

CASE STUDY

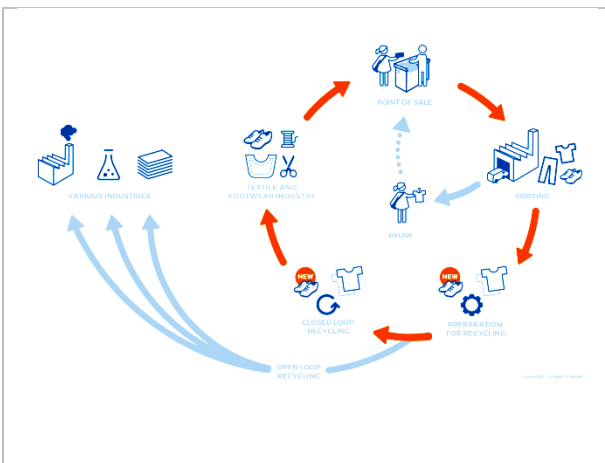
Case Study

 **Solid Waste Management**

The European Recycling Company

Problem to resolve: Our fashion oriented society tends to wear clothing only for a fraction its theoretical length of its possible useful life. Considering that it currently requires between 10,000 and 30,000 liters of water to produce single cotton t-shirt, producing between 1.5-3.6 kg of CO₂, the material is too precious just to throw it away.

Response: Recycling of used fabric fibres for new clothing and other purposes.

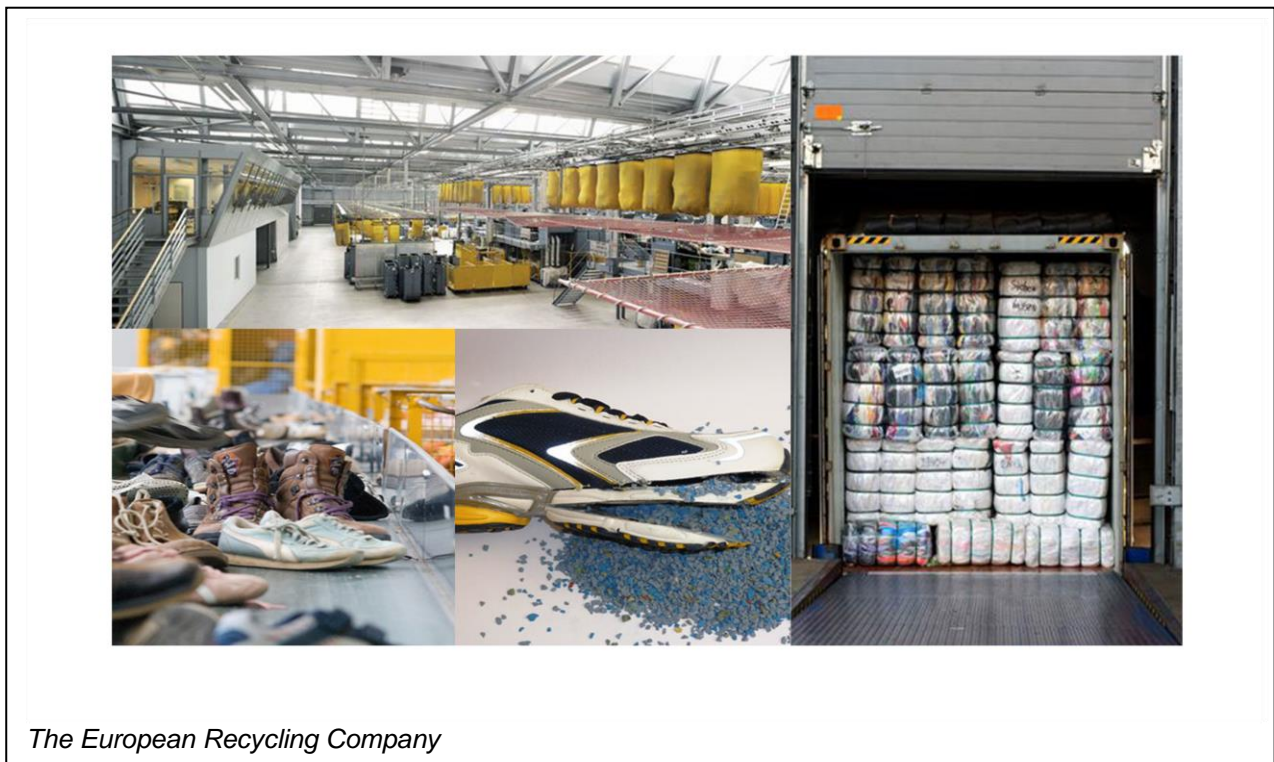


Consumers can bring their unwanted clothing and unworn shoes to the branches of SOEX /I- collect retail partners. As a thank you, they will receive incentives such as a discount on their next purchase.²

With approximately 700 employees and top-of-the-range process management, the SOEC recycling Plant close o Leipzig (Germany) is one of the world's most modern production facilities for textile recycling, enabling up to 400 tons of used textiles to be handled every day.¹

The European Recycling Company assists people all over the UK to provide a new lease of life to their unwanted shoes and clothes. Every day in the UK approximately 2,000 tons of clothing and shoes are sent to landfill. The European recycling company has worked in coordination with local authorities, waste companies and clothing retailers for over 20 years, helping to eliminate landfill. The ERC is part of the SOEX International Group of Companies, employing over 3,500 staff around the world. From the UK, collections are shipped to the SOEX recycling plant in Germany, and clothing is sorted into 400 different grades. The unit produces materials for the manufacturing industry, to suit exact needs and specifications. Products include woolens, fibers, cottons, and acrylics.

Pulled fibers can be supplemented by new fibers, resulting in mixtures, custom tailored for manufacturing. Nothing is wasted in the recycling process, so that tons of zips, buttons, and rivets are extracted and recycled. Even the plastic bags the clothing is collected in are sent for reprocessing. As an aside it currently requires between 10,000 and 30,000 liters of water to produce a single cotton t-shirt, producing between 1.5-3.6 kg of CO₂. Using recycled fibers and material can reduce these numbers by up to 95%.



Credentials

Principal authors: Michael Boldt, Sweco
With Annabelle Cleeve (Mott MacDonald)
Editing: Kosta Mathey and Florian Steinberg.

References

¹ <https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fachbereich-sozoek/professuren/busch/01-welcome/news-container/aktuelle-meldung-2017-06-26.html>

² <https://www.soex.de/en/collect/>