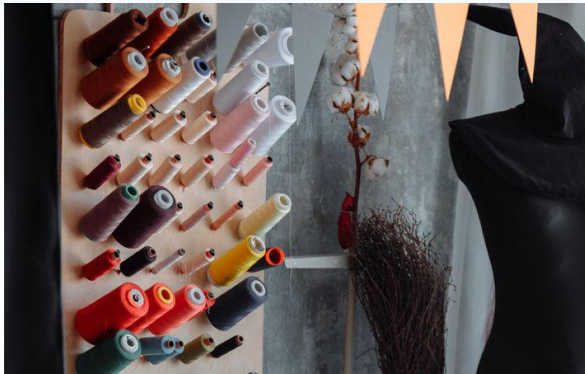


Finland offers new solutions to textile industry challenges



Pic: Pexels/Thirdman

Finland recently claimed it is leading the revolution towards sustainable materials and business models in global textile business. The country offers groundbreaking solutions and knowhow at every level of the sustainable textile ecosystem, from waste handling, treatment, sales and usage, collection and recycling to identification and waste handling, it said.

The currently available raw materials cannot meet the constantly growing demand for fibers and textiles. At the same time, on a global scale, an estimated 92 million tonnes of textile waste is produced every year of which 75-85 per cent is either burned or ends up in landfills.

Leading Finnish firms experts like Rester, NordShield, Emmy, Spinnova and Infinited Fiber Company offer innovations across the textile ecosystem, the government said in a press release.

“By replacing primary raw materials with recycled components or using, for example, wood-based textile fiber, and by keeping already existing materials in the economy as long as possible, we have the opportunity to impact the huge global system and value chains,” said Marika Ollaranta, head of the Bio and Circular Finland programme of Business Finland, Finland’s trade, investment and travel promotion and innovation funding organisation.

“Finnish innovations offer revolutionary solutions that cover the whole life cycle of a textile. Governments, consumers and the industry itself are waking up to the challenges of a very single-use oriented industry, but more work is needed to build awareness and change mindsets and behaviour to make the cycle more sustainable, while also maintaining the level of quality and reasonable costs.”

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Rester collaborates closely with Southwest Finland's municipal waste management company LSJH in a project that brings together the private and public sectors in textile waste handling.

From waste handling to a textile's physical features, NordShield's patented technology enables natural antimicrobial treatment of textiles, free of heavy metals.

Spinnova and Infinited Fiber Company have come up with innovative ways of making fiber out of wood pulp and discarded textiles, while Emmy Clothing Company has created a transparent resale-as-a-service for clothes, which makes it possible for all actors in the ecosystem to participate in prolonging a textile's life cycle.

Responding to the growing issues of textile waste, new textile recycling regulations will come into force in the EU in 2025. However, Finland aims to start the process already by 2023.

Rester, together with LSJH, is opening a textile refinement plant in Paimio, Finland, that will refine end-of-life textiles into raw material fibre that can be used in new products. The plant could become one of the biggest textile refinement plants in Northern Europe, making Finland one of the Nordics' recycling hubs, the government said.

The plant's two production lines will process post-consumer textiles from households and pre-consumer textiles from the business-to-business sector. At its launch, the plant will process 12,000 tonnes of end-of-life textiles annually. The plan is to scale up the volume in the future to double the capacity.

Finnish firm Spinnova makes fibre directly from wood pulp or pulp made of side streams without dissolving and the use of harmful chemicals. The manufacture of sustainable textile fibre made with Spinnova's method generate nil waste or side streams, nil microplastics and has minimal carbon dioxide emissions and water use.

Finnish biotechnology company Infinited Fibre Company is known for technology that can turn discarded textiles into a premium regenerated textile fibre, called Infinna. Infinna has the soft and natural look and feel of cotton and it offers a circular alternative to less sustainable conventional textile fibres that rely on virgin raw materials. The company was recently listed on the 2021 Global Cleantech 100 list.

Infinited Fiber Company is also leading the European Union-funded New Cotton Project, a consortium of brands, manufacturers, suppliers, innovators and research institutes that is breaking new ground by demonstrating an entirely circular model for commercial garment production.

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This is a world first in the fashion industry. Over a three-year period, textile waste will be collected, sorted and regenerated into Infinited Fiber Company's unique, cellulose-based textile fibers which will be used to create different types of fabrics for clothing designed, manufactured and sold by global brand Adidas and companies in the H&M Group.

Finnish biotechnology company NordShield has created natural-based anti-microbial technology that works against bacteria, fungi and viruses. It is free of heavy metals and instead harnesses the ancient power of Nordic forests. In its various forms, the technology can be applied to textiles and fibres as well as medical devices, plastics and even skin.

The recently launched NordShield® BioLayr is a durable antibacterial solution for making consumer textiles anti-microbial. The NordShield® Brilliant technology can be applied to a variety of products, such as for sanitizing hands, feet, surfaces and even community face masks.

Emmy Clothing Company is a leading Nordic online marketplace for pre-owned premium clothing. The webstore enables consumers, apparel retailers and fashion brands to easily and efficiently resell, discover and buy high-quality fashion, with complete transparency regarding quality, availability and delivery options.

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