

Ensuring clothing is durable, not disposable!

“More than USD 500 billion of value is lost every year due to clothing underutilisation and the lack of recycling. Furthermore, this take-make-dispose model has numerous negative environmental and societal impacts. For instance, total greenhouse gas emissions from textiles production, at 1.2 billion tonnes annually, are more than those of all international flights and maritime shipping combined. Hazardous substances affect the health of both textile workers and wearers of clothes, and they escape into the environment. When washed, some garments release plastic microfibres, of which around half a million tonnes every year contribute to ocean pollution – 16 times more than plastic microbeads from cosmetics. Trends point to these negative impacts rising inexorably, with the potential for catastrophic outcomes in future. This linear system is ripe for disruption”. (Source: Ellen MacArthur Foundation)

In the post-pandemic decade of 2020, what does luxury mean and what do we, our society and environment, need from fashion designers? Can the fashion of our generation lead the cultural change to celebrate sustainability and equality, and reverse the damage that it has notoriously been causing worldwide? Can we innovate to turn one (wo/)man’s trash into another one’s treasure?

The Fashion Design Category calls for the best design talents to innovate for new solutions that are meaningful to people and protective of the planet, using minimal natural resources to create maximum social and sustainable impact.

3 main pillars to keep in mind when considering circular fashion solutions:

1. **Keep clothes in use** by developing new business models based on reselling or swapping clothes, store take back schemes, garment repair and upcycling.
2. **Use renewable and safe materials** made with high quality renewable fibres that are non-toxic.
3. **Solutions based on upcycling**, for example upcycling of waste materials to new products through design or waste textiles turned into new fibre through mechanical and chemical recycling.

SCOPE

This challenge defines the scope of the circular economy as follows:

All economic activity that is substantially contributing to protecting the environment and that meets at least one of the following criteria:

- a) **making more efficient use of natural resources**, including sustainably sourced bio-based materials and other raw materials in production, including reducing the use of primary raw materials or increasing the use of secondary raw materials;

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- b) **prolonging the use and reuse of products**, for example through increasing the durability, reparability, upgradeability or reusability of products as well as through reuse, design for longevity, reorientation, reconditioning, upgrading, repair and sharing and through appropriate services and business models;
- c) **increasing the recyclability of products**, including that of the individual materials contained in products, inter alia through disassembly and substitution or reduced use of products and materials that are not recyclable, in particular in design and manufacturing activities and through appropriate services and business models;
- d) **Substantially reducing the content of substances of very high concern** and substituting them in materials and products throughout their life cycle, including by replacing them with safe alternatives and ensuring traceability;
- e) **Avoiding the generation of waste.**

The development of new circular product ideas and services means rethinking business models whilst focusing (among other things) on design, resources, and marketing and communication, to foster an economically viable and feasible solution.

By "**product and service circular economy**", we understand all products and associated services contributing substantially to the protection of the environment and fulfilling at least one of the following criteria:

1. **Product life extension**, through
 - Extended use and reuse of products through increased durability and sustainability,
 - Reparability,
 - Refurbishment,
 - Remanufacturing,
 - Design for longevity,
 - Reorientation, reconditioning, upgrading,
 - New sharing models,
 - New appropriate new social and economic models and services.
2. **Materials and components**
 - Increase the recyclability of products, including that of the components and pure materials contained in the products, among others through disassembly and the appropriate services and business models,
 - Exclusion of hazardous materials.
3. **Designing out waste**
 - Avoidance of waste at all stages of the production cycle and during the use of a product.

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EXAMPLES

At **Eileen Fisher**, you can return your used garments for a store credit through their take-back programme, and the brand will reuse each item, through repair, rework and recycling. The brand started collecting its used garments 7 years ago before it had a solution for them. The 'new' garments are sold through the secondary platform [Eileen Fisher Renew](#).

For **Patagonia**, the concept at the heart of their business is to manufacture, repair and recycle products in order that they last a lifetime. By designing durable products that can be repaired, Patagonia ensures that garments stay in use for as long as possible, something the brand encourages by providing a lifetime guarantee for all of its wares. If the customer no longer wants an item, then Patagonia will sell it through their [Wornwear](#) platform. This has created an entirely new revenue stream for the company.

G-Star RAW has also been pursuing circularity for its denim. It first introduced the pilot for Renewed Denim made from recycled **G-Star RAW** jeans in 2012. In May, the company presented its 2.0 version made with yarns upcycled from G-Star jeans that were collected, sorted and shredded to create new fibre. Blended with new organic cotton the product contains no added polyester. The jeans are 98 percent recyclable thanks to the elimination of rivets and eco-finish metal buttons instead of zippers.

[Christopher Raeburn](#) is a UK designer who has pioneered the reworking of surplus fabrics and garments to create distinctive and functional pieces. From his REMADE studio in London, Raeburn creates innovative and luxurious designs using decommissioned military parachutes, life rafts and jackets for a range of menswear, womenswear, luggage and accessories.

"It's incredible what you can do with material that would otherwise languish in landfill," says Kresse Wesling, founder of [Elvis and Kresse](#), the UK brand who utilises decommissioned firehoses to create luxury handbags and accessories. They are early adopters of circular thinking and are now working with Burberry to create a 3-piece system to utilise leather waste.

(Source: [Makegood.world](#))