

THE CHALLENGE OF TEXTILE WASTE

Each person generates an average of 30 kg of textile waste per year, including clothing, footwear and fashion waste (T/C). 90% of this waste ends up in mixed-waste bins, together with other types of waste. Only 10% is properly separated through clothing collection bins or at recycling centres.

In La Ribera, the CRIV estimates that between 6% and 10% of the mixed waste arriving at the Guadassuar waste treatment plant corresponds to textile waste.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF THE TEXTILE/CLOTHING SECTOR

The textile industry's consumption of resources is a major concern due to its impact on water, land, energy and raw materials. The T/C sector:

3rd

The largest sector putting pressure on water and land resources in the EU.

5th

The largest consumer of raw materials and producer of greenhouse gas emissions.

3rd

The third-largest employment sector worldwide

POLICIES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

5 pillars to promote circularity in the textile sector through local authorities:

2 New businesses and circular enterprises

- Support private repair and reuse initiatives by **providing public spaces, tax exemptions** and/or organising training **workshops**.
- Launch an **urban circularity laboratory** within the municipal business incubator, enabling companies to develop, test and scale up their circular economy solutions.
- **Social wardrobe vouchers**: municipalities can establish social wardrobes where families in need can request vouchers to obtain second-hand clothing.
- **Create a municipal/regional register of footwear and textile repair services, laundries and dry cleaners, second-hand shops** and other sustainable businesses to improve accessibility for citizens.

1 Strengthen an efficient collection and management system

- **Align the Municipal Waste Management Plan (MWMP)** with the waste hierarchy, prioritising prevention and promoting local reuse systems.
- **Municipal waste management contracts** should prioritise reuse over recycling. In addition, results should be monitored: kg collected, kg allocated to local/national reuse, and kg sent for recycling.
- Establish a **collection system** adapted to local circumstances, such as those of urban or rural areas. Accessibility for users should also be improved through appropriate tools and diversified collection channels.
- Implement **pay-as-you-throw systems** linked to tax incentives.
- **Provide a public service that gives clothing a second life**, allowing citizens to deposit unwanted items and, in return, receive other textile and clothing products. This could be complemented by repair, cleaning and refurbishment services involving people at risk of social exclusion, following appropriate training and support.
- **Inform and educate citizens** on the correct way to dispose of all textile products, correcting misconceptions and explaining that clothing should be treated as waste.

3 Create demand for recycled materials

- Include criteria such as life-cycle analysis and recycled content in the **municipal procurement** of textile products and services. At the same time, **local/regional and national production should be prioritised** in order to minimise the environmental impact of transport.
- Municipalities should use **reserved public contracts** to support companies that promote social and circular innovation.
- Develop **Green Public Procurement model criteria**. These comprehensive guidelines will provide a standardised framework for minimising environmental impact across all municipal departments.
- Promote **local demand** by organising reuse markets, fairs and circular public events.

4 Communication and behaviour change

- Develop a municipal **communication strategy aligned with the waste hierarchy**, prioritising messages on waste prevention and reuse.
- **Include an obligation** to carry out communication campaigns in waste collection contracts.
- Provide practical **guidance on the correct disposal of all textile waste products and on textile care**, washing techniques and microfibre reduction.
- Promote products made from **recycled fibres as high-quality**, modern lifestyle choices.

5 Governance, monitoring, integration and cooperation

- Create a **guide with minimum technical requirements** for the textile collection system (locations, responsibilities, collection operators, commercial sector, etc.).
- **Integrate circular roadmaps into the MWMP**, making textile reduction and recovery mandatory.
- **Create a textile-specific MWMP model and adapted local regulations** to facilitate implementation, including specific indicators for different waste streams.
- Engage with **higher-level authorities** and advocate for legislation that supports the circular economy.
- Promote **industrial symbiosis** between textile stakeholders and stakeholders in other sectors (furniture, construction).
- **Create an online circular economy platform** providing information on container locations, general or specialised collection services, local resources and high-quality products available locally on demand, while also encouraging collaboration.
- **Carry out an audit of the municipal waste collection system**, identifying stakeholders, contracts, indicators, etc.
- Promote **inter-municipal cooperation** to align efforts and distribute responsibilities.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

- * **Data gaps and lack of priority:** Textile waste management is neither an institutional nor a citizen priority. This is compounded by the lack of reliable statistical data needed to design specific and effective regulations.
- * **Regulatory and institutional delays:** The implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is still pending. In addition, there is a major inequality in technical and economic resources between large cities and small municipalities.
- * **The impact of fast fashion:** The market is experiencing an oversupply of low-quality, fast-fashion products. This situation hinders the growth of the second-hand clothing sector, which still requires greater innovation to change consumption habits.
- * **Need for awareness and support:** Strong educational campaigns are needed to teach people how to separate waste properly and promote responsible consumption.
- * **Market resistance:** Consumers still have doubts about the quality and durability of recycled textiles compared with new materials. This limits current demand for these circular materials.
- * **Job creation:** The transition towards a circular economy requires new business models. This can promote green entrepreneurship in areas such as repair, refurbishment and textile remanufacturing.

THE FIRST 10 STEPS

- 1 Increase the number of containers and other types of collection points.
- 2 Monitor textile waste flows by: (i) requiring collection operators to provide detailed quarterly data on the volumes (in kg and units) collected, sorted and reused, both locally and internationally; and (ii) carrying out waste characterisation studies to quantify the amount of textiles ending up in residual waste containers and identify major textile waste generation hotspots throughout the city.
- 3 Create a section on the municipal website providing general information on the different waste streams, including textiles, with advice on how to reduce waste and information about the collection system. Local resources and services in neighbouring municipalities should also be identified, including footwear and textile repair services, laundries and dry cleaners, and second-hand shops.
- 4 Ensure that the local strategy (MWMP) is fully aligned with EU regulations and objectives.
- 5 Seek synergies with other municipalities and collaborate with relevant organisations and initiatives.
- 6 Include environmental criteria in municipal tenders, moving away from the previous approach, which prioritised economic criteria alone.
- 7 Identify local and regional organisations and stakeholders to collaborate with when launching circular economy initiatives: associations, companies, entrepreneurs, NGOs, etc.
- 8 Launch a social media communication campaign on the correct way to separate textile waste and the impact of fast fashion, in collaboration with the company managing the collection service.
- 9 Organise an employment workshop on textile and footwear repair, linking it to social issues.
- 10 Provide temporary use of public spaces for the establishment of businesses such as repair workshops, etc.

The **VERDEinMED** project aims to contribute to the transition towards a sustainable and circular economy in the textile and clothing sector, involving industry, consumers and public authorities.

Knowledge Platform

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VERDEinMED



LOCAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEXTILE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Partners



Associated partners

