

**NEWS RELEASE****01.06.22, for immediate release****ZDHC Foundation and The Microfibre Consortium announce collaboration to address microfibres within wastewater**

The ZDHC Foundation (ZDHC) and The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) have unveiled details of the next stage of a major initiative to address the issue of microfibres in textile manufacturing wastewater. Following the release of ‘Control of Microfibres in Wastewater’ manufacturing guidelines by TMC, the two organisations will now collaborate closely during a new phase of the project, combining the expertise of ZDHC in sustainable chemical management and the science led fibre fragmentation (previously referred to as microfibre release) knowledge of TMC.

In the words of Frank Michel, Executive Director of the ZDHC Foundation; *“The collaboration between TMC and ZDHC is a great example that two organisations can come together by building a competence centre around fibre shedding. This will leverage each other's expertise and infrastructure.”*

Designed to help companies and supply chains better control microfibres in wastewater during textile manufacturing which includes apparel and footwear products, the preliminary guidelines in the document identify an approach that can be taken throughout the industry, to best support change within manufacturing.

Building on the first phase of this work which looked to identify and landscape utilisation of existing technologies across the industry, this upcoming phase will focus on the measurement and baselining so that progress can be managed effectively and transparently. To support this, a dedicated task team from ZDHC and TMC will focus on three key areas:

Defining a test methodology – the identification and alignment of a globally available test method to measure fibre loss within waste water at a manufacturing level;

Determining a baseline - establish this for microfibre loss from manufacturing facilities;



Aligning to a harmonised data infrastructure – working to identify a reporting structure that captures the measurement and control of microfibres from manufacturing facilities.

The work will be managed as three key interconnected workstreams that draw from the strengths of the two organisations, and which leverage the unique knowledge building that is achievable as a result. ZDHC and TMC are also encouraging businesses and other stakeholders from the textile industry to both adopt the manufacturing guidelines captured in ‘Control of Microfibres in Wastewater’, and also contribute to the next phase of the project, adding to the collective knowledge base that is being drawn on to tackle the issue.

Sophie Mather, Executive Director of TMC, adds: *“We are looking here to maximise change, without the need for huge investment or complicated modifications within textile production. This new collaborative phase with ZDHC and our combined networks, offers up unique value in the strength between the two organisations, whilst leveraging from existing approaches to work at the manufacturing level. There is an urgency for us to be able to measure consistently from facility to facility, so that we can manage loss and ultimately impact. I offer up a call to action for industry at all levels, synthetic and natural fibres, high fashion to outdoor, to align and encourage manufacturing facilities to support this work.”*

TMC has confirmed that the ‘Control of Microfibres in Wastewater’ preliminary guidelines are now public. Signatories of the [Microfibre 2030 Commitment](#) had early access to this industry resource, which is available to download [here](#).

To support the landscaping of existing technologies, take part in a short questionnaire set up by TMC which can be found [here](#).

Organisations that would like to get involved in the project to address the problem of microfibres in wastewater should contact 2030@microfibreconsortium.com .

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NOTE TO EDITORS

About the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Foundation

ZDHC is a global multi-stakeholder initiative of more than 170 contributors within the fashion and footwear industry including Brands, Suppliers, Chemical Formulators, Solution Providers, and Associations committed to the elimination of harmful chemicals across the textile and footwear value chain.

The vision is widespread implementation of sustainable chemistry, driving innovations and best practices to protect consumers, workers and the environment. To realise this vision, The ZDHC Foundation oversees the implementation of the Roadmap to Zero Programme using collaborative engagement to drive a holistic, industry focussed and practical approach to sustainable chemical management.

ZDHC guidelines, platforms and solutions drive large-scale industry wide implementation that advances the industry as a whole towards the zero discharge of hazardous chemicals.

Find more information about ZDHC at www.roadmaptozero.com. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

About The Microfibre Consortium

The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) is a research-led sustainable textiles NGO, working to convene the global textiles sector through [The Microfibre 2030 Commitment and Roadmap](#). It is the first and only organisation whole-heartedly focused on this topic and works on behalf of its signatories (currently 81 scaling to 250 by 2030) which comprises of 63% brands and retailers, 32% researchers and 5% affiliated organisations. TMC's signatory base represents the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, 13 European and 6 Asian countries, amongst others. Its global remit within 26 geographies ensures that the clothing industry delivering to a wide and diverse consumer base, can be consistent with its implementation of mitigation measures relating to unintentional fibre fragmentation and microfibre pollution (both synthetic and natural) through actions such as:

- developing root cause understanding and solutions
- driving an aligned commitment
- delivering sustained action and measurable impact.

Its work is managed by a dedicated UK based team that is led by executive director Sophie Mather.

The full list of TMC signatories to the Microfibre 2030 Commitment are listed at <https://www.microfibreconsortium.com/signatories>.



The Microfibre Consortium's position on the control of microfibres in wastewater

In support of the capture of unintentional fibre loss during manufacture, TMC is proposing a wide, cross industry adoption of the Preliminary Guidelines, 'Control of Microfibres in Wastewater' within the global supply base, so that an aligned and industry wide adoption of these best practices can achieve the greatest impact in a timely manner. TMC's current position is outlined below:

1. All businesses along the footwear and apparel value chain (i.e., brands, retailers and their supply chain partners) are **encouraged to adopt and adhere to aligned cross industry guidelines** to minimise impact from fibre fragmentation.
2. Both synthetic and natural fibres shed during textile manufacturing and both pose a risk to the environment (see TMC Positioning Statement: Biodegradability in the context of Fibre Fragmentation). Therefore, **all fibre types are equally important**.
3. TMC recognise that there are some low / no-cost steps that can be taken to reduce discharges of microfibres. Facilities should **optimise existing on-site processes to remove microfibres and larger fibres that can subsequently fragment to form smaller fibres**. If removal is still not satisfactory there will be a need to augment existing equipment with more advanced filtration technology.
4. Although out of scope of the current TMC agenda, it is **recommended that centralised effluent treatment plants (CETP) and municipal effluent treatment plants (METP) consider the methods and approaches outlined within the Preliminary Guidelines** to mitigate release of fibres generated primarily from domestic sources.
5. It is understood that each manufacturing facility is unique so **differing mitigation technologies may be applied depending on specific circumstances**. A number of different options are provided within this document.
6. The different mitigation technologies outlined in this guideline may have **benefits beyond the reduction of microfibre releases and this should be taken into consideration**, especially where investments are being made and ROI calculated. For example, the use of more advanced filtration technologies may significantly reduce the risk of regulatory non-conformance for many conventional parameters and may even permit water recycling.
7. In the absence of test methodologies and standards **it is not yet possible to operate a conformance / non-conformance approach to microfibre releases and these guidelines are aimed to reduce discharges from facilities**. However, we are developing a test methodology and baseline that will be the focus of Phase 3 of this work.

This positioning statement forms a time relevant response to ongoing work in this area. The *Manufacturing Task Team*, as part of the *Microfibre [2030 Commitment and Roadmap](#)* continues to support moving the agenda forwards. Further information can be found [here](#).