

# Building an Inclusive and Circular Textile Waste Value Chain in India

## Context

India is the world's second-largest textile and apparel producer, as well as the world's largest cotton textile producer. An estimated 900,000 tonnes of textile cutting waste is generated annually in the manufacturing process, of which 60% is cotton. A staggering 73% of textile waste ends up in landfills. The lack of proper technology (e.g., sorting, separating blended fibres or fibres from chemicals) affects the textile recycling potential of this waste. In addition, the Indian textile sector faces multiple socio-economic issues, for instance poor working conditions, long working hours, and low daily wages, especially for women and other marginalised groups. The workers also often lack sufficient capacities and skills, and there is no established infrastructure to collect, sort and distribute textile waste at scale. Hence the need for an inclusive and circular textile waste value chain becomes evident.

## Objective and Approach

The project is funded through the develoPPP.de programme that the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Together with the private sector partners Concordia Textiles, and Purfi along with the Enviu foundation the project is implemented by GIZ India in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The project objective is to demonstrate and replicate a scalable and inclusive textile waste value chain in India. This will be achieved by addressing the key bottlenecks of sourcing, sorting, and collecting textile waste. The model will not only provide effective waste management solutions but also create dignified livelihoods for waste workers. In addition, the project aims at setting up a vast network of solution providers and other stakeholders in order to build a cohesive, circular, inclusive textile waste management value chain. The joint efforts of all partners involved are instrumental in promoting efficient sorting and recycling processes

throughout the country. A blueprint of the business model for a sorting centre will be developed, which has replication and scale up potential to be taken up by public and private entities, as well as brands and manufacturers in the textile sector.

Project name	Building an Inclusive and Circular Textile Waste Value Chain in India
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Lead executing agency	Concordia Textiles NV and Enviu Foundation
Duration	2021 - 2024

The project partners will develop an easy-to-use Textile Waste Management Methodology (TWMM) featuring low-tech, simple methods and basic IT applications which will later be shared with the (informal) waste management sector. In addition, a Reuse Guide will be prepared. This compendium on possible usages of textile waste and its prevention from ending up at down cyclers or landfills ensures economic as well as environmental value. The TWMM and Reuse Guide will be shared for consensus and further adoption with industry partners and solution providers.

Further, the project aims to conduct training programmes based on the TWMM for capacity building of grassroots waste pickers, and solution providers.

## Activities

**Industry level:** Setting up a professional sorting and collecting value chain and sharing the knowledge through:

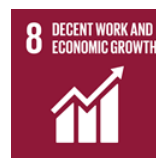
- **Reuse Guide:** Facilitating sustainable solution providers with information on available potential recycling solutions of textile waste.



L. to r: Sorting of textile waste, textile sorting centre and cutting of textile waste.

- *Textile Waste Management Methodology*: Creating a methodology for building long-term capacities of the waste pickers/*chindiwalas* within the value chain.
- *Developing sustainable solution providers*: Providing recycling solutions with clean, well-sorted packages of textile waste that are easy to use and therefore lay the foundation for scaled-up circular and close-loop textile systems in India.
- *Industry Working Group*: Engaging on a long-term basis to meet the supply with demand of textile waste; support in building the enabling framework conditions for textile waste recycling through advocacy and knowledge sharing.

## Contribution to the 2030 Agenda



**Waste picker level:** By fostering job readiness within the company and collaborating with grassroots organisations to implement the textile waste management methodology, the project aims to empower informal waste pickers through its grassroots capacity building programme. This comprehensive approach will enable individuals in the textile waste sector to enhance their livelihoods and economic capacity in the long-term.

**Partner level:** Through the establishment of a model for efficient waste collection and sorting, it will be possible to scale up the project outcomes globally while addressing waste-related challenges locally. This initiative will empower communities by building capacities and job readiness.

In addition, the project is addressing gender inclusivity by empowering women and other marginalised groups. Moreover, it fosters circularity in the textile sector through innovative technologies and waste management. The development partnerships with the private sector enable the project's potential expansion on a national and international scale.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
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As of August 2023  
GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.  
On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)