

Sustainable Clothing Roadmap



The Sustainable Clothing Roadmap is a clothing industry initiative established since September 2007 involving over 300 companies along the clothing supply chain and coordinated by Defra to provide a platform for an integrated approach to improving the environmental and ethical performance of clothing throughout the sector.

Industry Initiative Update - Part 1

While it operates out of the UK, it has international linkages in order to influence the global supply chains manufacturing most UK consumed clothes, 90% of which are imported. The aim is to drive sustainability from retailers down through the clothing supply chain and fast track best practice through establishing sound science based EVIDENCE and agreeing prioritised ACTIONS (short to long term) and disseminating industry best practice cases in order to catalyse change throughout the sector.



A baseline 'Mapping the sustainable development impacts and interventions across the life cycle of clothing' was conducted at the start of the Roadmap and discussed with industry to agree where actions going forward could be most effective and where further evidence was required. (The Defra briefing note: Sustainability Impacts and Interventions of Clothing provides more background on this.)

Following on from this, further evidence studies were commissioned by Defra to clarify and agree the way forward on the following key areas which have been running during 2008-2009. These have been informed by over 170 industry participants to ensure they were industry relevant:-

1. Sustainable Fibres and Fabrics (in progress)
2. Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Clothes Cleaning (complete) - to be reported on in textiles Issue 1 2010.
3. Maximising the Reuse and Recycling of UK End of Life Clothing (complete)
4. 'Public Understanding of Sustainable Clothing' (published) on consumer perceptions and behaviour of sustainability and clothing. This will be of interest to organisations aiming to influence or communicate with consumers about sustainability and clothing.

To generate partnerships between those countries where UK clothing is manufactured demonstration projects on key topics are underway. To date these have been with India where the following two projects are taking place:

- Eco-Efficiency in Indian Dye Houses (in progress until 2010)
- Sustainable Design – India/UK linkage (in progress until 2010)

Reported on in the news item 'Shared Talent India' on page 6 in this issue of textiles.

The 'Summary of Defra Commissioned Projects under the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan', outlines the objectives, steering groups and consortia for each of these studies. Final reports are published on the Roadmap website so industry can use them.

Taking action in targeted areas to effect the greatest change

In addition to identifying the way forward, the Roadmap aims to walk the talk so the first Sustainable Clothing Action Plan was launched at London Fashion Week in February 2009. Due to popular demand from more industry stakeholders to participate a second updated Sustainable Clothing Action Plan was published in September 2009. The Action Plan sets out actions from over 38 clothing/ fashion companies and support organisations to improve the sustainability performance of clothing in the following key target areas:-

1. Improving environmental performance across the supply chain, including:
 - Sustainable design



Key focus areas for the Defra studies



- Fibres and fabrics
- Maximising reuse, recycling and end of life management
- Clothes cleaning
2. Consumption trends and behaviour
3. Awareness, media, education and networks
4. Creating market drivers for sustainable clothing
5. Instruments for improving traceability along the supply chain (environment, ethics and trade)

As these actions complete, best practice case examples from these are published on the Roadmap website to inspire similar actions throughout the sector.

New evidence on clothes cleaning and reuse/recycling

The Defra commissioned industry evidence projects on 'Reducing the Environmental Impacts of Clothes Cleaning' (to be detailed in the next issue of textiles) and 'Maximising Reuse and Recycling of UK Clothing and Textiles' have recently completed. These are independent studies funded by Defra, informed by industry, peer reviewed and published on the Defra website for industry to use going forward.

The 'Maximising Reuse and Recycling of UK Clothing and Textiles' study

The aim of this project was to report up-to-date, comprehensive and robust data on the quality and quantity of post consumer clothing and textile waste in the UK, and present and evaluate strategies for increasing reuse and recycling in order to divert from landfill. This included a detailed assessment of the barriers and opportunities to maximise reuse and recycling, the technical and economic feasibility of different options, the infrastructure requirements, and examples of best practice from overseas. A pilot scale trial to test textile waste suitability for reuse/recycling was conducted for a representative sample of households in Birmingham, UK. The study recommends key interventions in order to optimise technologies and develop markets for clothing and textile items and their constituent materials, thus diverting more from landfill.

Key findings

The study shows that as of 2007 the status for waste textiles in the UK is:-

- 2.3 million tonnes of textile waste (including clothing, carpets and footwear) is generated annually;
- 24% (498,000 tonnes) is recovered for reuse and recycling in the UK and overseas. Of this, 316,000 tonnes is exported for resale for reuse overseas;
- 47% (1 million tonnes) enters the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) stream to landfill.

Recommendations

The best end of life options for clothing were identified as reuse and recycling. These perform best in energy and waste/resource terms compared to other options e.g. Energy from Waste.

	'000 tonnes	'000 tonnes	% of new consumption
Apparent consumption of new textiles	2,036		
Imports of used textiles	24		
Consumption of used textiles	206		
Total consumption		2,266	100
Textiles entering the MSW waste stream		1,081	47
Textiles collected for resale and recycling	523		
of which:			
Resale for reuse in UK	106		
Exported for reuse and resale	316		
Recycled in UK	23		
Exported for recycling	52		
Rubbish, returned to waste stream	25		
Net textiles diverted from waste stream		498	23
Textiles directly given away	100		4
Textiles to trade waste	44		2
Textiles unaccounted for		310	14

Details of arisings and disposal routes for waste textiles in the UK.

The opportunities to increase reuse and recycling via established and new markets to greater than the current 24%, thereby diverting from landfill, look optimistic on a pricing (currently several hundred GBP£/tonne), capacity and quality basis. Key trends noted are:-

- Collection and reuse/recycling organisations reported difficulties in sourcing enough textiles to meet demand. This has been exacerbated by a marked increase in exports of unsorted or partially sorted textiles to countries with lower labour costs.
- Infrastructure, in particular for downcycling (recycling waste clothing into lower value products) lags behind other recyclates. Downcycling applications (e.g. wipes, mattress filling, building/automotive components) are under utilised at present and have good potential.

In particular, opportunity focus areas for increasing reuse and recycling are:-

- Carpet – a large contributor (17%) to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), with a low recycling rate at present. The existing collection infrastructure facilitated by Carpet Recycling UK, for carpets and carpet tiles, while small can be built on.
- Corporate clothing and textile rental – This has an existing take back infrastructure but with some barriers relating to corporate logos and security requiring resolution. Procurement (public and private) is an important potential driver to enable this. The high percentage of polyester in corporate clothing makes it a potential candidate for closed loop upcycling e.g. via the Japanese based Teijin Ecocircle technology, however this is not available in the UK or Europe at present.
- Footwear
- Consumer clothing – it is estimated that an additional 310,000 tonnes of clothing, are potentially collectable from households at a suitable quality for reuse and recycling, with market capacity.

Part 2 of this article will be published in textiles, issue 1, 2010, titled 'Reducing the Environmental Impact of Clothes Cleaning'.

Publications quoted in the article and other background information are available for the industry to use via the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/products/roadmaps/clothing.htm>
Contact email: products@defra.gsi.gov.uk



Letter from Chair of Membership

Dear Member

I am writing to you on behalf of The Textile Institute Membership Committee of which I am the Chair and Bill Bohm is the vice chair. I am based in Australia and Bill in London. This allows us to cover a broader spectrum of the worlds' textile industry.



As you have been aware, the Extraordinary General Meeting in May showed us all that we need to look at a new strategy for the TI and how we as members can help make a change for a better future. So as a new

representative on Council and now Chair of Membership, with Bill at my side, we are asking for your feedback.

The Institute is the only worldwide professional organisation for all aspects of textiles, clothing and footwear. We are 99 years young and are looking forward to our 100th birthday celebrations next year. This provides us with a great opportunity to work together and increase our membership in all categories: individual, student and corporate.

The best and simplest way to increase our membership is for existing members to recruit friends and colleagues so please have a go.

We also welcome your comments on what further actions we can take, and when we have received these we will put them together with our own ideas and get back to you.

To find out how you can help, contact Stephanie Dick.

To see me in person and hear this message please visit the Institute's home page www.textileinstitute.org where you can view this message as a video link.

Very best wishes

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Council Matters

Elections to Council 2010

Nominations are invited to fill the vacancies that will occur in 2010 for membership of The Textile Institute's Council. In the event of the number of candidates exceeding the number of vacancies, there will be a postal ballot of all voting members. Those elected will take office from the date of the Annual General Meeting on Monday 10 May 2010.

The Council is the Institute's international governing body and is composed of up to 24 nominated members of the duly constituted Sections or Regional Committees and a similar number of elected members by the membership at large. The constitution of Council and the conduct of elections to it are closely governed by the Institute's Charter and Byelaws. Elected members normally serve for a period of three years, after which time they may submit themselves for re-election. However, no member may serve for more than three consecutive terms without taking a break of at least one year. Council normally meets two times a year.

It is from amongst its members that Council normally selects future Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, Honorary Secretaries, Honorary Treasurers, and members of certain committees. It is important to ensure that Council is fully representative, so that it guides the Institute's development in a way that reflects the wishes of its membership.

Please read the notes to ascertain whether you are eligible for election and to ensure that you complete the nomination form correctly which is available via the members-only part of the TI website see below for access details.

Those who would be willing to offer themselves for nomination but do not know how to contact proposers or seconders should contact Stephanie Dick director of operations and membership at The Textile Institute International Headquarters well in advance of the closing date (February 10).

Please follow the instructions below to access the members-only part of the TI website to gain access to nomination forms and view the notes for eligibility, nomination procedure and Council structure and chart:

<http://www.textileinstitute.org/membersonlylogin.asp>
Type in membership number in lower case. Then type password "welcome" in lower case.

NOTES

1. Eligibility

All personal members of the Institute current with their subscription are eligible for nomination with the exception of (i) Ordinary Members (principally those under 25 years of age, unless they are Licentiatees), (ii) those retiring members of Council who have served for nine consecutive years; (iii) undischarged bankrupts or those in similar circumstances; (iv) those who have failed to make payments ordered by courts of law; (v) those who have been convicted of a criminal offence involving dishonesty or deception; and (v) those who have been disqualified from acting as trustees or company