

## Transform Textile Waste into Feedstock

01 March 2023

**Textile waste is a problem in Europe. Out of 7-7.5 million tonnes of textiles discarded every year, only 30-35 % are collected separately – and of that quantity, only 15-20 % are sorted by medium and larger sorting facilities within the EU. After sorting, 60 % still qualify as wearable clothes, however after a second or third collection-loop, all of the textiles become non-wearable sooner or later. Therefore, fibre-to-fibre recycling is becoming increasingly important to preserve the valuable resources.**

The textile recycling value chain is not yet mature, but we are on the verge of a turning point, as different fibre-recycling technologies are deployed on a large scale. If successful, the textile recycling industry could reach a recycling rate of 18 to 26 percent of gross textile waste in 2030. This would create economic, social and environmental value that could total 3.5 to 4.5 billion euros in 2030.

Today, there is a sorting gap to achieve a circular economy for textiles in Europe. To feed this new circular value chain, a significant sorting-capacity increase is needed with 150 to 250 sorting and recycling facilities nearby, as the McKinsey-study “turning waste into value” assessed.

There is also a technology and capacity gap in sorting for reuse and recycling to ensure that high quality raw materials from non-wearable textile waste can be made available on a large scale. This is why the “Transform Textile Waste into Feedstock” project was initiated by TEXAID, within the ReHubs initiative together with well-known stakeholders of the textile value chain.

The major outcome of this project will be a sorting-factory blueprint fulfilling the requirements to the future needs of fibre-to-fibre recycling, enabling the future of more sustainable textiles by using recycled fibres. TEXAID, who is leading the project, is committed to build and operate scalable sorting facilities across Europe, the first with a capacity of 50,000 tonnes by the end of 2024.

“This project will enable real scalable sorting in a sense of sorting 4.0,”, Martin Bösch (CEO of TEXAID) states “In order to reach that target we are starting with a technology assessment, followed by a demo plant before going to full scale by the end of next year”. Well-renowned companies like Concordia, CuRe Technology, Decathlon, Inditex, Indorama Ventures, L’Atelier des Matières, Lenzing, Marchi & Fildi, PurFi, Södra, Worn Again and others are taking part in the project to jointly evaluate technologies and the business case for scaled sorting for reuse and recycling. ITA Academy GmbH (in cooperation with RWTH Aachen) together with CETIA has been commissioned for the assessment of technologies. The outcome will be an innovative sorting system 4.0, building on cross-functional technologies with digitalization and automation are at the heart.

## TEXAID

TEXAID is a circular service specialist for the fashion and textile industry. As market leader dedicated to sustainability, TEXAID is an experienced global solution provider in professional collecting, sorting, repair, reselling and recycling of textiles and footwear.

With nearly 50 years of experience, TEXAID processes more than 280M items (80.000 tons) annually. TEXAID's operational presence spans Europe and North America, with more than 1,000 employees contributing daily to saving millions of textiles from landfill or incineration. TEXAID's Unit Retail Solutions is designed to address the textile industry's growing needs for sustainable end-of-use solutions and provides custom-made concepts to producers, distributors, brands and retailers in the textile industry to keep pre- and post-consumer textiles and footwear in the circle.

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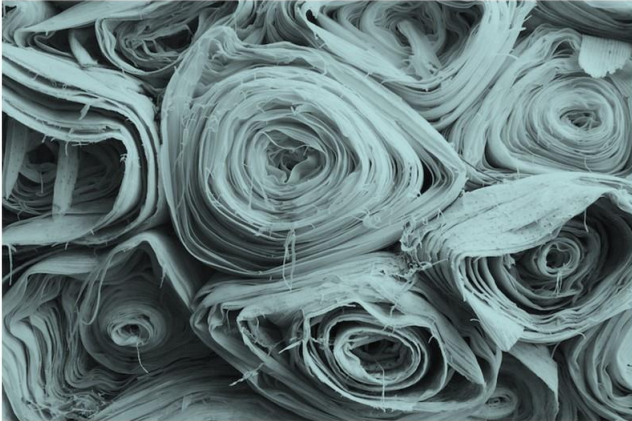
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**Image captions:**



**Image 1:** Transform Textile Waste into Feedstock

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## About Worn Again Technologies

Worn Again Technologies was founded in East London in 2005, with a vision to eradicate textile waste. Since 2012, the company has been in development of a unique polymer recycling technology which separates, decontaminates and extracts polyester and cellulose (from cotton) from non-reusable textiles. The dual PET and cellulose outputs can be reintroduced into supply chains to become new fibre, textiles and products as part of a continual cycle.

The regenerative recycling technology is being brought to life by an expert team and strategic partners who have a shared ambition of creating a circular textiles industry. The company has valued strategic investors including Sulzer Chemtech (global market leader in innovative mass transfer, static mixing and polymer solutions for petrochemicals, refining and LNG), Oerlikon (leading materials and surface solutions provider), Mexico-based Himes Corporation (a garment manufacturer) and Directex (a textiles producer), as well as the support of influential brands and partners, such as Kering, ASICS Europe, Sympatex, Dibella and Dhana.

In November 2017, Worn Again Technologies was invited to become part of the Fashion for Good scaling programme. In 2019, Worn Again Technologies received the ANDAM Innovation Prize, the PCIAW Outstanding Contribution to the Textile Industry and the 'One to Watch' at the Global Good Awards. In 2019, the company's Founder, Cyndi Rhoades, was also a finalist for The Circular Economy Awards Leadership award.

Worn Again Technologies is also a signatory and key contributor to the UNFCCC Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action.

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