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Moving towards circular textiles through Cape Town partnerships



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“Fashion and The City” Webinar
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Introduction to Cape Town



The City of Cape Town (CoCT) Municipality is located in South Africa (SA), at the Southern tip of Africa

Cape Town Municipality - basic details

- ❑ 2445.5 km²
- ❑ Population 4.76 million (2022 Census)
- ❑ Approx. 1.45 million households (2022 Census)
- ❑ 88% formal, 12% informal
- ❑ Unemployment Rate – 14.20%
- ❑ Contribution to SA's GDP – 8.48%
- ❑ Economic Sectors include:
Finance, Community Services, Trade, Tourism and Manufacturing



Introduction to Cape Town

✳ Wide range of Cape Town neighbourhoods ✳



..... From high end apartment areas



to basic informal suburbs...



..... and everything in between - from functional to luxury



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Scoping the textile waste challenge in Cape Town

The CoCT, with one of its Strategic Business Partners, GreenCape (see later slide) have attempted to quantify/calculate the textile waste landfilled, as shown below:

(from GreenCape's Textile Recycling and Fibre Recovery Industry Brief, 2023:

<https://greencape.co.za/library/case-study-threading-the-loop-textile-recycling-and-fibre-recovery/>)

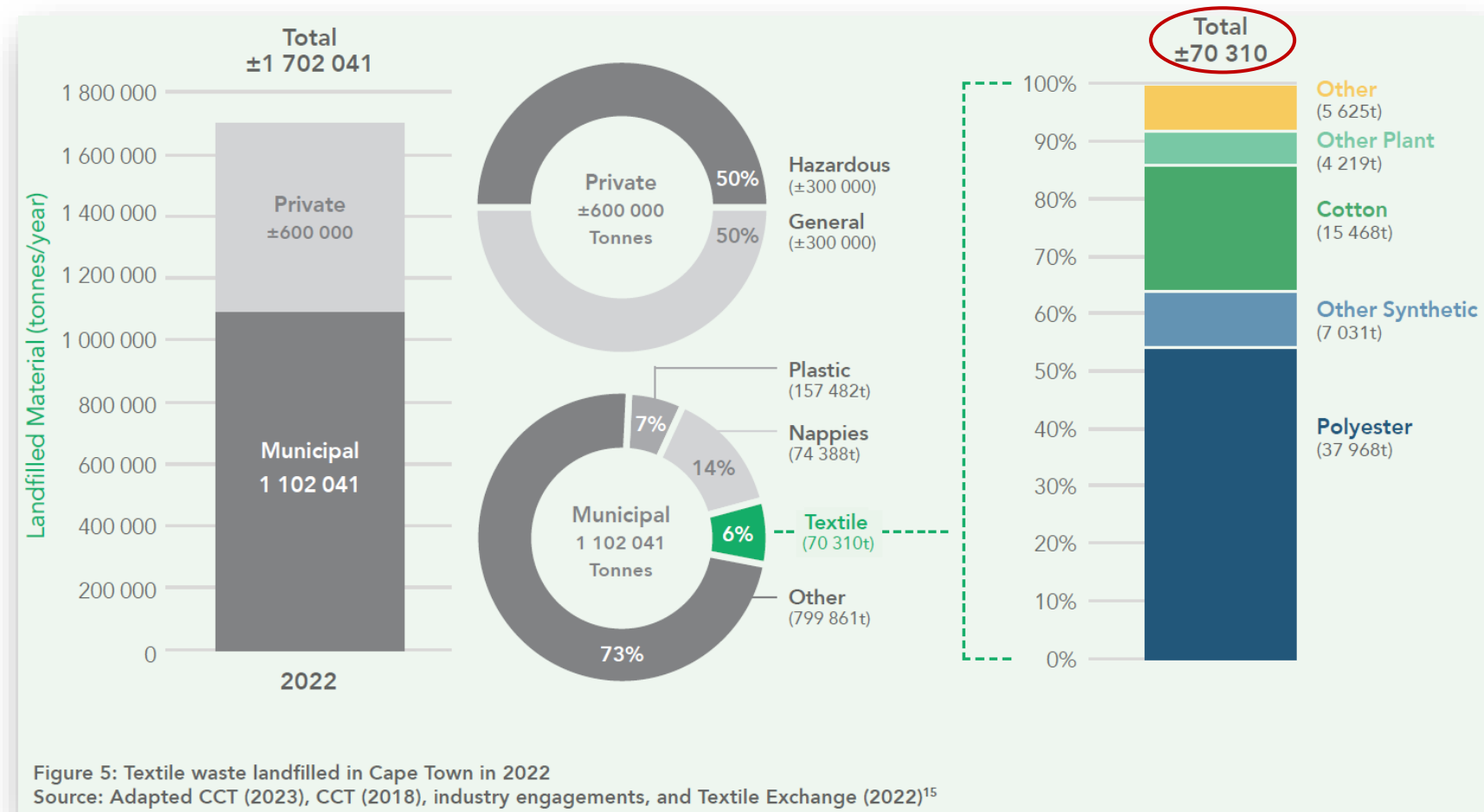


Figure 5: Textile waste landfilled in Cape Town in 2022

Source: Adapted CCT (2023), CCT (2018), industry engagements, and Textile Exchange (2022)¹⁵

Scoping the textile waste challenge in Cape Town

The approx. **70 000 tons of textile waste** landfilled makes up approx 6% of the total waste – higher than envisioned

- It was further found that much of this waste is coming from lower income areas
- Also – there are minimal fabric recycling businesses in CT ~ logistics challenges
- Additional issue – many textiles being thrown into **sewer systems** (see photo)
- The City's has embarked on the “**Bin It, Don't Block It**” campaign to counter this



Help prevent sewer system blockages and overflows by putting your waste in the right place

Bin It. Don't Block It.



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Making progress possible. Together.

Get rid of your waste properly to avoid blocked toilets, drains,
sinks and sewer system pipes



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Get rid of your waste properly to avoid blocked toilets, drains,
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Existing circular textile practices in Cape Town

- ✓ Cape Town has a longstanding personal **second hand** (hand me down) clothing culture
- ✓ Also, thrifting, known as “**pre-loved**” culture, becoming more trendy (stores and markets) – **largely informal**
- ✓ Some Cape Town textile aggregators for recycling elsewhere in SA – e.g. Rewoven <https://www.rewoven.africa/>
- ✓ Many charity shops for used clothing, such as:
 - **U-Turn**, a charity for development and support of the homeless
 - **Help the Rural Child**, a charity supporting rural children & their communities

- **Key challenge** = high percentage of waste donated is not fit for re-sale/redistribution
 - e.g. 60% of U-turns donations not fit for re-sale or redistribution
 - Result – some are investigating partnering with textile recyclers



Cape Town partnerships to accelerate circular textiles

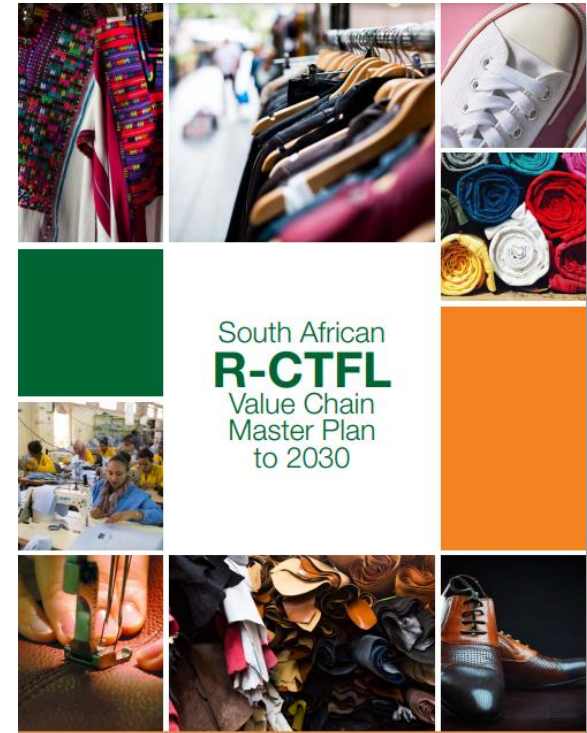


City of Cape Town – funder of the **Cape Clothing and Textile Cluster (CCTC)**

- Not-for-profit initiative to boost competitiveness of clothing, textile, footwear & leather (CTFL) manufacturing industry in W-Cape (since 2005)
- Comprises 25 leading manufacturers & retailers, committed to local CTFL industry

One function is to drive industry-driven
“**National Retail – Clothing, Textile, Footwear, Leather (R-CTFL) Master Plan**”

- National government partner = Department of Trade, Industry & Competition (DTIC)
- Recently added “Sustainability” to one of the Master Plan’s key pillars
- Set up “**Sustainability Working Group**”



Cape Town partnerships to accelerate circular textiles



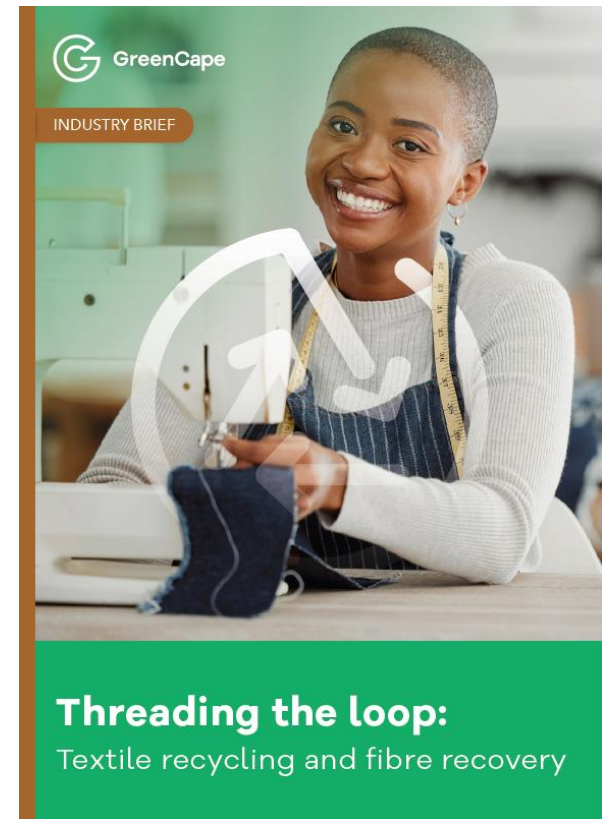
City of Cape Town - funder of the **GreenCape Sector Development Agency**

- A non-profit organisation that drives widespread adoption of economically viable green economy solutions from South Africa
- Funding on a number of projects/initiatives

1. **Waste Sector Desk**- assist City, recycling and related industry, investors & policy makers with:

- ✓ General investor and green economy circular economy-related industry support, as required
- ✓ Annual Waste Sector Market Intelligence Reports
- ✓ Textile Recycling and Fibre Recovery Industry Brief (July 2023)
- ✓ Circular economy case studies

[GreenCape Textile Recycling & Fibre Recovery – Industry Brief](#)



Cape Town partnerships to accelerate circular textiles

2. Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Programme (WISP)

- ✓ A free facilitated industrial symbiosis programme connecting companies to use unused/leftover resources (materials, energy, water, assets, logistics, expertise) of others
- ✓ **Case studies** of successful WISP “synergies”



 **WISP**
Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Programme

Case Study 009



Fabricating Innovation

WISP worked with Farbe Designs and CSK Material Handling to divert 20 tonnes of Textile waste from landfill annually, while also creating R8 000 in economic benefits per year.

 **WISP**
Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Programme

2020



Stuffing for Bears who Care

WISP worked with The Care Bear Project, ATSI and The Courier Guy to help save The Care Bear Project R10 800 and divert 0.18 tonnes of waste annually from landfill

Cape Town partnerships to accelerate circular textiles

3. Sustainable Textiles Summit/Event (April 2024)

- ✓ GreenCape, WWF and CTCC will host a 2-day summit in April 2024
- ✓ Targetting major clothing/textile manufacturing brands and retailers



- Day 1: Decisionmaker focus
 - Raise awareness on and encourage commitment to the R-CTFL Master Plan's sustainability working group
- Day 2: Technical expert focus
 - Share local and international case studies on circularity (& sustainability)
- Focus of the event is providing insight and calling for **collaboration towards a circular textiles sector.**



Thank You

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Making progress possible. Together.