

Press Release

A CIRCULAR EUROPEAN VALUE CHAIN TURNS POST-CONSUMER TEXTILE WASTE INTO NEW GARMENTS FOR DUTCH RETAILER ZEEMAN

- 24 tons of post-consumer textile waste were transformed into nearly 50,000 garments for Dutch retailer Zeeman, with finished products containing 70% recycled content.
- A fully European value chain was established with collection and sorting in France, recycling in the Netherlands, spinning and knitting in Italy.
- The project was initiated by the Boer Group and financed by Refashion, with mechanical recycling led by Frankenhuis, and Zeeman as the final customer.
- The eight-month project demonstrates that closed-loop recycling is both technically feasible and commercially viable, setting a benchmark for scaling textile-to-textile recycling across Europe.

Brussels, 21st October - A closed-loop recycling project has successfully transformed 24 tons of post-consumer textiles into nearly 50,000 garments for Dutch retailer Zeeman, with each product containing a high-rate of 70% recycled content. This achievement represents a major milestone in accelerating textile-to-textile recycling in Europe.

The project was initiated by the Boer Group, with financing support from Refashion, both active partners of ReHubs. The entire value chain was established within Europe. Textiles were collected and sorted in France, before being prepared by mechanical recycling specialist Frankenhuis (part of the Boer Group) in the Netherlands, where colour sorting and defibration took place. Blue and white textiles were selected to naturally influence the colour of the final yarn. The feedstock was then transferred to Italy, where Spinaker spun the yarn and Stella Sky knitted the fabric. Zeeman, as the final customer, played a vital role by defining the type of product to be created and ensuring it aligned with consumer expectations.

The project, which ran over eight months, was designed to test both the technical and financial feasibility of producing garments with high levels of recycled content in Europe. The project successfully showcases that post-consumer textiles can be transformed into high-quality yarns and garments, as well that a circular value chain with collaboration across collection, sorting, recycling, spinning, and manufacturing can be achieved within Europe. An accompanying environmental impact report confirmed the benefits of this approach by replacing conventional yarn with the yarn developed in this project, the

environmental footprint of the product is significantly reduced, including lower GHG emissions, reduced water use, and decreased energy consumption.

Véronique Allaire, Head of Circularity at Refashion commented:

“This project proves that Europe can turn its textile waste into new garments at scale. By building a fully circular value chain here in Europe, we have shown that textile-to-textile recycling is not only possible, but commercially viable. It’s a powerful signal that our industry can lead the shift towards a truly circular economy. “

Mariëlle van Dillen - Senior Buyer Circular at Zeeman commented:

“At Zeeman, we want to show that circular innovations can also be accessible for affordable clothing for everyone. By collaborating with strong European partners, we have proven that post-consumer textile waste can be turned into new, high-quality products that our customers love to buy. The sweaters from this project were a great success in our stores, selling very well and demonstrating that customers value affordable circular fashion. This project brings us one step closer to our ambition to reuse textiles more often and reduce our impact as a retailer.”

ReHubs’ recently updated strategy aims to break the supply-demand deadlock in which recyclers struggle to scale without brand commitments, and brands are lacking access to cost-competitive, reliable recycled fibers. This project shows how collaboration across the value chain from collection and sorting to recycling, spinning, and retail can deliver real products to the market.

This project’s success highlights the power of collective action in transforming Europe’s textile waste into valuable new products. By uniting stakeholders with a shared vision, it has proven that closed-loop recycling is both technically possible and commercially viable. With a circular European value chain now demonstrated, this project sets a benchmark for future initiatives and strengthens momentum towards scaling textile-to-textile recycling across Europe.

About ReHubs

ReHubs is a synergy-driven alliance dedicated to scaling up textile-to-textile recycling and boosting the adoption of recycled fibres. With a mission to recycle 2.5 million tons of textile waste in Europe by 2032, ReHubs unites stakeholders from across the value chain, to build a future where textile waste is recycled instead of being incinerated or landfilled.

About Refashion

Refashion is the French eco-organization in charge of the textile sector's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). It coordinates, finances, and accelerates solutions for the repair, collection, sorting, reuse, and recycling of used clothes, household linen, and footwear. As an innovation driver, Refashion works with industry stakeholders across Europe to develop circular value chains and scale textile-to-textile recycling, helping the sector transition towards a sustainable and circular economy.

More information: refashion.fr

About Boer Group and Frankenhuis

Boer Group has been collecting, sorting and preparing textiles, worn clothing and shoes for reuse for over 100 years. Boer Group comprises three collection companies and seven sorting companies in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and an innovative platform. A company part of the Boer Group, Frankenhuis textile recycling processes post-consumer and industrial textiles into high-quality raw materials for further industries.

About Zeeman

Zeeman is a leading European retailer of affordable clothing and textiles, with over 1,300 stores across eight countries. Guided by the brand promise "zuinig vanuit het hart", Zeeman offers fair basics and surprising products for the whole family, with care for both people and the planet. The company is taking concrete steps towards a circular future by increasing the use of recycled materials, developing new systems for collection and reuse, and collaborating with partners who share the same sustainability ambitions.

More information: www.zeeman.com

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