

SHORT SUMMARY

Organisation: Dutch Ministry of Defence | **Contact persons:** John Langeland (Procurement Manager, Workwear and Personal Equipment) | Stephanie Grieving (System Specialist Workwear and Personal Equipment) | **Product & sector:** Workwear (Textiles) | **Country:** The Netherlands



Workwear Dutch Ministry of Defence



“Who knows, in five years we may even get our own green fibres back.”

John Langeland,
Ministry of Defence Procurement Manager

Making new raw materials from old, military equipment items, and circular procurement of towels, wash cloths, scarves, handkerchiefs and overalls. This enables the Ministry of Defence to contribute to the circular economy.

Project description

The Dutch Ministry of Defence is a high user of textile products in its extensive military equipment. In this project, the Ministry sought to address the problem throughout the chain. Surplus/used clothing is no longer burned, but is recycled and restored to reusable fibres. The Ministry of Defence then offers this product to the market as high-quality raw material. And new suppliers to the Ministry must use recycled fibres in new textiles. The first phase of this project started with three lots: towels and wash cloths; scarves and handkerchiefs; and overalls.

Approach

To gain insight into the market possibilities, in 2014 the Ministry organised a market consultation and a session with suppliers and placed a Request for Information (RFI) on TenderNed. This also enabled the Ministry of Defence to investigate the extent to which it is possible to set requirements on the use of recycled fibre material in new items. The conclusion was that this is possible. More functional requirements were set than technical ones. This stimulated the market to add more recycled content. The requirement was to use at least 10% recycled PostConsumer cellulose fibre. The supplier needed to demonstrate this using microscopic testing.



FACTS & FIGURES

Volume contract:

- > approximately 53,000 green overalls
- > 100,000 towels (white and green), 10,000 wash cloths (white and green)

Contract form new clothing:

- > purchase, 4 years

Contract sorting:

- > 8 years for 750,000 military equipment items per year

Number of fte:

- > 58,800 (Ministry of Defence total)

Results

The contract was awarded in June 2016. Two Belgian businesses will supply the Ministry of Defence with 50,000 white and green towels and wash cloths and approximately 53,000 green overalls. A high percentage of recycled textile is processed in the new textile: 36% and 14%. The parties also learn and innovate during the four-year term, which could result in a higher percentage of recycled material.

“The requirements for this pilot are described in a more functional way.”

Stephanie Grieving, System Specialist
Workwear and Personal Equipment

For the scarves and handkerchiefs' lot, no correct tenders were received. For the reuse, an eight-year contract was signed with Biga group. The company will be sorting approximately 750,000 items of military gear per year. The clothing comes from servicemen who hand in their clothing, for example, when

they leave the service.

The clothing is to be sorted by hand, by people with a disadvantage on the labour market. This also enables the Ministry of Defence to make a social contribution. High quality clothing will be reused. This can offer considerable savings to the Ministry of Defence. The new contract makes a provision for expansion to the entire Central government. After sorting, the State Property Service (DRZ) will sell the clothing on the market.

Lessons learned

- The original Schedule of Requirements (SOR) had too many technical specifications. A circular economy tender must be written in a much more functional way to grant the market the space for solutions.
- Allow the market more time following the call for tenders. The usual 52 days after publication of the contract to the close is too short for the market to investigate new or different production methods.
- Do not stick rigidly to existing rates for such a pilot. Tight ceilings in budgets limit the development potential.
- Announce your tender calendar

About REBus and the Green Deal on Circular Procurement

The Green Deal on Circular Procurement (GDCP) is an initiative of MVO Nederland (CSR Netherlands), NEVI, Central government, Duurzame Leverancier, PIANOo, Kirkman Company and Circle Economy. Various pilots originating from GDCP are partly financed by the European REBus project, implemented in the Netherlands by Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management). They are working together to support businesses and government organisations in their circular procurement ambitions.

Contact information

- > E-mail: Circularair@rws.nl
- > Website: PIANOo

Partners (selected partners): Stichting Leger des Heils Reshare | Biga Groep | Jules Clarysse N.V. | Seyntex N.V.

Relevant links & documents: [Central government textile category plan](#) | [Case study REBus](#) | [Circular Economy Report; closing the loop for workwear](#)

With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

