

**French Clothing Producer Responsibility Scheme,
M. Thierry Sénamaud, FEDEREC, Federation of Recycling Industries, France**

FEDEREC is the French “Federation of Recycling Industries”. The Federation has more than one thousand member businesses.

Since the idea of setting up a specific mechanism to assist the recycling and treatment of textiles was first conceived, just over 2 years ago, the FEDEREC Textiles division has been working with other stakeholders including the producers of textile products and the public authorities (Department of the Environment, Minister of industry, in particular). This trade union represents collectors and sorting companies.

1- Why has France decided to set up a mechanism to assist the recycling of textile waste?

The fall of the quality and the prices of new products on the French market, in particular related to the massive imports of textiles coming from outside Europe, had disastrous consequences for the companies operating in the sector of the textiles’ recovery as their expenditures increased dramatically, although collected tonnages dropped.

Moreover, the selective collection and material recovery of textiles’ waste is commercially driven even though there has not been a significant implication for the local authorities so far. On the other hand, those incur the costs of textile waste disposal which is not collected selectively on their territories

Being aware of the weakness of the recycling industries, the French law maker intervened with an aim of promoting a mechanism which will support and promote the textile recycling and material recovery in the long term. It also aimed to carry out ambitious objectives to increase collected and recovered volumes.

France thus decided to set up a device based on the “Producer Responsibility” model.

That led to the creation of a stakeholder group which included:

- Upstream, generators of textile products in the market (manufacturers, importers, distributors),
- Downstream, local authorities, operators of collection and waste sorting

The law of 21 December 2006 specifies precisely on this point :

“(…) any natural or legal person which put on the national market on a professional basis new textile products of clothing, shoes or domestic linen new intended for household use are required to contribute or provide for the needs of recycling and handling of which these products may produce.”

- either the generators of textile products contribute financially to an approved by public authorities body which enter into a convention with sorting companies, and Waste Disposal Authorities and redistributes financial support for the waste recycling and processing operations.

- either by setting up, an individual system of waste recycling and processing enacted in the procurement guidelines.

The Law also adds that it’s question to consider the conditions that favours the position of people facing difficulties to integrate into the labour market.

Two remarks to emphasize this point:

- First of all, the device is not especially built for organisations that support the long term unemployed, but it takes into account the specific circumstances of the sector. In France, organisations that support the long term unemployed are strongly present in the field of the collection (mainly) and the sorting of the textiles. This way, the law maker wanted to safeguard and support the integration capacity of these organisations helping people experiencing difficulties, while keeping in mind that traditionally private companies also take part in this effort.
- The law allows sorting businesses to be compensated for the increased cost of recycling and treatment of the fraction of textile waste that cannot be re-used again, which will have arisen as a result of increased sorting activities.

2- What are the main objectives of the Recycling industry and the textile processing waste?

- Some figures in connexion with the actual situation:
 - 700.000 tonnes of products put on the market in France (11 kg per person) in 2006.
 - 106.000 tonnes collected, approximately (1.7 kg per person) in France. That accounts for 15% of the deposit, whereas it's up to 38% in Germany.
 - In France, in 2006, half of collected tonnages are sorted (approximately 52.000 tonnes).
- Then, several goals have been targeted in the field:
 - It's a question to allow a long lasting activity of the sorting companies while financially supporting them in order to contribute to accept liability for recycling and treatment of waste costs.
 - Another fixed goal is to develop the selective collection and the sorting within the whole national territory in order to decrease disposal costs of textiles paid by local authorities. The purpose is to avoid rising of the flow rate related to incineration or waste disposal costs. Essentially, the objective, in 6 years' term might be to reach a rate of collection of the used textiles up to 30% (210.000 tonnes).
 - Promoting research and development is expected and
 - Supporting the long term unemployed without distorting competition between the private operators and those operating in the charitable/social economy.
 - On the whole the device has to allow to achieve goals related to handling of waste and material recovery (re-use, recycling). The objective, by the year 2013, could be to double the volume of sorted tonnages.

3- How does the scheme work?

One must recall that law provisions in this field have not been yet enacted, except the Law mentioned above. Some rules of operation have to be fixed or specified.

While considering the goals assigned by contributors and sorting companies, one must better understand how the device is functioning.

- *With regard to contributors (generators of textile products)*

The generators of textile products must provide or contribute to recycling and handling of waste resulting from the textile products. They do not have to recycle textile products

themselves. They can choose how they wish to fulfil their obligation. However, the setters on the market will almost certainly prefer to contribute financially to one or more Eco-agency (which will have to be approved by public authorities). This "Eco-agency" will deal with their obligations in exchange of contribution to the unit (a piece) making available to the market, with several scales according to the size of the pieces.

Currently, only one Eco-agency is about to submit its request for approval. The Eco-agency will be having an approval for a maximum period of 6 years, it will have to take care to allow long lasting activities and to develop a stakeholder group of sorting, re-use, recycling and recovery while contributing to the management of waste.

Also, procurement guidelines which have to be annexed to the approval of the Eco-agency and will specify among others:

- Objectives in term of quantities of sorted waste, re-use, recycling. The objective on the long term, related to quantities of waste sorting would be fixed to 50 % of the tonnage of the products launched on the market by the members of the Eco agency. This percentage is consistent with the national waste management policy that specifies that the recycling rate of household waste of 35% should be reached by the year 2012. Indeed, while 70 % of sorted textile waste need to proceed through a recovery process, it is rather necessary to sort out up to 50% of the deposit in order to obtain 35% of material recovery.

- Concerning objectives related to research and development : The general objective is to promote technical projects which are in favour the eco-design, recycling, the re-use and material recovery of the textiles and to find new outlets (for example, in the field of thermo insulation or phonic).

- The procurement guidelines will also indicate the scale of financial support to the communication, which local authority will be having benefits in regards of the territory upon which the selective collection of textile waste can be organised (in connexion with communication campaign addressed to citizens).

- In connexion with sorting businesses

"The sorting businesses are the operator of an industrial facility which sorts used textiles and shoes selectively collected within which the textiles and shoes are sorted for being sold for re use or sent towards the installations which carry out directly their recycling or material recovery when these operations are not carried out within the factory where is located the industrial facility for sorted waste. This possibility has to respect the condition that the operator is able to bring back the proof, if necessary, of the effectiveness of these recycling and recovery operations which are not directly carried out by him. The whole recovery process operations must allow him to achieve the minimum goal of recovery up of 70% of the quantities of sorted waste (except energy recovery). "

- The Eco-agency enters into a convention with sorting companies that forward a request to ensure the payment of a financial support. This financial contribution will be less if the sorting operator is not respectful with the minimum goal of integration of unemployed people.

- The sorting companies will have to ensure a traceability of flows upstream (origin of used textiles) and downstream (destination of sorted flows) and to be able to show that sorted waste comes from collectors which have informed local authorities of their activity on the territory of which they carry out the collection.

-These collectors must moreover have signed conventions with local authorities in case of a public collection of waste or to establish a contact with people that possess on the territory of their private land of a disposable voluntary checkpoint for waste.

Thus are guidelines for the specific mechanism which has been implemented.