

Concept Note

Interregional Cooperation for the improvement and harmonization of textile and plastic waste management in the Alps

Interreg Alpine Space Classic project

Priority 2: Carbon neutral and resource sensitive Alpine region

Objective 2.2: Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

Context:

Polymer wastes are one of Europe's most persistent waste materials and an essential component of most mountain technical equipment and infrastructures. This importance has made them a major source of pollution in fragile Alpine environments, because of overconsumption, illegal tipping, lack of recycling, and poor reuse or repair strategies.

The quantity of polymer wastes generated by textiles and plastics in the Alps is important but hard to estimate, as waste sources are numerous and initiatives for dealing with them are diverse and uncoordinated. This waste is not qualified at a global level, which would provide powerful insight about what to do with it, and how to prevent it.

Today, the figures are alarming:

- 5.8 million tons of textiles are discarded every year in the EU¹
- Up to 2.1 million tons of post-consumer clothing and home textiles are separately collected each year in the EU for recycling or sale on global reuse markets, representing approximately 38% of textiles placed on the EU market. The remaining 62% are thought to be discarded in mixed waste streams²
- Almost 7,5 million tons of textile and plastic wastes were exported outside of the EU in 2020³

Common Alpine territorial challenge:

Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy in the highly touristic mountain areas by improving and harmonizing the waste management of textile and plastic products in the Alps.

Project idea

(common needs and potentials)

- Tackle overconsumption, illegal tipping, lack of recycling and poor reuse or repair strategies
- Reducing the fragmentation of initiatives, pooling information and databases on potential resources

¹ EEA (2019) Textiles and the environment in a circular economy

² JRC (2021) Circular economy perspectives in the EU Textile sector

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/fr/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210420-1>

- Support the implementation of sectorial EPR in Europe, with a headstart in France (textiles, sport accessories)
- Fighting illegal littering in mountain areas
- Improving air quality in the mountains
- Improving the efficiency and sustainability of waste management : preventing, collecting, sorting, repairing, reusing, repurposing, recycling
- Open the materials library managed by the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region to interregional alpine cooperation for textiles and plastics

Project objective

What do we want to change? What is the added value? How does the project contribute to the programme?

- We want to change :
 - o **Reduce waste generation**
 - o **Better manage the waste created (identification, repair, reuse, reduce, repurpose, recycle)**
 - o Give pathways to the **green transition of the mountain economy**
- Added value :
 - o **less waste**
 - o optimization of their **management**
 - o **Potential for the creation of new interregional value chains**
 - o **(creation of logistic stream limiting transport CO2 emissions ?)**
 - o (job creation ?),

Specific objectives

What immediate goals to achieve during the project, how do they contribute to the overall project objective (beyond lifetime)

- **Waste identification :**
 - o Quantities, place
 - o Potential for reuse, repair, repurpose, recycling (potential market value)
 - o Level of details to be discussed :
 - Reusable, repairable ? – interesting for the general public and local authorities
 - More details about the products (what type ?) and materials ? – interesting for sorting and recycling facilities
- **Map existing technologies and facilities** to sort and recycle textile and plastic materials in the Alps
- Set the pathway to **creating alpine « recycled raw materials »**
 - o Results will be beneficial to organisations which recycle materials in the region, for creating value chains allowing potential alpine recycled raw materials

Outputs

- Pilot actions :
 - o **Mapping** of existing sorting and recycling facilities in the Alps

- Current **legislation/regulations / link with EPRs** and their implementation – TG : policy makers, industrials
- **Demonstrators** :
 - Pilot sorting line / actions to encourage local waste processing
 - Proposing local solutions: upholstering seats, recovering what is reusable (potential second hand) or repair (local workshop, potentially participative...)
 - Setting up a recycling unit (to raise public awareness and knowledge)
- **Multiplier events** about 5R strategy on targeted areas (ski resorts, public authorities...) in each of the participating regions
 - Focus on specific aspects relevant for each area

Solutions :

- **Toolbox about the existing sorting and recycling technologies**; TG=public authorities, resorts (there is a challenge about the long term pertinence of this output)
- **Proposal for inter-regional services to reduce/limit textile/plastic waste**; TG: public authorities, clusters, associations, SMEs, chambers of commerce, etc.
- **Capitalising** on the platform ACTIF-cci.fr

Consortium

Minimum : 4 countries, 7 partners, and diversity among the partners.