

SUSTAINABLE LOOK, OVERLAY & SIGNAGE

TEXTILES
CIRCULARITY



The second Innovation Workshop in Sustainable Event Excellence series focussed on solutions to circularity, transparency, materials stewardship, and technical innovations for the recovery of textiles used in events and sports for event branding.

INNOVATION WORKSHOP #7

DEC 2021

The Issues

Signage, branding, scenic design and fence coverings at events can account for huge volumes of single-use plastic, often used once and thrown away.

Textiles are used for items such as flags, banners, barrier jackets, fence scrim, stage masking, and even massive stretched fabric installations on the outsides of venues, stadia and at event entry points.

1. Quantifying the impact

To date, the size and scale of the issue hasn't been quantified, but it's vital we understand this in order to tackle the problem and find sustainable alternatives. Of the events professionals surveyed, 80% did not know the scale of the impact of single-use plastic from the way they dress and brand their event sites.

2. Textile Recycling is Currently Patchy

Right now in Europe and the UK, we can confidently say that the majority of textile-based items used by events are not making their way to recycling.

Textiles are not typically managed by the types of waste companies engaged to service events.

Textile recyclers in Europe are few and hard to find. And certainly there is no easy 'reverse logistics' to get the textiles to the recyclers even if an energetic event manager is motivated to do this.

Watch the Workshop:



The Innovation Workshop

Collaborating towards solutions

To address this challenge and look for pathways forwards, The Ocean Race brought together leaders in events and sports, production houses, suppliers and circularity specialists to focus on solutions to circularity, transparency, materials stewardship, and technical innovations for the recovery of event's look and overlay textiles.

Importantly we also look at what common metrics could be and how to report and share data.

Workshop Content

- Receive an update from the textiles circularity sector and how this will affect us in sports and events.
- Hear about current work, innovations and ambitions in look overlay and signage in sports and events, with a focus on textiles and circularity.
- Split into breakout rooms to focus on the workshop outcomes.

Workshop Outcomes

- Review the Textiles 2050 vision and define practical steps for events and sports.
- Establish a commitment to act - measurement, transparent reporting, and sharing success and learnings.
- Define common metrics, targets and language for our sector's ambition, and alignment with wider textiles circularity work.



Textiles Circularity Update

Cyndi Rhoades from [Worn Again Technologies](#) and [World Circular Textiles Day](#) gave us an overview of the [2050 Vision](#) for textiles circularity. The vision is ultimately for all textiles to be fully circular by 2050. Moving from the R&D and Innovation, through to infrastructure rollout and expansion.

Petra Schweiger from [Accelerating Circularity](#) confirmed that finding textile recyclers in Europe currently is a challenge. They are working on a database of recyclers which will make finding them much easier. Right now, we have all been looking for something that doesn't quite exist!

A key to making textile circularity really work is having the 'reverse logistics' in place. Event organisers have been having a hard time with getting textiles back through waste and recycling systems to the textiles recyclers. This is something that Mauro Scalia from Euratex shared, the development of '[ReHubs](#)' which will facilitate reverse logistics for textiles circularity through five European hubs.



Innovation and Pilot Programmes

A barrier to circularity is our banners, flags, etc, being made from multiple plastic types lending it non-recyclable or labour-intensive to get it to be recycled.



In our Innovation Workshop, we heard from The Ocean Race partner **Helly Hansen**, who has taken samples of textile banners and flags from The Ocean Race Europe for a test pilot 'monomer' recycling,

Tokyo 2020 and Dow Chemical also reported on a similar test of recycling textile items from this recent Olympics.

Project Plan B explained their test pilot in mechanical recycling, with banners and flags from CSM Live/**FormulaE** - with a key learning that materials must be clean to be successfully recycled.

We also heard from **CSM Live** speaking on behalf of **Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games**, and **Paris 2024 Olympics**.

Both upcoming mega-events are looking for innovation and test cases to help advance sustainable look and overlay.

Workshop Outcomes

Breaking into four groups, each considered [Vision 2050](#) for circular textiles and what we can do now in this critical first phase until 2025. We co-created a **Commitment** and **Vision**:

Our Vision

By 2025 we will have:

- ✓ Suppliers/producers take responsibility and facilitate solutions for end-of-life.
- ✓ Recycled content materials and responsible bio-materials automatically the default option offered by suppliers to events.
- ✓ Collection systems and reverse logistics partners are in place.
- ✓ We have awareness and communications campaigns that communicate 'the system' to all stakeholders.
- ✓ We engage participants/audience in circular textiles - such as collection bins for post consumer textiles at events too.

Our Commitment

Towards 2025 we commit to:

- ✓ Become a test bed for innovation, run pilot programmes and test cases in circularity.
- ✓ Commit to sourcing the maximum percentage of recycled/circular inputs possible, from certified sources.
- ✓ Include all stakeholders in the value chain. (including larger players, along with smaller innovators.)
- ✓ Measure volumes of materials used, collected and reprocessed, by material type.
- ✓ Share results amongst our industry - publish results and case studies.



Measurement

Without measuring we can't manage and so the outcomes of our Innovation Workshop was to define common metrics that we can all report to.

Data Collection

Collecting data can be time consuming, often done sporadically and with gaps, and for busy event managers and design teams, keeping everything tracked can be a challenge.

We can create tools or use tools that are developed for our industry, but we still need a consistent hand on the data.

The workshop concluded that the 'data steward' should be the production houses and waste companies.

It is reasonable for event managers to include in agreements with suppliers and contractors that they provide accurate measurement data on textiles (and other) look and overlay materials.

- ✓ Require production houses to provide production measurement data.
- ✓ Require waste companies to provide transparent reporting on textile waste.
- ✓ Include data reporting requirements in RFPs and contracts.
- ✓ Be ready to receive and analyse the data.



Measurement

What Data to Collect

One of the main aims of the Innovation Workshop was to come up with agreed metrics which will allow benchmarking and comparison.

The following were determined as measures we should all be gathering:

Quantity of items	Freight (for GHG analysis if estimated to be significant)
Total m² of material	Percentage single-use and re-used items
Total estimated weight and/or volume	Any sustainability credentials (e.g. ecolabel, % of recycled content.)
Material composition	Volume and/or weight of materials by end processing option



Follow Up

A significant list of follow up action items, considerations or information needed was created in the workshop. This is included as reference for those actively working on this topic.

- Create demand for recycled materials, by requesting it, so that price lowers.
- Open up for the full bio-based alternative to PET - address microplastic.
- Recruit production companies in being take-back aggregators in reverse logistics back to processors.
- Produce items only from a single material, and design so that materials are 100% recyclable.
- Aligning material choices with available recycling processes (mechanical and chemical).
- Understand circularity at regional and global levels and what this will look like. Identify key aggregators that could handle, manage, sort materials (from a volume perspective) to then be disseminated to processors.
- More LCA data and “circularity rate” data for new materials.
- Guidance on best reuse/recycling options depending on textile waste characteristics.
- How far will it need to travel to then be remade into something useful?
- Support textile to textile recycling technologies.
- Understand available traceability solutions.
- Move away from single event thinking.
- Make generic signs/banners that ‘any’ other events can use. Are standardised sizes possible?
- Open discussion around branding materials being re-used in more than one event.
- Storing, washing and reusing year on year
- The whole value chain needs to get into dialogue and work together. Co-creation. And co-designing!
- Cross-industry learning and collaboration.
- Use partners such as GR3N to help close those loops.
- Watch the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes to see how this affects our textiles.



PARTICIPANTS

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