs of customers and markets of various locations, applying them to product development, and delivering the products to customers on a timely basis. This is YKK’s strength as a company that conducts business globally. YKK is not only focused on strengthening its core products but will also place its focus on upgrading and expanding products that are appealing to customers who seek high functionality that is not found in core products. At the same time, we are also focused on uncovering the needs of customers and society and developing products that will provide new value.

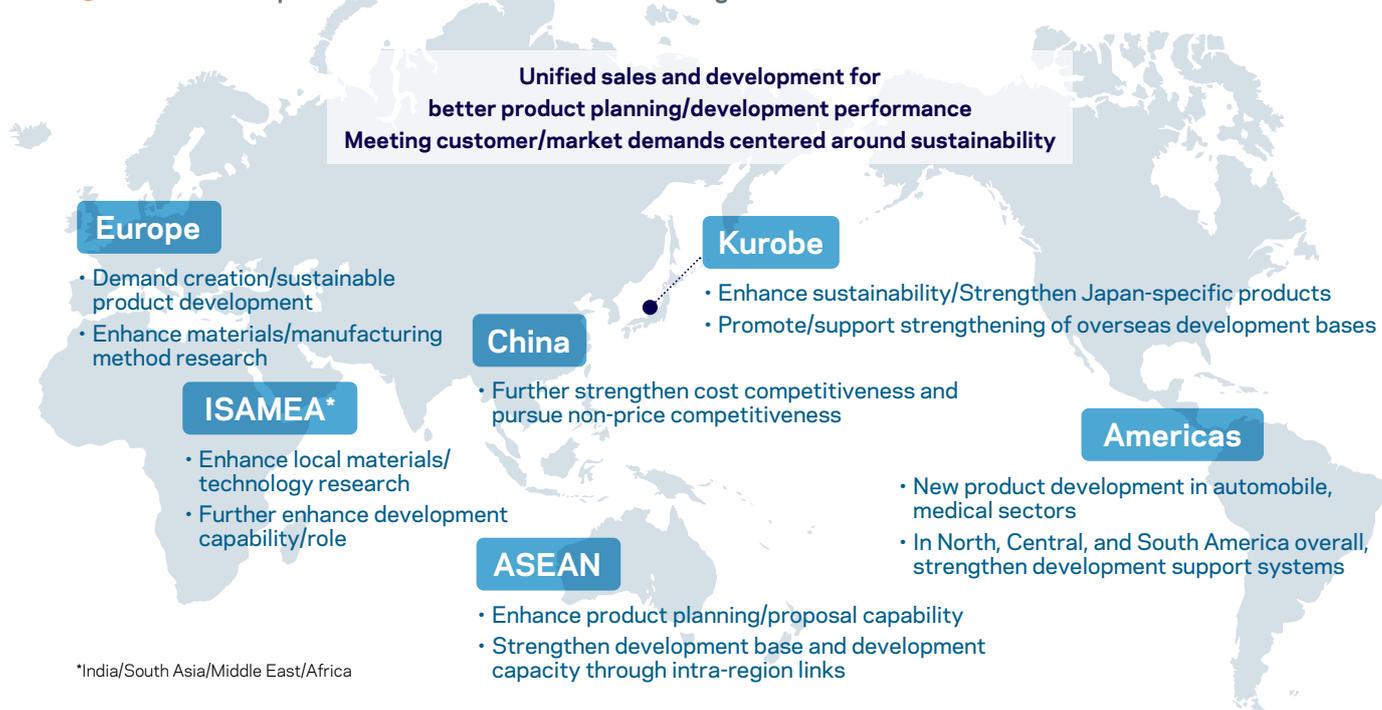
Major achievements in FY2021 include the development of metal zippers using aluminum

material with newly conceived shapes and improved strength, and the AiryString® tapeless zipper that can be sewn to a greater variety of fabrics. As well, to increase the ratio of eco-friendly products, we are expanding the use of recycled textile materials in core zipper products, using our new AcroPlating® plating technology for snaps and buttons, and increasing products that use stainless and aluminum items that support needle detection requirements. Going forward, to bolster our sustainability efforts we will further increase the ratio of products that use sustainable materials and promote the introduction of new eco-friendly products, while continuing to work hard to enhance the manufacturing capabilities that are the foundation of our business.

Product Planning and Development Policy According to Market

Market	Main Type of Customer	Policy of the Initiative
Value Conscious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-end brands High-function sports apparel Automobile interiors, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the development of green products Continuous launches of added-value products
Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual apparel customers European and American mass retailers, and e-commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough pursuit of cost competitiveness

Product Development Policies Tailored for Business Regions



Development locations/personnel

39 locations / **982** people (FY2022 Plan)

Providing New Value to Customers and Society

YKK searches constantly for ways to meet the changing needs of customers and society and continues to create innovative and high-quality products. We are strengthening, on a global scale, product development processes that integrate sales and development, accurately identifying customer requirements, rapidly actualizing solutions, and linking all this to new product development.

Product development example

The YKK Digital Showroom introduces many examples of customer voices and product development stories. ▶

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FLATKNIT® AquaGuard®



We created a thinner, lighter, and more flexible version of our water-repellent the AquaGuard® zipper by using the FLATKNIT® braided tape. Compared to the standard AquaGuard® zipper, it is less stiff, and well-suited to sports, outdoors, and other lightweight apparel. It has a dedicated slider with an insertion assist function, and a large lower surface at the opening and wide insertion opening make it easy for all ages to use.

<Employee Voices>

Norio Uozumi
Product Development Division,
Global Sales Division



“The impetus for the zipper’s development was frank feedback from customers, who said that ‘the clothing is soft, but unfortunately the zippers are stiff’. In order to respond to this demand, we added new technology to existing manufacturing methods to achieve improved softness combined with water-repellent properties. This has expanded the range of possible applications.”

TouchLink®



A fastening product with a built-in NFC chip. Users can access information in the chip simply by holding their smartphone over it. Using TouchLink® zipper in clothing and products makes it possible to create unprecedented touchpoints between fashion brands and ordinary consumers and help promote circular business models within the fashion industry.

<Employee Voices>

Brian La Plante
Global Marketing Group
Sustainability Manager



“TouchLink® zippers will allow fashion brands to maintain an ongoing, interactive relationship with their customers. We believe that TouchLink® zippers will play an important role in circular business models by providing digital product passports and helping to enable the rapidly growing garment resale and rental businesses.”

VISLON® with Magnetic Closure



The zipper has magnets embedded in the left and right openers. The magnetic force allows the zipper to be closed simply by bringing the openers closer together. Because it is easy to close without looking, it is expected to be used in a wide range of fields, including for quick clothing changes in sports, children’s wear, and universal fashion.

<Athlete Voice>

Ruy Ueda
Pro trail runner



“The stress of wearing ill-fitting shoes or clothes worsens as the race goes on, so comfort is important to me. My fingers sometimes get numb from the cold when I’m trail running. I think this zipper would be easier to use in situations like that. It would also be convenient for those times when I’m running with gloves on.”