



Leading brands and research organisations team up in new circular fashion project

SCIRT kicks off its innovation journey towards a circular fashion system

For Immediate Release

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Antwerp, Belgium - The SCIRT project held its virtual kick-off meeting on 9-11 June 2021 to begin tackling the issue of clothing waste and recyclability, one of the biggest challenges faced in the fashion industry today.

Gathering 18 partners from five countries, this project aims to accelerate the transition to a circular fashion system through **technological innovation in textile-to-textile recycling**. Coordinated by VITO, an independent Flemish research organization in the cleantech and sustainable development sector, **the EU-funded SCIRT project will deliver a closed-loop recycling solution** for discarded post-consumer textiles, **stimulate conscious design and production practices, create new business opportunities** by boosting activity within textile value chains, and **increase public awareness** of the environmental and social impacts of textile consumption.

As clothing brands are setting ambitious targets and making promises to incorporate recycled fibres in their products, discarded textiles are piling up in abundance around the globe. Though it would seem that the stars of supply and demand have aligned for this part of the circular economy, the truth is that **less than 1% of textile waste is recycled into new textile fibres**, according to an Ellen MacArthur Foundation report published in 2017. This minuscule percentage is indicative of a greater problem—**achieving circularity in the fashion industry is not just a question of supply and demand, but of the connection between the two**. There is a lack of knowledge surrounding the technological, economic and environmental feasibility of recycling fibre mixtures, and a need to align the quality and cost of recycling processes with the demands of textile companies and fashion brands.

SCIRT will develop solutions to support systemic innovation towards a more circular fashion system and bridge this supply-demand gap. To address the demand side of the equation, SCIRT will demonstrate **a complete textile-to-textile recycling system for discarded clothing**, otherwise known as post-consumer textiles, involving stakeholders throughout the value chain and focusing on the recycling of natural and synthetic fibres, as well as fibre blends. With the support of technical partners and research institutes, clothing brands **Decathlon, Petit Bateau, Bel & Bo, HNST and Xandres**, will develop, prototype and produce six different representative types of apparel using post-consumer recycled fibres. These **include formal and casual wear, sportswear, underwear and uniforms**. Through this endeavour, SCIRT will prioritise quality and cost-effectiveness in order to ensure market confidence and **encourage the broad uptake of post-consumer recycled fibres**.



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From a non-technological perspective, **SCIRT will develop supporting policy measures and tools** to facilitate the transition towards a circular system for apparel. This includes a framework for an eco-modulated **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system** and a **True Cost Model** to quantify circularity and increase value chain transparency. Special attention will also be given to the consumer perspective—a **Citizen Lab** will be developed to engage citizens throughout the project in order **to understand the perceptions, motivations and emotions shaping their behaviour** regarding the purchase and disposal of textiles.

Over the next three years, SCIRT project partners will work to overcome current technological, economic, socio-economic and regulatory barriers faced in textiles recycling **to achieve a real, lasting circular fashion economy**.

Partners

- **Fashion companies:** [Bel&Bo](#), [HNST](#), [Decathlon](#), [Xandres](#), [Petit Bateau](#)
- **Research organisations:** [VITO](#), [CETI](#), [Prospex Institute](#)
- **Universities:** [BOKU](#), [TU Wien](#), [ESTIA](#)
- **Industry players:** [Altex](#), [AVS](#), [Valvan](#)
- **SMEs:** [Circular.fashion](#), [FFact](#)
- **Non-profit organisations:** [Flanders DC](#), [IID-SII](#)

Coordinator

Evelien Dils
VITO

Press contact

Carine Valette
IID-SII
+33 (0)6 4220 4865
contact@scirt-h2020.eu

Contact & Social Media

contact@scirt-h2020.eu | www.scirt-h2020.eu |   



Bel&Bo



DECATHLON



FLANDERS DC

hnst



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