

Press Release

Schattdorf, 12 December 2017

TEXAID Textilverwertungs-AG · Militärstrasse 1 · CH-6467 Schattdorf · Tel.+41 41 874 54 16 · Fax +41 41 874 54 01 · www.texaid.ch

***Investing in the future of used textile recycling:
The “Texcycle” research project***

The textile recycling firm Texaid, in partnership with Coop and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, will launch the “Texcycle” research project. The goal of the project is to create a new upcycling raw material that can be used in a number of different fields. With the “Texcycle” project, Texaid hopes to help “close the loop” on textile recycling.

Every year, Texaid collects around 36,000 tonnes of used clothes in Switzerland. The company then ensures these garments are recycled in an environmentally beneficial manner. Approximately 65% of the collected textiles land in the second-hand clothes market. The rest are clothes which are no longer fit to be worn. These garments are downcycled into rags, insulation or shoddy. “Texcycle” seeks to highlight the qualities of these materials so they can be put to better use, such as for the fabrication of high-quality products. By doing so, “used textile” raw materials will be more sustainable than ever.

Taking the “close the loop” approach

The “Texcycle” project, a joint endeavour by Texaid, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Coop, will strive to develop an innovative raw material to use in high-quality recycling. The first step will involve analysing the processes that are currently being used to prepare used garments for recycling, and how these processes can be optimised for other applications. The project is centred around the “close the loop” approach, tackling the question of how textile life cycles can be closed in a sustainable and integral manner. The raw material derived from those garments which are no longer fit to be worn will be recycled for other uses.

Teaming up with science and commerce

Beginning in January 2018, the trio of partners will begin 18 months of intensive project implementation work. Coop’s objective is to evaluate the possibilities of obtaining high-grade and sustainable recycling raw materials from used textiles, and to test the use of such materials in new products. Coop hopes to use the project to contribute to the “close the loop” dialogue currently taking place in the textile field. At Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, the project will be carried out in close collaboration with the Department of Design & Art and the Department of Technology & Architecture. A design-driven research strategy will allow for the highly complex sustainability issues of textile life cycles to be addressed from a perspective that is based entirely on design. What kind of textiles remain after the second-hand clothes sorting processes of today, and how can these materials be processed in an innovative way? What might a new line of products made with materials derived from used garments look like? To support theoretical questions such as these, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences will create various prototypes for newly defined application areas to test their concepts and materials in practice.

The project will be funded by the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI).

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Texaid was founded in 1978 as a charity-based private partnership by six Swiss aid organisations (Swiss Red Cross, Winterhilfe, Solidar, Caritas, Kolping and HEKS), along with an entrepreneur. With its headquarters in the Canton of Uri and branches in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Morocco, the company is one of Europe's leading textile recycling service providers. Texaid has an ISO-certified quality and environment management system in Switzerland (ISO 9001 & ISO 14001) and has been awarded the "carbon dioxide neutral" label by Swiss Climate AG. Texaid employs around 130 members of staff in Switzerland.

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Caption: Sorting facility at Schattdorf (© *Texaid*)