

# Circular Procurement - Learnings from a textile pilot

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# Agenda

- Project idea
- Project timeline
- Market dialogue
- Tender criteria
- Learnings



# Project Idea

- The competence center for socially responsible procurement in Bremen wanted to implement circular criteria and pilot joint procurement.
- Previous procurement projects showed potentials of circularity.
- External funding for the 2-year project granted.
- Project goal: publish two circular tenders and pilot the use of municipality-led supply chain auditing as well as joint procurement.



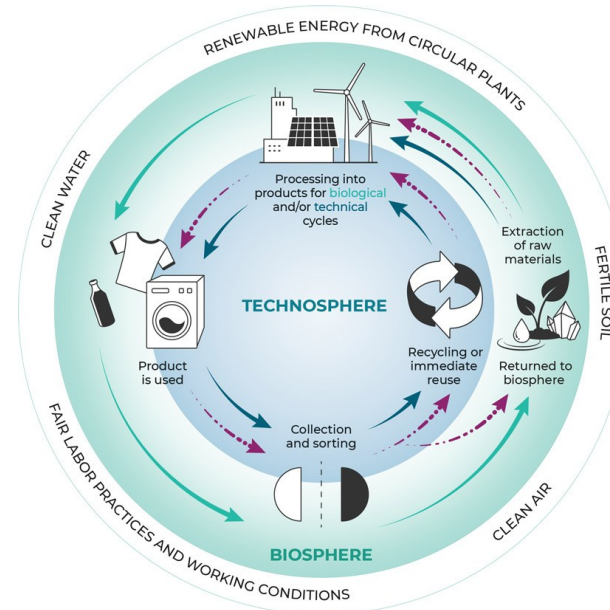
# Project timeline

- Select textile products for a pilot tender.
- Identify which textile products are both purchased plenty and simple enough so that they already offer circular alternatives.
- Find other municipalities or agencies for joint procurement.
- Final project group: Bremen, Bremerhaven, Karlsruhe, Oldenburg, and Police of Berlin.



# Market Research

- What does circularity mean for textiles?
- What criteria would work with our kind of textiles and our usage?
- Which criteria can be operationalized for tenders, and how?
- How can these criteria be verified?
- How can I compare items?



CONSUMPTION IN BIOLOGICAL CYCLES  
CONSUMPTION IN CASCADES  
USE IN TECHNICAL CYCLES



# Market Research

Which brands...

- offer circular textiles?
  - offer products that are suitable for municipal use and are able to meet our standards on volume, branding, etc.
  - are experienced in tendering
  - also meet our social criteria.
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- What kind of circular certification, standards, or labels are available?
  - What about take-back schemes?

T-Shirt aus 100%  
Biobaumwolle  
Weiss-C2C

Art. Nr.: 39202

★★★★☆

**Produktbeschreibung**

- 100% Baumwolle (Bio-Baumwolle kbA)
- BIO DELUXE-Single-Jersey
- Klassischer Schnitt Unisex
- Rundhals-Ausschnitt
- Halbarm
- Gerader Armabschluss
- Abgerundeter Saum
- Gestickte TRIGEMA-Schwinge auf rechtem Arm

+ Muster



# Results

- Circular work wear and fashion items are available.
  - Mainly 100 % organic cotton textiles or a mix of cotton and recycled polyester.
  - Recycled polyester often comes from PET bottles or cutting waste.
  - Only a few textiles are made with recycled cotton or recycled polyester from post-consumer waste.
  - Circular claims and certifications are often unclear or unverified.
  - More items seem to be made for fashion than for workwear users.
  - Learning by doing: Only market consultation and the tender will give reliable answers.
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# First Draft of Criteria

## Lot 1:

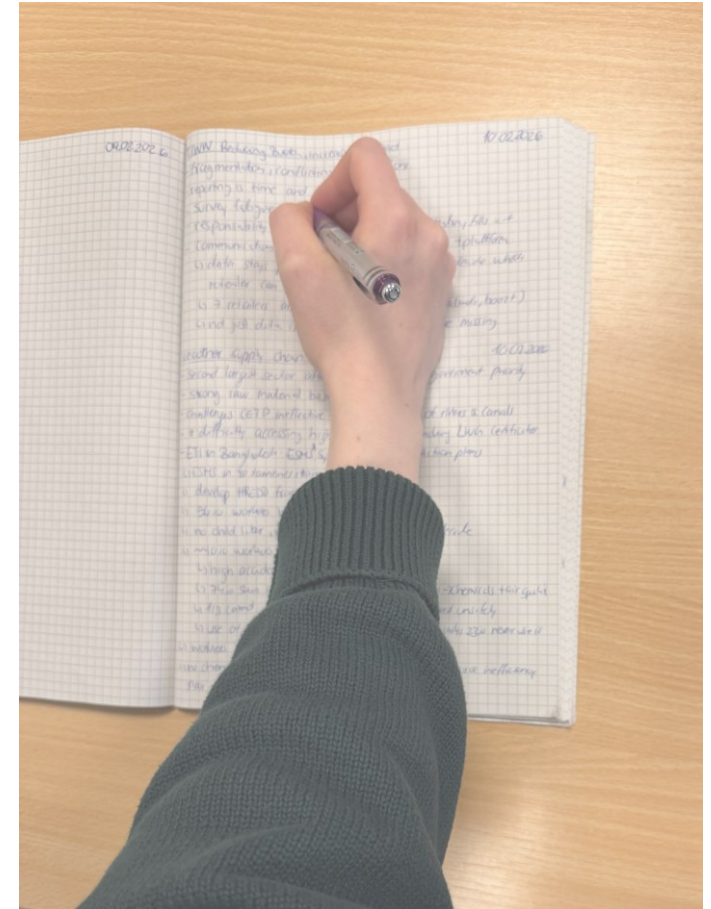
- T-Shirt made with 100% Organic cotton
- T-Shirt made with a minimum 50 % Organic cotton

## Lot 2:

- Polo-Shirt made with a 100 % Organic cotton
- Polo-Shirt made with a min. 50 % Organic cotton

## Award Criteria:

- 30 % price, 40 % quality, and 30 % sustainability



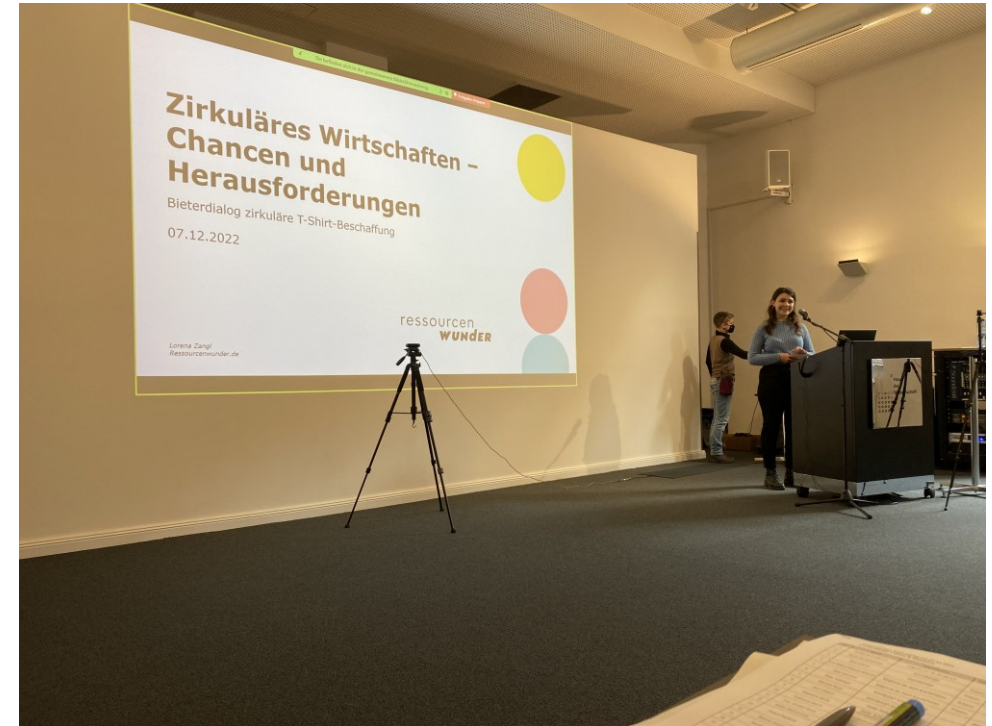
# Market dialogue

- December 2022: Market dialogue with potential bidders and other workwear companies.
- 9-10 manufactures/brands attended, for example, Tricorp, UVEX, Trigema, and Circularity.
- Expert input on circularity and circular textiles.
- Project municipalities presented details of the planned tender.
- Bidders asked questions and discussed the criteria.



# Market dialogue

- Opinions on market readiness varied between companies.
- Companies are hesitant about innovation/pilots
- Our criteria were very specific and don't work well with circularity or smaller volumes yet.
- Take-back schemes are only economical under certain conditions.
- Social standards can be met; auditing might be more difficult.



# Learnings from the dialogue

- A successful pilot might look different: Measure the most ecological or circular option and give more leeway to companies to fulfill standards.
- Joint procurement needs a lot of cooperation and compromise. Solutions to accommodate all criteria can be more expensive or difficult.



## Tender: Product criteria

Lot 1	T-Shirt: 100 % Organic Cotton
Lot 2	T-Shirt: 100 % Organic Cotton
Lot 3	T-Shirt: Poly-Cotton Mix, minimum 50 % cotton
Lot 4	T-Shirt: Poly-Cotton Mix, industrial wash
Lot 5	Polo-shirt: Poly-Cotton Mix, industrial wash

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# Tender Award Criteria



# Tendering process

- Only 3 companies participated in the tender.
- Not all offered products met requirements; 2 lots could not be awarded.
- Moderate to high price increase, but high quality.
- Started dialogue with tenderer and manufacturer in Denmark.
- Beyond Audit at the factory in Bangladesh was commissioned.
- Auditor visited the factory for multiple days and found several issues with labor conditions. Bremen continued dialogue with the tenderer.





## Learnings

- Pilots are needed for clarity, but volume purchased cannot be guaranteed.
- Available return schemes are limited, and their circularity is questionable.
- Beyond Audits are insightful but very expensive and only feasible for externally funded projects.
- Joint procurement can be cheaper and more effective, but only if there are compromises on the range of products and criteria.



## Project results

- Recycling content have been incorporated in the textile tenders.
- Bremerhaven has tried a return scheme. Currently discussing a separate return scheme tender for textiles.
- Bremen is planning a new tender on collection, recycling and usage of old workwear textiles.

**Interreg**



**Co-funded by  
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**North-West Europe**

**Thank you**

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# Contact Information

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# Q&A

What does circularity mean for textiles in your organization?

Do you see a way to include circular criteria in the future?

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