

LOCAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIRCULAR TEXTILES

A Practical Guide for Municipalities



VERDEinMED

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Co-funded by
the European Union

Preface

The VERDEinMED project, “PreVEnting and ReDucing the tEXtiles waste mountain in the MED area”, is an initiative co-funded by the EU Interreg Euro-MED programme to promote a more sustainable future for the textile sector. VERDEinMED is based on the promotion of the circular economy in the textile sector along its entire value chain. Framed within the Innovative Sustainable Economy Mission of Interreg Euro-MED, the project seeks to reduce textile waste by applying innovative tools and raising awareness among different audiences in the Mediterranean.

The present document is focused on displaying policy recommendations and available instruments at local level based on lessons learnt of VERDEinMED deliverables and project participatory events with relevant textile sector stakeholders.

Furthermore, the document is complemented by a comprehensive literature review and desk research to identify and incorporate additional best practices with potential for successful adaptation and implementation by other local authorities.



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Introduction

The **VERDEinMED** project, “**PreVEnting and ReDucing the tEXtiles waste mountain in the MED area**”, is an initiative co-funded by the EU Interreg Euro-MED programme to promote a more sustainable future for the textile sector. VERDEinMED is based on the promotion of the circular economy in the textile sector along its entire value chain. Framed within the Innovative Sustainable Economy Mission, the project seeks to reduce textile waste by applying innovative tools and raising awareness among different audiences in the Mediterranean.

Following the project activities addressed to consumers, industries and local communities, VERDEinMED compiles national/regional and local policy recommendations and available instruments to contribute to the transition towards a more environmentally and socially responsible global textile model gathered during the process of stakeholders’ dialogue.

In that sense, the present deliverable is concretely focused on displaying policy recommendations and available instruments at local level based on lessons learnt from previous project deliverables and participatory events with relevant stakeholders.

Local instruments are categorized in the following typologies based on ‘the role of municipal policy in the circular economy’¹ document produced by Circle Economy:

- **Regulatory & strategic plans:** Municipal policies help relevant businesses to share certain societal and environmental objectives, and as such enables long-term thinking over short-term budgeting.
- **Economic instruments:** Loans and subsidies help overcome financial barriers related to establishing a business, servicing immature markets, or taking office in a city.
- **Soft instruments:** Networks and information campaigns facilitate ongoing circular activities and boost social capital of the circular business community.

¹.Circle Economy. (2019). The role of municipal policy in the circular economy: Investment, jobs and social capital in circular cities.

Challenges in circular economy of textile and clothing sector

While the textile and clothing (T/C) sector remains a cornerstone of the European economy—renowned globally for innovation, heritage, and high-quality manufacturing—it faces unprecedented structural challenges. Public administrations must now address the sector's escalating environmental footprint, particularly concerning resource consumption, unsustainable waste volumes, and localized disposal management. The European Environment Agency highlighted the next key facts about textile products consumption²:

- Starting with 2025, EU Member States must put separate collection systems in place for textiles.
- Around 4-9% of all textile products put on the European market are destroyed without ever being used for their intended purpose.
- In 2020, each person in the EU consumed on average 16 kg of textiles, 4.4kg per person were collected separately for reuse and recycling, and 11.6kg per person ended up in mixed household waste.
- Between 60 to 70 % of textiles are made of plastic (mostly polyester), which is made of oil and gas. The remainder is made of bio based textiles, including cotton and wool.
- Per average person in the EU, in 2020, textile consumption required nine cubic metres of water, 400 square metres of land, 391 kilogrammes (kg) of raw materials, and caused a carbon footprint of about 270 kg. Most of the resource use and emissions took place outside of Europe.
- It was estimated (2017) that less than 1% of all textiles worldwide are recycled into new products, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.
- The amount of used textiles exported from the EU has tripled over the past two decades from slightly over 550,000 tonnes in 2000 to almost 1.7 million tonnes in 2019.

² European Environment Agency website. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/textiles?active-Tab=07e50b68-8bf2-4641-ba6b-eda1afd544be>

- The textile sector is the 3rd highest source of pressure on water and land use in the EU; the 5th highest use of raw materials and greenhouse gas emissions, and; the 3rd largest employer worldwide.

On the other hand, VERDEinMED project partners identified critical systemic bottlenecks encountered by public administrations³:

- Textile waste management: it is not a central focus for citizens and governments.
- Implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): Schemes are pending in most EU member states, either in regard to their design or implementation phase.
- An inadequate level of public awareness and comprehension, alongside a critical shortfall in technical assistance provided to local entities.
- Fast fashion: The market is currently flooded with more low-quality textiles than ever before.
- Societal reluctance & market stagnation: Insufficient innovation within the second-hand apparel industry hinders its ability to shift public consumer habits.
- Disparities in resources: Significant differences exist in economic and staffing resources between large cities and small towns.
- Evidence-based policy constraints: The absence of robust data on textile waste generation and recycling rates compromises the formulation of targeted regulations.
- The need to scale reuse: Textile reuse has not yet reached critical mass, highlighting the need for comprehensive regional support programs.
- Consumer scepticism: Negative perceptions regarding the quality and durability of recycled textiles compared to virgin materials may restrict market demand and adoption.
- Green job creation: The shift demands innovative circular economy models, driving entrepreneurship in textile repair, reuse, refurbishment, and re-manufacturing.

³ VERDEinMED project (2024). Regional reports of state of the art of textile waste management and recycling.

Local authorities' policy instruments and incentives

Local authorities play a pivotal role in implementing circular economy policies within the textile and clothing (T/C) sector. Operating closest to citizens, households, and small businesses, they act as vital links in establishing effective collection, reuse, and recycling ecosystems. By combining regulatory, economic, and organizational tools, municipalities can leverage their dual mandate over waste management and local economic development to rapidly accelerate this transition.

Based on the dialogue with industry experts and public authorities on circular economy, the promotion of circularity of textiles by local authorities is principally sustained by 5 strategic pillars:

- 1. Efficient waste collection and sorting system.**
- 2. New circular companies and businesses.**
- 3. Create market demand for local and recycled T/C material.**
- 4. Communication on sustainable consumption and consumers habits changing campaigns.**
- 5. Governance, policy assessment & integration and cooperation.**

Local authority recommendations are organized into tables based on the following three-category classification system:

- I. Instrument typology. Every action pillar will divide its specific measures into three operational categories:
 - Economic Incentives: Financial tools, taxes, subsidies, and fee structures.
 - Regulatory & Strategic Plans: Local by-laws, mandates, policies, and master plans.
 - Soft Instruments: Capacity building, information campaigns, networks, and guidance.

- II. Target Population Tier (visual anchor: Colours). Instruments will be tagged to show which municipality size they suit best:

Municipality population rate	Code
All sizes municipalities including small municipalities and rural communities.	
Among 5000 - 50000 inhabitants. Medium-sized towns and suburban districts.	
> 50000 inhabitants. Large cities and urban major centre. Or grouped municipalities.	

- III. Financial Capital Requirement (scale: A–C). Measures will be classified by the initial budget and resource allocation needed:

- Grade A (Low-cost measure): Minimal operational spending or shifting of existing resources.
- Grade B (Medium-investment action): Requires dedicated co-funding, staff allocation, or minor procurement.
- Grade C (High-investment measure): Requires major capital expenditure, infrastructure development, or multi-year budgets.

Efficient waste collection and sorting system

The EU generates around 2.5 billion tonnes of waste per year (2022), approximately 5 tonnes annually per person⁴. Within this enormous waste stream, around 5 million tonnes of clothing waste are generated each year, corresponding to about 12 kg per European⁵.

To tackle this overload of post consumer textile and clothing waste that ended up in mixed municipal waste, the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) mandates that from 2025, EU Member States must establish separate collection systems for used textiles.

Household textiles and accessories—including apparel, footwear, and linens—are increasingly being diverted to municipal waste collection systems. By applying a range of interventions aligned with the waste management hierarchy, these systems must prevent landfill disposal and actively support the transition toward a circular economy.

This set of recommendations for local authorities addresses how to design, deploy, and communicate municipal waste collection systems to reduce the volume of textiles reaching waste processing plants. Additionally, it identifies how the private T/C sector can contribute to increasing overall collection rates.

Stakeholder consultations within the national hubs confirmed that municipal textile management faces systemic hurdles comparable to other household waste streams. Addressing these requires a strategic focus on four mainly action lines:

1. Deployment of high-efficiency collection systems: Implementing diversified models tailored to distinct user needs and urban/rural profiles.
2. Strategic procurement of waste services: Optimizing public tenders for the collection and sorting of textiles to ensure technical quality and operational reliability.
3. Refinement of Municipal Waste Management Plans (MWMP): Ensuring local frameworks are fully harmonized with EU regulations while remaining responsive to specific local specificities.

⁴ Eurostat. Statistic data. European Union.

⁵ European Commission. (2022). Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy. European Union.

4. Communication and empowering citizens: Engaging and informing users is a prerequisite for local governments to turn their zero-waste ambitions into a reality.

It is all the more critical to address the perception that municipalities do not prioritize textiles, as their primary concerns remain focused on organic waste, packaging, glass, and paper.

Currently, all textile waste contained in the mixed waste bin that arrives at the treatment plant is landfilled due to a lack of sorting and recycling infrastructure. Therefore, it is essential to promote separate collection and address the misconception that used clothing is primarily intended for donation or second-hand use, rather than being recognised as a separate waste stream that can generate value through proper collection and management.

To improve sorting rates at source, it is essential to address key barriers such as user identification, container availability, and the implementation of incentive schemes. In this context, the effective enforcement of the 'pay-as-you-throw' principle remains a critical factor for success.

In Europe, textile waste is primarily managed through street-side bring points, frequently supplemented by civic amenity sites for materials outside standard curb-side collection. While indoor collection is ideal for securing high-quality, unsoiled textiles for reuse, it is often hindered by limited public access. Conversely, although street-side containers facilitate high-volume collection, they carry a significant risk of contamination, often rendering the materials valueless for reuse.

To maximize the recovery of high-quality garments and reduce the residual waste fraction, several municipalities are adopting door-to-door collection schemes. These programs significantly minimize the risks of weather damage and cross-contamination common in traditional bring points, although they are frequently constrained by high operational costs. In rural areas, it is noted that decentralized collection poses even more logistical and cost difficulties.

Hub stakeholders pointed out another key factor that is ensuring easy access for consumers, ideally through the use of dedicated tools (physical and/or online). This can be achieved by expanding collection channels to reach different audiences, such as public containers, donation centres run by social enterprises, retail take-back programs, online returns, and pop-up collection events.

A non-exhaustive list of textiles collection methods⁶ are shown below:

- Direct donations: donations directly handed over by end-users to social enterprises or charities in second-hand shops or reuse centres.
- Textile containers: bins located on public ground (indoor or outdoor).
- Door-to-door collection: collection by charities, municipalities or reuse operators of waste from the doorstep of households.
- Online take-back systems: service offered by textile retailers who propose to their customers to send back their used products (often against a consumption voucher).
- Physical take-back systems: service offered by textile retailers who allow to their customers to take-back their used products via containers located in retail stores (often against a consumption voucher).

At municipal level, the Municipal Waste Management Plan (MWMP) is the key waste policy framework established by local authorities. A MWMP is a strategic roadmap that outlines how a local government will collect, transport, process, and dispose of the household waste generated within its jurisdiction. At a strategic level, many EU Member States are encouraging the consolidation of municipal waste services into clusters—such as districts, counties, or provinces. This collaborative approach to waste treatment and landfill management facilitates economies of scale, improving overall operational efficiency.

Concerning urban waste management services (including source collection, transport, and treatment), local authorities should prioritize reuse over recycling. This requires shifting the economic and operational focus of municipal waste procurement contracts from a 'tonnage-based' model to a 'performance-based' one. This ensures contractors are incentivized to keep materials at their highest value rather than simply processing them as bulk.

⁶ RREUSE & CISUTAC project (2024). Unlocking opportunities for circular business models in textiles: phasing out linearity.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR BEST PRACTICES	CODES
Regulatory and strategic plans category	
The Municipal Waste Management Plan (MWMP) ought to align textile collection system with the waste hierarchy by prioritizing prevention and fostering local reuse systems, especially for clothing.	A
To prioritize reuse over recycling within the Terms and Conditions of a municipal waste management procurement contract , for instance including social reservation or a destination hierarchy clause. And, finally, ensuring that non-reusable textiles are recycled. At the same time, set targets for local used T/C reuse and T/C waste recycling at the MWMP and monitor them.	A
Waste collection system must take into account local specificities such as urban or rural environments. Furthermore, the municipality should improve accessibility for consumers by leveraging specific tools and diversifying collection channels to reach different target groups: bring banks, collection centres/donation points run by public and social enterprises, take-back in retail outlets or on-line returns, pop-up collection events, etc.	A
Development of preparation for re-use public infrastructure as part of the municipal waste management system. where citizens can drop off unlimited number of unnecessary items and, on the other hand, can pick up some other T/C products. This public service might be upgraded with a preparation for reuse activities, which includes repairing, cleaning, refurbishing items with defects or directly from residents. These reuse activities might be part of a social service training or in collaboration with local craftsmen or private repairing business.	C
Leverage zoning regulations to designate dedicated spaces for circular activities , including waste management facilities, recycling centres, and industrial zones specialized in resource recovery.	A
Improve or mandate textile waste collection operational efficiency through digital tools , including route-planning software, container-filling monitoring, vandalism tracking and interoperable systems for recording collected kilograms and final destinations.	A
Economic instruments category	
Implement a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) system to boost waste sorting efficiency and generate cleaner material streams, thereby increasing recycling rates and minimizing landfill disposal. This system incentivises proper waste separation by rewarding compliant households and businesses while penalizing those	A

who fail to sort correctly.	
It is essential to establish financial and fiscal incentives to encourage circular consumption . Key measures include tax rebates, deductions, and vouchers linked to circular behaviour, as well as financial rewards for customers who responsibly dispose of their used textiles.	A
Soft instruments category	
Inform and educate citizens on the correct disposal of all textile products , correcting misconceptions and explaining that clothing should be treated as a separate waste stream. Public misconception: textile recycling is widely perceived as being exclusively associated with second-hand retail or donation, rather than as part of an integrated textile waste management system that should be properly monitored and managed.	A
Success in any municipal waste collection system relies on effective behaviour change. Consequently, municipalities advocate for comprehensive awareness campaigns, school and local business partnerships , and targeted initiatives to educate citizens on the proper usage of textile collection system and waste reduction.	A
To Implement a digital tool designed to maximize the recovery of high-quality textiles by facilitating on-demand residential collection appointments and integrating geospatial mapping tools, with the potential to be shared at the county or regional level, to identify the most proximate drop-off infrastructure. This platform might include guidelines and tips on how to manage unused textiles and clothing, as well as any other sort of household product or waste.	B
Promote the rollout of intuitive sorting systems that simplify at-source textile separation for households and businesses . Practical examples include distributing household textile-sorting guide magnets or launching a dedicated app to clarify what, how, and where to discard.	A
Establish a team of waste educators —potentially volunteers—to promote sustainable best practices and foster individual environmental commitment.	B
Foster inter-municipal agreements and regional / county platforms to align efforts in textile collection, recovery, and broader sustainability initiatives.	A

New circular companies and business

New circular economy companies must leverage their unique technologies and methodologies to help close the loop. Within the waste hierarchy, preparing items for reuse—which principally consists of sorting, quality assessment, cleaning, and repair—ranks just below prevention. Promoting second-hand shops and repair businesses is therefore essential to divert textile and clothing (T/C) products from landfills. Additionally, innovative models such as "product-as-a-service" and sharing platforms are already gaining traction in the market.

Participatory processes conducted through VERDEinMED national hubs highlighted the following key action lines for this pillar:

1. Encourage preparation-for-reuse initiatives driven by both local authorities and the private sector.
2. Establish an incentive framework to lighten the tax burden on preparation-for-reuse businesses.
3. Inform citizens about existing preparation-for-reuse services within their municipality and surrounding areas.

Besides these action lines, consumer capacity building—as a lever for citizen empowerment—is key to extending the lifespan of textile and clothing (T/C) products. For this reason, citizen-led repair operations can take various forms, including repair cafés, do-it-yourself (DIY) workshops, brand-provided repair kits, and step-by-step DIY repair guides.

Another major component of preparation for reuse is establishing the infrastructure needed for effective reuse services and distribution channels. Reuse services encompass a wide variety of models, including in-store resale—such as second-hand stores, market stalls, charity shops, and commission-based consignment stores—alongside online resale businesses (B2C), online peer-to-peer marketplaces (C2C), and online auctions. Additionally, this ecosystem features community-driven and corporate alternatives like flea markets, swap events, clothing libraries, and brand-owned resale programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR BEST PRACTICES	CODES
Regulatory and strategic plans category	
Establish public preparation for reuse centres designed not only to divert waste from landfills but also to serve as social hubs for workforce development. These centres will create meaningful job opportunities and vocational training for students and individuals seeking employment.	C
Support circular and social economy growth through shared public hubs . These spaces will house essential services like repair shops, laundromats, second-hand boutiques, and upcycling projects.	A
Launch an Urban Circularity Lab within the municipal business incubator, offering a collaborative platform for companies to invent, test and scale their circular economy solutions.	B
Capacity building: Municipal business incubator might launch municipal ' Circular Fashion ' programs. Cities can effectively merge repair, reuse, and social entrepreneurship. This strategy equips community members with practical hands-on skills and accelerates the launch of green business startups.	B
Regional Accessibility: Launch (and provide support) a flagship repair workshop in each county, region, or major city district to act as a local benchmark.	A
Economic instruments category	
Fiscal Frameworks for Circularity: Reducing municipal taxation for reuse, repair, and upcycling enterprises constitutes an emerging urban policy instrument aimed at driving the circular economy. By lowering operational expenditures, these tax incentives enable businesses that extend product life-cycles to compete effectively with primary goods markets. Municipal support typically targets adjustments in three core areas: (i) waste management fees, (ii) property taxes, and (iii) business activity taxes.	A
Implementation of repair vouchers: Implement repair vouchers as fiscal incentives to reduce costs associated with textile and footwear restoration. These instruments can be executed as universal point-of-sale discounts or structured as targeted subsidies for low-income demographics to mitigate waste.	A

Social wardrobe vouchers: Municipalities can establish social reuse wardrobes where families in need can apply for vouchers to obtain second-hand garments. These initiatives can be enhanced by preparation-for-reuse actions that improve overall product condition.	A
Soft instruments category	
Regional Visibility Framework: Establish a municipal registry capturing textile and footwear repair services, dry cleaners, second-hand boutiques, and broader sustainable enterprises to optimize citizen accessibility; a framework designed with the scalability to encompass neighbouring jurisdictions. Concurrently, the local authority's digital platform will feature a dedicated mapping tool of these textile-service providers thereby reinforcing their strategic role within the high-value textile and footwear segment.	A
Counter consumer scepticism: Design targeted messaging to dismantle negative perceptions, price myths, and green-washing doubts.	A
Promote Regional Businesses: Educate local audiences about available circular solutions, repair hubs, and sustainable businesses in their area.	A
Strategic Funding: Create a comprehensive catalogue of local incentives, actively leveraging European project funding and inter-municipal consortia to secure long-term financial resilience.	A

Create market demand for local & recycled material

To increase the demand of recycled (and local) textile products is a cornerstone towards sector circularity. As reuse and recycling capacities in Europe are limited, a large share of used textiles collected in the European Union (EU) is traded and exported to Africa and Asia. So, it makes no sense to increase the collection without having an internal demand to recover those products.

According to local authorities, their ability to stimulate market demand relies chiefly on public procurement. This makes government purchasing an essential trial environment for ecodesign, circular goods, and service-based business models—including leasing, maintenance, repair, take-back schemes, and product longevity.

Public procurement represents around 14% of EU gross domestic product (GDP) and is a key policy tool to support innovation, competitiveness and investment. The reform aims to strengthen its role in supporting European competitiveness, resilience and economic security⁷.

Green public procurement (GPP) is defined as “a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured⁸”.

Joint Research Centre (JRC)⁹ highlighted that green public procurement criteria can be included in a public tender in several different aspects such as the following ones:

- **Selection criteria.** When assessing ability to perform a contract, contracting authorities may take into account specific experience and competence related to environmental aspects which are relevant to the subject matter of the contract. They may also exclude operators who are in breach of environmental law in some cases, and - for service and works contracts only - ask specifically about their ability to apply environmental management measures when carrying out the contract.

⁷ European Commission Public Procurement website: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/public-procurement_en

⁸ European Commission. (2008). Public procurement for a better environment (COM(2008) 400 final).

⁹ European Commission. (2011). Buying green! A handbook on green public procurement (2nd ed.).

- **Technical specifications.** These constitute minimum compliance requirements that must be met by all tenders. They need to be related to characteristics of the work, supply or service being purchased itself – and not to the general capacities or qualities of the operator. It is also very important that they are clear, understood by all operators in the same way and verifiable.
- **Award criteria.** These can be used to stimulate additional environmental performance without being mandatory and therefore without foreclosing the market for products not reaching the proposed level of performance.
- **Contract performance clauses.** These specify how a contract must be carried out. For supply contracts, the main opportunity for the use of environmental clauses is often to specify how the goods will be delivered.

The proposed criteria state by JRC are split into two main areas according to the revision of the EU GPP criteria¹⁰. The first area focuses on textile products directly purchased by a contracting authority. These criteria align closely with the EU Ecolabel for textiles, adjusting ambition levels to match market availability and ease of verification. Fibre sourcing, chemical restriction, durability & lifespan extension, energy conservation and design for re-use and recycling are the useful criteria when purchasing textiles with a reduced environmental impact.

The second area covers textile-related services, such as leasing, laundry, asset management, and end-of-life take-back. Because these services fall outside the EU Ecolabel scope, their criteria are developed through independent research. Incorporating criteria such as maintenance of the textile assets, take-back systems for end-of-life products, fabric selection to minimise drying and ironing energy use and laundry energy and detergents use are the recommended criteria when evaluating the most environmentally friendly bidder.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR BEST PRACTICES	CODES
Regulatory and strategic plans category	
Prioritize life-cycle assessment (LCA) and recycled content in public procurement: Municipalities should implement public procurement processes based on life-cycle assessment (LCA) criteria, prioritizing the purchase of goods with lower environmental impact and with recycled content. Furthermore, the city will	A

¹⁰ Dodd, N., & Gama Caldas, M. (2017). Revision of the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) Criteria for Textile Products and Services. JRC.

actively disseminate the lessons learned from these sustainable practices to foster broader institutional adoption.	
Introduce procurement criteria related to durability, repairability, recycled or bio-based content, traceability and compliance with chemical requirements .	A
Encourage the adoption of recognised ecolabels and product certifications , as well as transparency tools such as digital product information, to strengthen buyer confidence and reduce green-washing risks.	A
Incorporate 'easy de-branding' in public procurement: Public procurement for uniforms, workwear, and municipal garments must prioritize 'easy de-branding' specifications. Requiring detachable logos and name tags instead of permanent embroidery or printing ensures these textiles can be seamlessly reused in future cycles.	A
Leverage reserved public contracts for social and circular innovation: Municipalities should utilize reserved public contracts to support enterprises driving social and circular innovation. By prioritizing local, regional, and domestic production over long-distance imports, local authorities can simultaneously minimize transportation impacts and boost the green economy.	A
Soft instruments category	
Develop model Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria: Municipalities should develop model Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for uniforms, equipment, and promotional materials to ensure all public purchases meet rigorous sustainability and circularity standards. These comprehensive guidelines will serve as a standardized framework to minimize environmental impact across all municipal departments.	A
Promote local demand and circular markets: Local authorities should support local demand by promoting reuse markets, textile fairs, and circular public events , while strengthening cooperation with local reuse and upcycling actors. This strategic engagement fosters a robust market for sustainable goods and embeds circular consumer habits within the community.	A
Stimulate cooperation between brands, manufacturers, collection entities and public bodies so that increased collection is matched by stronger domestic reuse, recycling and material valorisation demand.	A

Communication on sustainable consumption & consumers habits changing campaigns

Sustainable consumption campaigns are recognized as highly actionable, immediate local interventions that complement all other strategic pillars. While they do not rely on legislative or financial instruments, **municipalities emphasize the importance of soft measures**. These include school-based programs, informational activities in retail stores, and targeted communication initiatives that encourage responsible consumption and extend the lifespan of clothing items.

Local authority needs to develop a communication strategy that emphasizes transparent, truthful, consistent, relevant, and clear messages. These should be delivered through local channels and directly linked to practical services.

Local authorities can turn national and EU circular textile goals into practical, everyday guidance for households, educational centres, businesses, local associations, and municipal departments. The core behavioural message must be simple and consistently repeated: use textiles longer, repair, reuse, exchange, and only then recycle. This should be supported by 'buy less, buy better' campaigns, textile care and washing guidance, and data on microfibre release from synthetics. Additionally, communications should explain how high-quality donations boost reuse potential and help citizens spot green-washing by identifying vague or unverifiable environmental claims.

Educational centres play a vital role in this strategy. Local authorities can partner with schools to host textile repair workshops, clothing swap days, circular fashion challenges, and visits to reuse centres. These educational activities on waste prevention impact children, parents, and the broader community, effectively normalizing repair and reuse as positive, practical daily habits.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR BEST PRACTICES	CODES
Regulatory and strategic plans category	
The local authority communication strategy must align with the waste hierarchy by prioritizing waste prevention messages and promoting a local reuse system, with a particular focus on clothing.	A
Incorporate public awareness and communication obligations directly into the Terms and Conditions (T&C) of municipal waste procurement contracts .	A
Establish a single local information point —or develop comprehensive communication materials such as leaflets or tourist-style maps—that highlights collection locations, repair services, reuse centres, upcoming events, and proper disposal instructions.	A
Foster regional collaboration by launching coordinated, inter-municipal campaigns designed to promote responsible fashion choices and scale up textile reuse across neighbouring territories.	A
Soft instruments category	
Inform and educate the public on the correct disposal of all textile products , correcting common misconceptions and clarifying when clothing can be donated versus when it must be treated as textile waste.	A
Launch large-scale campaigns to drive consumer behavioural change by hosting regular repair cafes, hands-on workshops, and promotional events.	B
Highlighting the environmental and economic advantages of purchasing products with recycled content to stimulate local market demand for circular goods.	A
Provide practical guidance on textile care, washing practices, and microfibre reduction, with a specific focus on synthetic textiles.	A
Decouple circular textiles from social assistance in public awareness campaigns, promoting them as high-quality, modern lifestyle choices. Utilize endorsements from public figures to effectively drive this cultural shift and foster sustainable consumer behaviour.	A

Governance, policy assessment & integration and cooperation

Waste circularity governance refers to the policies, regulations, and collaborative frameworks needed to manage waste in a circular economy. This involves systemic change beyond just recycling, incorporating upstream interventions like network governance to coordinate efforts between public and private actors. Effective governance is essential for integrating stakeholders.

Good governance is essential for a successful collection system. While municipalities possess multiple strategic levers, implementation depends on national legislation and broader policies, such as social economy support schemes linked to circular targets. Nevertheless, municipalities should require all collectors to generate and report data, establish performance indicators aligned with the waste hierarchy, and design public tenders accordingly—for instance, by giving social economy actors priority access to textile collection streams. Finally, the system must anticipate the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the subsequent cost-coverage by producers¹¹.

Based on the dialogue with national hub stakeholders, the following main action lines have been identified:

1. Data & Digital Frameworks. This line focuses on transitioning from flat-rate waste management to a data-driven system.
2. Regulatory Alignment & Governance. This line seeks to ensure that circularity transitions from an abstract goal to a legally binding municipal obligation. It formally embeds dedicated textile roadmaps and uniform performance indicators directly into existing Municipal Waste Management Plans (MWMP). Furthermore, it creates institutional mechanisms to align local policies with evolving regional, national, and European frameworks while actively lobbying higher government levels to remove regulatory barriers.

¹¹ Zero Waste Europe. (2023). How to collect, sort, and reuse textile waste locally?. Zero Waste Cities.

3. Municipal Support & Standardization. Designed to eliminate the current regulatory gap, this action line provides operational standardization for public administrations. It establishes clear technical requirements for public and retail collection points, defines private collector responsibilities, and delivers "turnkey" model plans and pre-drafted ordinance templates. This allows municipalities of all sizes—regardless of technical staffing—to swiftly deploy legal frameworks.
4. Strategic Partnerships & Circular Ecosystems. This action line aims to build the collaborative infrastructure necessary to scale up the textile economy. It drives inter-municipal cooperation to achieve economies of scale for sorting facilities, promotes cross-sector industrial symbiosis (e.g., converting textile waste into raw materials for the construction and furniture sectors), and fosters alliances between industry leaders, NGOs, and local government to co-create circular business models.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR BEST PRACTICES	CODES
Regulatory and strategic plans category	
Mandate granular data reporting for PAYT frameworks: Local authorities must require all textile collectors to generate and report detailed data to local councils to support waste fee incentives based on a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) model. By utilizing precise waste generation traceability per person or household, this data-driven framework will effectively reward circular behaviour and reduce textile waste.	A
Establish standardised technical requirements for textile collection : Develop comprehensive guidance for local authorities—tailored to both large cities and small municipalities—covering minimum technical requirements, private collector responsibilities, placement of collection points in public spaces and retail stores, and data transparency obligations for performance monitoring.	A
Integrate circularity roadmaps into Municipal Waste Management Plans (MWMP) : Address the current lack of dedicated textile strategies by formally embedding specific textile circularity roadmaps into existing MWMP. This institutional alignment ensures that textile waste reduction and resource recovery become core, legally binding objectives within established municipal waste frameworks.	A
Develop a model Municipal Waste Management Plan (MWMP) and standardised textile-related ordinance templates to help local authorities quickly draft and implement effective local regulations and sectoral plans.	A

Clarify and disseminate multi-level regulatory frameworks: Effectively bridge the information gap among local authorities by clarifying and disseminating the regulatory framework and multi-level strategies for textile circularity. This unified approach provides public administrations with the essential insights needed to accelerate local policy alignment.	A
Enhance textile waste monitoring and data oversight: Enhance textile waste monitoring by mandating quarterly reports from collectors on local and international volumes, measured in kilograms and units including selective collection per inhabitant, sorting rate, preparation for reuse, recycling rate, share of textiles in mixed waste, service coverage, participation in campaigns and operational losses. This oversight, combined with systematic residual waste characterizations, allows the city to accurately quantify textile leakage into non-recyclable streams and identify high-generation hotspots.	A
Integrate specific textile circularity Indicators for multi-stakeholder cooperation: Strengthen governance by integrating specific textile indicators into MWMP to enable precise flow monitoring and policy evaluation. Backed by national data recording standards and a Ministry-coordinated program, this approach ensures robust cooperation between public authorities, industry partners, and research bodies.	A
Identify and pursue regional strategic partnerships: Identify and pursue strategic partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and regions to scale up the textile and clothing circularity framework. This collaborative approach expands the geographical scope of the initiative, leveraging shared resources to achieve a wider and more sustainable collective impact.	A
Develop a targeted policy advocacy strategy: Develop a targeted advocacy strategy that enables local authorities to influence higher policy levels and lobby for a more supportive regulatory framework for circularity. This proactive approach aims to align regional and national legislation with local sustainability goals, removing existing legal barriers to circular business models.	A
Promote industrial symbiosis across sectors: Promote industrial symbiosis by linking textile waste streams with the furniture and construction sectors to transform by-products into valuable secondary raw materials. This inter-sectoral approach maximizes resource efficiency and accelerates regional circular manufacturing.	A
Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships across the value chain: Foster partnerships between industry leaders, NGOs, and local government to enable the co-creation of collaborative business models across the textile value chain. This multi-stakeholder approach streamlines regional cooperation to maximize the impact of textile circularity initiatives.	A

Soft instruments category	
Develop a centralised online circular economy platform: Create a unified hub for information, resource sharing, and multi-stakeholder networking. This digital tool would strengthen connectivity between businesses, citizens, and policy-makers and help accelerate regional circular economy initiatives.	A
Execute a comprehensive baseline audit of the existing collection framework: Map relevant actors, current contractual obligations, and point-specific volumes (by weight and unit count). This assessment will support stakeholder integration into the new strategy and inform the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for collection, preparation for reuse, and civic engagement, in line with the waste hierarchy.	A
Pilot social economy integration: Align social inclusion policies with circular economy initiatives and use preliminary market consultations to design accessible public procurement procedures that incorporate social criteria.	A

Conclusions

The EU mandates separate textile collection by 2025 to manage around 6 million tonnes of annual waste by shifting from landfill reliance to circular economy models. This huge effort relies on local government services, although municipalities face structural administrative and funding constraints. Municipalities bear the direct pressure of European waste and circularity regulations, but they lack financial resources, skilled staff, and basic infrastructure needed.

Results from the VERDEinMED participatory processes indicate that local authorities can most readily implement regulatory and soft instruments, whereas economic tools demand stronger support from higher levels of public administration.

To effectively advance local waste management, local authorities must mainly focus on four interconnected actions: i. deploying high-efficiency collection systems by implementing diversified models tailored to distinct user needs and urban or rural profiles; ii. procuring waste services strategically to optimize public tenders for textile collection and sorting, ensuring technical quality and operational reliability; iii. refining Municipal Waste Management Plans (MWMP) to fully harmonize local frameworks with EU regulations while remaining responsive to specific local conditions and, vi. communicating with and empowering citizens, as engaging and informing users is a vital prerequisite for local governments to successfully turn their zero-waste ambitions into reality.

Concerning governance and public administration cooperation, the digital transition requires establishing data and digital frameworks to shift from flat-rate waste management to precise, data-driven systems. At the same time, governments must drive regulatory alignment and governance to transform circularity from an abstract goal into a legally binding municipal obligation by embedding textile roadmaps into MWMPs, aligning local policies with European frameworks, and lobbying to remove higher-level regulatory barriers. Furthermore, administrations must provide municipal support and standardization to fill regulatory gaps with clear technical requirements for collection points, defined private collector responsibilities, and pre-drafted ordinance templates that allow municipalities of all sizes to swiftly deploy legal frameworks.

Finally, success may rely on cultivating strategic partnerships and circular ecosystems to build the collaborative infrastructure needed to scale the textile economy through inter-municipal cooperation, cross-sector industrial symbiosis, and multi-stakeholder business models—all while communicating with and empowering citizens, as engaging and informing users remains a vital prerequisite for turning these zero-waste ambitions into reality.

Additionally, the core objectives of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement are to enhance procurement transparency and maximize value for money. To deliver better value, the directive introduces a groundbreaking obligation for contracting authorities to design award criteria that secure high-quality works, supplies, and services; specifically, these criteria must integrate qualitative, environmental, social, and innovative aspects directly linked to the subject matter of the contract. Consequently, green public procurement has become an administrative necessity that must actively drive market demand for low-impact, sustainable textile products.

Last but not least, local authorities are demanding cross-cutting technical guidance and staff capacity building as key levers for the successful implementation of circular economy policies in the textile and clothing sector.

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Bulgarian Fashion Association - BFA^{FA}

Document ID: D 3.1.1

Title: LOCAL POLICY RE-
COMMENDATIONS FOR
CIRCULAR TEXTILES

Work package: WP3 –
Framework to support the
transition of the textile sec-
tor.

Due date: 30/06/2026

Delivery date: 02/07/2026

Dissemination level: Public.



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Project website: <https://verdeinmed.interreg-euro-med.eu/>

Knowledge platform: <https://knowledge.verdeinmed.eu/>



LOCAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIRCULAR TEXTILES

A Practical Guide for Municipalities



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Co-funded by
the European Union