Patagonia, Puma, On, Salomon boost plastic recycling efforts with Carbios

By Matthieu Guinebault - August 30, 2022

Carbios, a specialist in the enzymatic recycling of PET plastics, has announced it will work for two years with On, Patagonia, Puma and Salomon to boost the recyclability of their garments, and help them deploy new recycling solutions.

This is a new step for the consortium’s five partners, after the work already carried out by Carbios on packaging recycling. Carbios is able to transform used textiles containing PET - the thermoplastic polyester the vast majority of synthetic fibres produced globally are made of - into plastic bottles. The goal is now to develop a ‘fibre-to-fibre’ system by making the new process widely available.

“This two-year agreement will notably aim to speed up the introduction of Carbios’s unique bio-recycling technology, which constitutes a breakthrough for the textile industry,” said Carbios. “Carbios and the four [partner] companies will also research how products can be recycled, assess the development of solutions to collect used polyester items, including testing waste sorting and treatment technologies, and gather data on fibre-to-fibre recycling as well as circularity models,” added the company.

With its Indonesian partner Indorama Ventures, Carbios is working to set up by 2025 a site in Meurthe-et-Moselle, France, able to bio-recycle 50,000 tons of performance textiles per year, using the process developed by Carbios itself. A process which makes it possible to move beyond mechanical recycling, whose possible applications are limited, notably by focusing on clear plastics alone. Carbios has indicated it is now able to recycle and reuse coloured PET by means of its enzymatic decomposition process.

“We aim to use 75% recycled polyester in our apparel and accessories by 2025,” said Puma’s Innovation Director Howard Williams, highlighting the potential of Carbios’s promising bio-recycling methodology. “The textile waste problem is bigger than one company or solution, and Patagonia is excited to be working in a new way to solve this problem...
problem,” said Natalie Banakis, materials innovation engineer at Patagonia. “This new consortium for advancing textile recycling will help create a sustainable future for all outdoor industry players,” said Olivier Mouzin, in charge of circularity at Salomon.

An increasing number of collaborative initiatives in textile recycling are currently being developed. Carbios is a member of the recently launched European Whitecycle consortium, whose members also include Inditex and Michelin. European textile industry association Euratex has instead recently announced it has started building a European network of waste sorting and recycling centres called Rehub.

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