

# Together against waste of textile: Results from a study on clothing consumption in Denmark

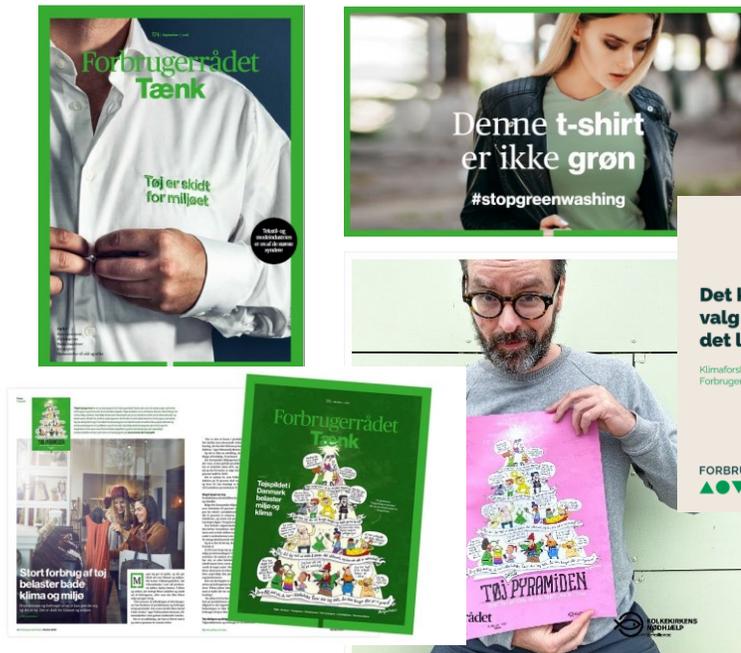
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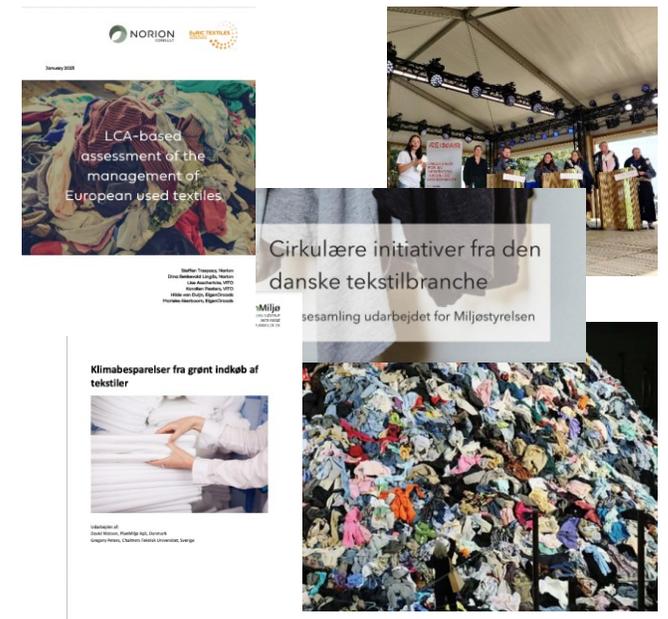
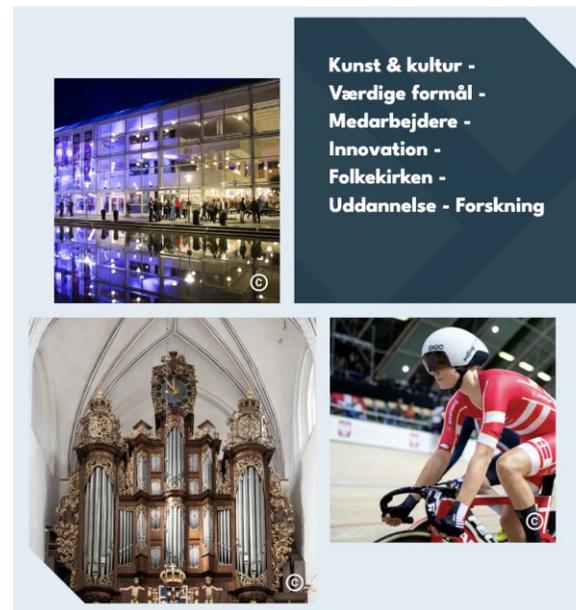
November 14th 2023

Danish Environmental Protection Agency

# Together against waste of textile



**Det klimavenlige valg skal være det lette valg**  
Klimaforslag fra Forbrugerrådet Tænk  
FORBRUGERRÅDET  
TÆNK



# Project aim

- Motivate consumers to: **Purchase** clothes with care, use and **maintain** clothes and **pass on/dispose** clothes responsibly
- Identify barriers to reducing waste of textile and find solutions that make it easier for consumers to reduce waste of textile
- Engage and inspire more actors to launch initiatives that promote the consumer's power to reduce waste of textile
- Target group: Adults over the age of 25 years in Denmark
- Carried out from April 2022 to March 2023

Forbrugerrådet Tænk I



**Together against waste of textile**

The path to consumption of clothing with a smaller environmental and climate footprint

salling fondene    NORION CONSULT    FORBRUGERRÅDET tænk



# Process

## Participants

- Advisory Board with 10 experts
- Internal experts (The Danish Consumer Council)
- Norion Consult experts

## Project activities

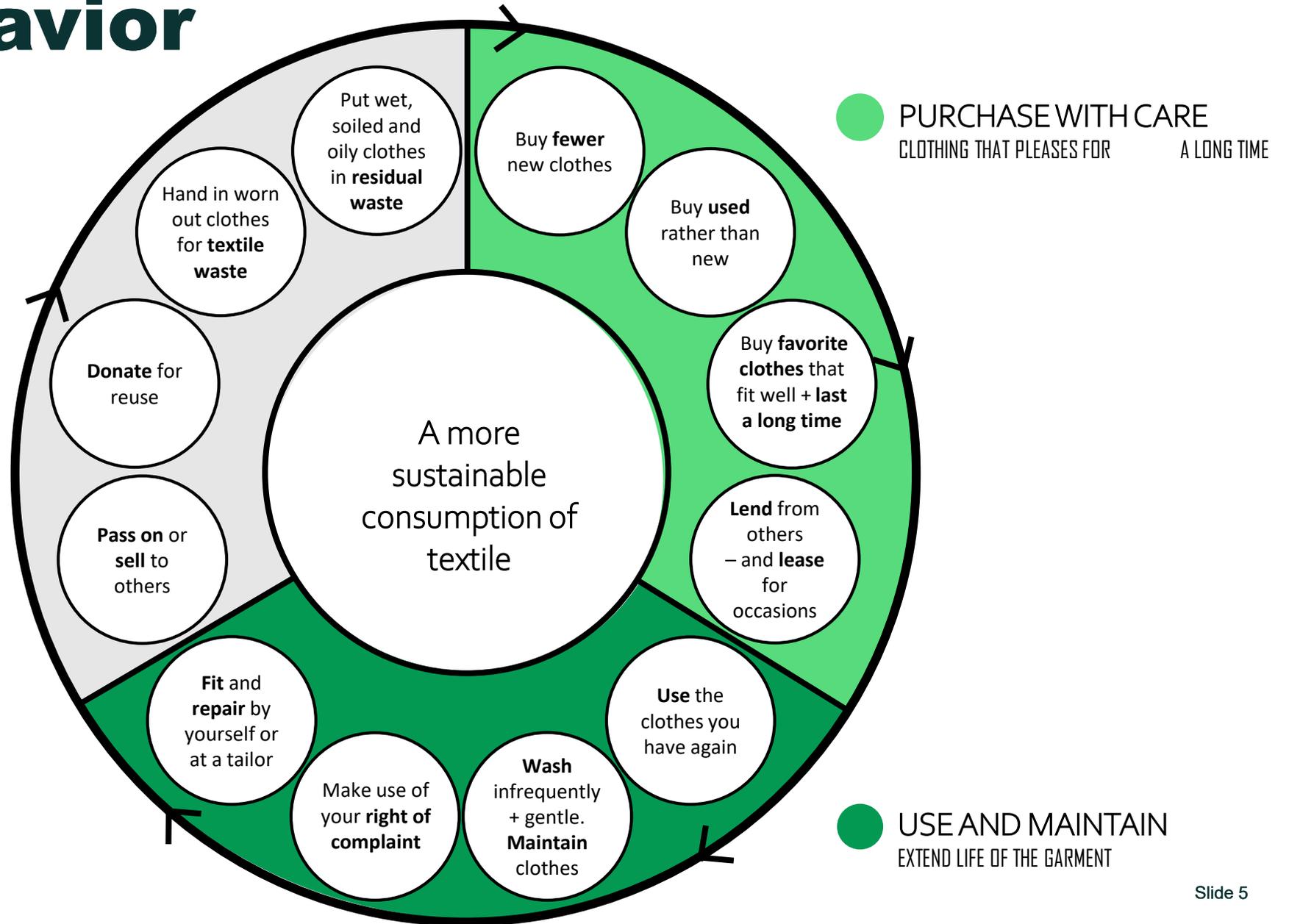
- Literature study
- Quantitative study (questionnaire, 2000 respondents)
- Qualitative wardrobe study (15 frequent shoppers)
- Ideation workshops for stakeholders (44 participants)
- Catalogue with recommendations
- Conference (80+ participants)



# Ideal behavior

PASS ON AND DISPOSE RESPONSIBLY  
GIVE NEW LIFE TO CLOTHES

*The desired and ideal behavior in terms of reducing waste of textile. Barriers and potentials for this desired and ideal behavior have been the focus of the analysis in the project (figure: NORION Consult)*



# General findings on clothing behavior

- 82 % are to some extent or to a considerable extent worried about the environment and the climate
- 87 % take, to a certain extent, the environment and climate into account when consuming
- Awareness of the environment does not necessarily lead to ideal consumption behavior
- Different approaches: minimalists, sentimentals, pragmatism, clothes joy and wardrobe shame
- Changes in life situations influence clothing consumption
- Clothes are rarely borrowed or rented

*"Det er sjovt, hvordan det har ændret sig med tøj, og det er inden for et par år. Der er kommet sådan en skyld forbundet med dét der med at bruge meget tøj."*

*Kvinde, 32 år*

# Parameters for buying clothes



## Signifikant

- **Det ramte min personlige smag:** Kvinder (55%)
- **At prisen er lav:** Færre fra Region Hovedstaden går op i dette (38%), i små byer går man mere op i pris (50%). Lavindkomst går højere op i det (55%), men det gør studerende ikke.
- **Jeg ville komme til at bruge det meget:** Kvinder (45%), mænd (35%)
- **Kvalitet/holdbarhed:** Mænd (46%), kvinder (31%), ældre (43%), yngre (35%)

# Barriers for reducing textile consumption

- Experimenting with identities
- Buy on impulse
- Occassions/spheres
- Unofficial dress codes
- Lack of time
- Too much time
- Entertainment / social
- Economic surplus

*"Dresscoden på jobbet driver meget, hvad jeg køber. Jeg har nok tøj til mit private, men det synes jeg slet ikke, jeg kan gå med på arbejdet (...) Jeg vil ikke gå på kompromis på arbejdet i at se snusket ud"*

*Mand, 35 år*

*"Om det er på computer eller telefon, så er det ligeså tilfredsstillende for mig at åbne Zalando appen som at åbne Facebook eller Instagram. Så går jeg ind på min favoritliste og kigger, og den liste vokser sig bare større og større. Så sidder jeg og kigger på det tøj, jeg har som favoritter og tænker over, hvornår jeg skal købe det, og så fjerner jeg også tøj, jeg ikke længere vil have"*

*Kvinde, 36 år*

# Barriers for buying second-hand clothes



- 64 % bought new clothes the last time they went shopping – without considering to buy second-hand clothes
- 19 % bought second-hand clothes the last time they went shopping
- 30 % buys second-hand clothes in general (especially the younger ones)
- **"Fast fashion is accessible, easy and cheap"**
- **"New is nice and feels good"**
- **"Second-hand has a small selection, is time-consuming and dirty"**
- Doubts about the condition of second-hand clothes online

*"Det var lidt sårbart, at andre havde haft det på [om genbrugstøj], især da hun var helt lille [Kvindes barn]. Det måtte godt være nyt og pænt og rent. Det er jeg vokset lidt fra, nu hvor hun er lidt større. Nu kan jeg godt købe mere brugt"*

*Kvinde, 28 år*

*"Jeg synes, det er en god ide at bruge det tøj, man i forvejen har, men det er også fedt at få nyt tøj. (...). Det føles rart at have noget på, der er nyt"*

*Kvinde, 38 år*

# Characteristics of the clothes that we use the most

- Fit
- Personal taste / signal value
- Versatility: suits several situations and moods
- The material feels good
- Easy to wash/durable/dirt tolerant (especially for kids)
- Well suited for changing body temperatures
- Sentimental value: brings good memories
- Functionality: pockets for keys and telephone
- Novelty value

*"Skjorterne er komfortable, løse og rare, men også noget, der går an på arbejdet. (...) De er rummelige, og jeg ved bare lige hvordan de føles, og de er dejlige"*

*Kvinde, 36 år*

# How do we extend the lifetime of clothes?

1. Use it as working clothes or leisurewear
2. Wash less frequently
3. Wash at low temperatures

*"Jeg er nok lidt slem til tøjvask. Bukser og jeans går jeg i længe, men jeg vasker mine skjorter og t-shirts efter bare én gang i brug, uden at det måske er nødvendigt. Men jeg kan godt lide, at når jeg tager det på, når jeg har været i bad, at jeg selv er ren og tøjet også er rent"*

*Mand, 30 år*

# Do we repair our clothes?

- 65% do not consider repairs
- Perceptions: Expensive, burdensome/difficult, exclusive – easier and cheaper with new clothes
- Do not know where to find tailors – and cannot figure out/see through the prices
- Bad experiences with repairs
- Only the clothes with value are repaired; economic, historical, emotional
- Most people have a pile of clothes in need of repair but it remains untouched

*"Vi har et problem [i forhold til at lave bæredygtige løsninger] i Danmark i forhold til arbejds løn. Jeg kan selv sy og lime, men professionelt er det at få stillet en diagnose dyrere end at købe noget nyt (...) Så ved jeg godt, at man kan få sparring nogle lørdage hvor nogen kan hjælpe, men det har jeg ikke tid til; det er for studerende og pensionister."*

*Mand, 35 år*

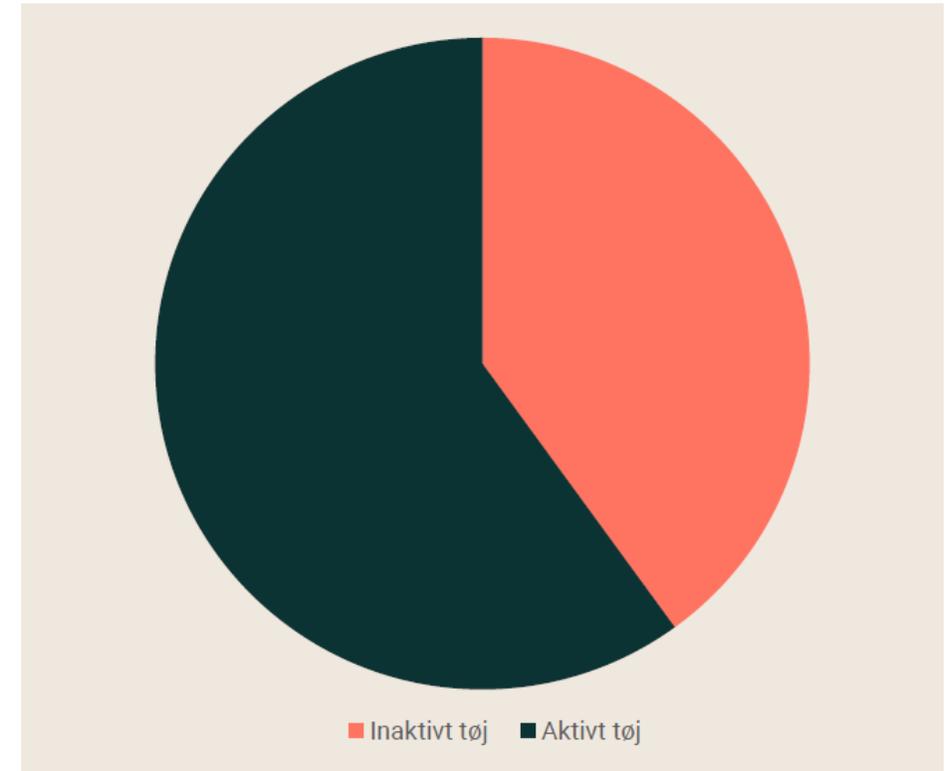
# Characteristics of the clothes that we don't use

## Not used because:

- It does no longer fit
- It is for special occasions
- Bad fit
- Worn-out

## But also because:

- It is burdensome as it needs hand wash or ironing
- It is difficult to match with other clothes
- It was a mistake buying it from the beginning
- It has been forgotten in the wardrobe



# We keep "passive" clothes because...

- There might come an occasion to use it again  
"What if...?"
- Wardrobe is not getting sorted
- Hard to find out what to do with it
- Sentimental value
- Not having success when trying to sell it
- "Must haves"
- Buy new clothes when clothes are discarded
- Lack knowledge about waste of textile

*"Det fik mig til at tænke en ekstra gang, at det er spild, når tøjet ligger herhjemme, fordi så kan det ikke gøre noget godt derude. Den tanke har jeg ikke brugt så meget tid på før. Så tænkte jeg mere, at det er spild, hvis man smider det ud"*  
Kvinde, 27 år

# Reasons for discarding or passing on usable clothes

- General cleaning activity
- Others could benefit from having it
- Need for more space

# What do we consider before we pass on our clothes?

- It's demanding to resell clothes
- Too intimate to give away the clothes
- Find it hard to donate worn(out) clothes to others
- Difficult to assess reuse vs. recycling vs. waste
- Task to identify collection points
- H&Ms take-back + reuse containers for clothes (Red Cross etc.) are easiest

*"Nogle gange synes jeg, at det er svært at vurdere hvor slidt tøj må være i forhold til, hvornår det kan sendes til genbrug"*

*Kvinde, 42 år*

*"Det er helt klart dejligt med en tøjcontainer, fordi det går så hurtigt. Det er vigtigt, fordi jeg kan godt lide at få sådan et oprydningsrush, hvor det bare skal ud. Fordelen ved trendsales er mest økonomisk, fordi jeg i det mindste kan få lidt penge for det. Og jeg kunne aldrig finde på at sælge sådan lidt kedelige ting, det her tøj er jo alt sammen noget der koster 500-600-700 kr."*

*Kvinde, 36 år*

# Ten ways towards balanced clothing consumption

## Manufacturers: Dress the consumer for success

1. Give the consumer more options to reduce waste of textile
2. Rediscover old virtues and combine them with individual needs and frameworks
3. Create clothes that create value for the consumer (90% doesn't fit)

## Politicians: Create system frameworks that reduce clothing waste

4. Review existing legislation
5. Branch code with industry to reduce waste of textiles
6. Call for a national action plan
7. Ban on destroying unsold clothes

## Stakeholders: Gather all players

8. Take advantage of a wide range of players with different expertise
9. Use experiences from other sectors and countries
10. Co-operate on uniform guidance for consumers based on reliable knowledge and safe reasons



# Changing the way we acquire, use and pass on clothes can be funny and meaningful – especially if we do it together...

Focus on what brings you the most **joy** - and with **whom**? Take one step at a time!

Join **existing** communities (e.g. repair, mending, clothing sharing, swap markets) or **create** your own

Make (realistic) **challenges** and support each other – and have **fun** while doing it!

# Links (in Danish)

**Sammen mød tøjspild (rapport, anbefalinger, præsentation):**

<https://taenk.dk/det-kaemper-vi-for/sammen-mod-toejspild>

**Sådan undgår du klima-tøjfælde (DR):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRHssXScXWg>

**Tips til at "aktivere" dit "inaktive" tøj:**

<https://www.instagram.com/p/ChCBK-vLqOz/>

**Hvordan stopper vi overforbruget af tøj (artikel)?**

<https://taenk.dk/forbrugerliv/baeredygtighed/hvordan-stopper-vi-overforbruget-af-toej>

**Tøjpyramiden:**

<https://taenk.dk/det-kaemper-vi-for/stop-toejspild>