

Guidebook For Circular Textile Waste Handling In Cambodia

A practical guide



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កិច្ចសហប្រតិបត្តិការ
អាល្លឺម៉ង់
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

អនុវត្តដោយ: **giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

FABRIC Cambodia

Purpose and Background

This guidebook serves as a practical resource for textile wastehandlers, waste management companies, and stakeholders in Cambodia involved in post-industrial waste collection, sorting, and recycling. With the country's textile sector experiencing rapid growth and emerging as a strategic sourcing hub for recycled feedstock, this guide provides actionable strategies to improve sustainable waste management practices while seizing new market opportunities.

By offering actionable strategies to improve sustainable waste management practices, it supports business development, operational efficiency, compliance with local regulations and sustainability standards, and collaboration with manufacturers and recyclers. Through these recommendations, waste handlers can position themselves as key contributors to a circular economy.



Why Does It Matter?

Responsible textile waste management drives business growth, protects the environment, and fosters professional, safe operations.

By adopting best practices, you comply with legal requirements and build stronger relationships with stakeholders (workers, factories, recyclers, government etc.) Well-sorted, high-quality waste becomes more valuable feedstock, commanding higher prices and enabling better recycling outcomes.



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Cambodian Context

- **140,000 tonnes/year:** Textile waste generated by Cambodia’s Apparel manufacturing sector.
- **Disposal Practices:** Majority includes landfilling, incineration and downcycling.
- **Recycling:** Scattered, opaque, informal waste handling and limited recycling infrastructure.
- **Waste Composition:** Cotton, synthetics (polyester and nylon), and blended fibers.

Challenges

The challenges in waste management include the non-transparency of waste flows and poor waste tracking, which hinder proper monitoring and disposal. Additionally, contaminated waste reduces the quality of recyclable materials, making processing difficult and increasing waste volumes.

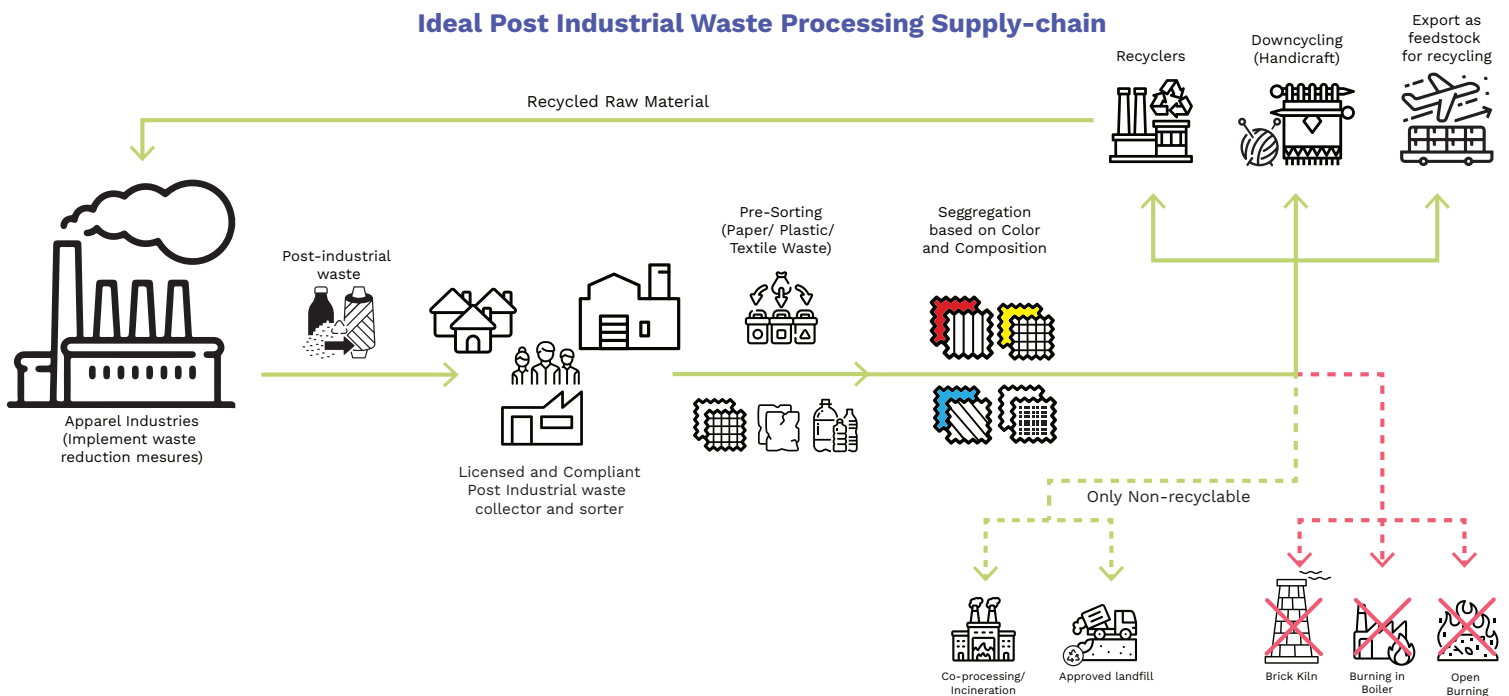
Opportunities

The opportunities include the rising global demand for recycled materials, along with better segregation and tracking, which can unlock significant value. Furthermore, improved legal, social, and environmental compliance enables business growth and enhances professionalism for waste handlers. Refer to the sections on legal, social, and environmental standards to ensure adherence to regulations.

Global Apparel Industry Trends

- **Demand for Sustainability:** Rising focus on recycled materials and eco-friendly practices.
- **Regulations:** EU mandates on recycled content, reparability, and microplastics control and human rights due diligence along the entire supply chain.
- **Transparency:** Growing adoption of digital tracking tools like Digital Product Passports.
- **Circular Economy:** Opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle waste for value addition.

Ideal Post Industrial Waste Processing Supply-chain





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How to use this guide →



For Operations

Refer to the best practices for sorting, storing, and managing textile waste.



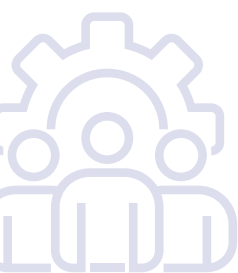
For Compliance

Consult the sections on legal, social, and environmental standards to ensure adherence to regulations.



For Growth

Explore strategies for building partnerships with recyclers and factories to expand business opportunities.



For Operations



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Best Practices



Keep Waste Clean

Keep waste as free from contaminants (paper, plastic, dirt etc.) as possible to enable efficient recycling and minimize environmental impact.



Maintain a Tidy, Organized Facility with clear procedures

A clean, well-organized workspace, including dry, separate storage areas, enhances safety, productivity, and regulatory compliance.



Use Clear Labels

Clear, consistent labeling of waste bales/bags helps with quick identification, accurate sorting, and effective inventory management.



Segregate Different Waste Types

Separate waste streams by material or composition as per recycling requirements to optimize recycling and disposal processes.



Build Professional Networks

Cultivate reliable partnerships with factories, recyclers, and brands to strengthen your waste management operations.



Relocate Burn Tests

Conduct burn tests away from main operations, using specialized areas or equipment to protect worker health and safety.



For Compliance



Legal Compliance



Business Registration

Obtain a Certificate of Incorporation to register and operate legally.



Tax Registration

Maintain proper tax documentation (Patent Tax Certificate, VAT Certificate, and General Department Tax approval).



Waste Collection Permit

Secure official permits from Ministry of Environment to collect, transport, or process waste.

Environmental Compliance



Responsible Disposal

Implement sustainable waste management and traceable disposal methods.



Reduce Landfill Impact

Avoid unauthorized dumping, burning, and landfilling. If incineration or landfilling is necessary, ensure legal compliance.



Resource Efficiency

Invest in or source renewable energy and adopt energy-saving measures (e.g., LED lighting, energy-efficient machinery) to reduce operational costs and environmental impact.

Social Compliance Human Rights



Legal Contracts with workers



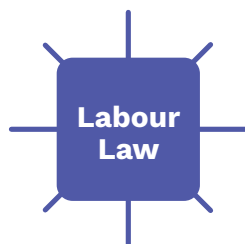
Workers' Benefit



Ensure Minimum Wages



Abide by Child Labor Law



Abide by Forced Labor Law



Freedom of Association



Zero Tolerance Discrimination



Zero Tolerance Harassment

Social Compliance Safe & Healthy Workplace



Well Lit Workspace



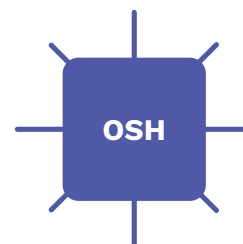
Structurally Safe Building



Well Ventilated Workspace



Adequate Storage



Mark Emergency Exit



Sufficient Fire Safety Equipment



Mark risky areas in the workspace



Visual Safety Guides



For Growth

Waste Sourcing and Traceability



Feedstock sourcing

Collaborate with factories to establish minimum waste segregation, starting with separating uncontaminated textile waste. Gradually introduce more advanced segregation (e.g., by color, composition) as feasible.



Scalable Traceability

Begin by tracing feedstock from source to end-use. Start with basic record-keeping (e.g., spreadsheets), gradually transitioning to digital traceability solutions for enhanced transparency



Value-Added Partnerships

Collaborate with factories and recyclers who prioritize traceability and compliance.

Additional Recommendation



Pursue GRS Certification

After achieving the above standards, consider Global Recycled Standard (GRS) certification to demonstrate your commitment to responsible textile waste management.



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The Environmental and Natural Resources Code

Effective from June 2024

- **Article 159:** Illegal waste disposal is strictly prohibited.
- **Article 173:** Mandates permits for waste activities; outlines application processes and permit types.
- **Article 176:** Requires proactive management of environmental pollution to safeguard public health.
- **Article 236:** Regulates exportation of solid waste and raw materials (permits and approvals required).
- **Article 272:** Bans handling of hazardous waste posing risks to health, environment, or property.

Consult local authorities or legal experts for detailed compliance guidance.



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