

Worn Again Technologies draws closer to full textile circularity

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Worn Again Technologies is helping to evolve the supply chain of feedstocks needed for the development of a global, circular and more sustainable textile industry by participating in an innovative end-of-use material sorting initiative. As part of the UK-based Autosort for Circular Textiles Demonstrator (ACT UK) project, the chemical recycling technology innovator will provide input and insights into the needs of processors as the industry is reshaped. In effect, an end-to-end approach to the collection, sorting, pre-processing and recycling of textiles will enable the transition to a cost-effective and efficient scale up of industrial scale textile recycling plants.

The £4 million ACT UK project is led by the UK Fashion & Textile Association (UKFT) with close involvement of Circle-8 Textile Ecosystems. It aims to design and carry out trials for the development of a pioneering, fully integrated, automated sorting and pre-processing system for non-rewearable clothing in the UK. This represents a crucial step in enabling post-use collectors and sorters to supply high volume, quality feedstock for fibre-to-fibre recycling, turning end-of-use textiles into valuable and circular resources.

As a leading expert in chemical recycling, Worn Again Technologies will support ACT UK by bringing its recycling know-how and through the use of its 1,000 tonne per year demonstration plant based in Winterthur, Switzerland. The result of this

collaboration will act as a blueprint for the creation of fully integrated, automated sorting and pre-processing facility at commercial scale able to supply high volume feedstock to mechanical and chemical recycling plants.

Erik Koep, CEO at Worn Again Technologies, comments: “Zero waste strategies can be successful only when the entire supply and value chains work together to embrace cost-effective, efficient and circular material management. Being part of the ACT UK project is a strategic step in this direction and we are excited to be part of this initiative. This collaboration will help align sustainability efforts across the global textile industry, supporting the scaling up of comprehensive solutions for circularity.”

About ACT UK

ACT UK brings together a consortium of recycling technologies, textile collectors/sorters, academia, manufacturers, industry associations, technologists and brands/retailers, supported with funding from Innovate UK. It is part of a broader Circular Fashion Programme supported by Innovate UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), all part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Led by the UKFT with close involvement of Circle-8 Textile Ecosystems, current project partners include IBM, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Pangaia, Reskinned, Salvation Army, Oxfam, Textile Recycling International, New Look, Shred Station, Worn Again Technologies, English Fine Cottons, Alex Begg, Camira, Manufacturing Technology Centre, University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield, Textile Recycling Association and WRAP.

Image captions:



Image 1: Worn Again Technologies will support ACT UK by bringing its recycling know-how and through the use of its 1,000 tonne per year demonstration plant based in Winterthur, Switzerland.

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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 H&M Group, 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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