

Tarkett and Aquafil close the loop on carpet tiles: a key step towards circular economy



Carpet tile materials at different stages of the separation and recycling process

Paris, France and Waalwijk, The Netherlands, November 21, 2019 –

Tarkett today announces that it is closing the loop on commercial carpet tiles in Europe thanks to a pioneering partnership with Aquafil. This is the result of an intensive collaboration over recent years, going beyond the traditional customer and supplier relationship. The two companies present today this significant step towards circular economy at Tarkett's carpet tile facility in Waalwijk, the Netherlands. Its unique recycling center creates two streams of materials that can be recycled and transformed into high-quality resources for new products.

Tarkett has developed breakthrough technology at its Waalwijk facility and is now able to separate the two principal components of carpet tiles – yarn and backing, while retaining more than 95% yarn purity. This level of purity is vital in ensuring that the polyamide 6 (PA6) yarn can be recycled by Aquafil and later transformed into regenerated ECONYL® nylon yarn.

In addition, Tarkett has increased its capacity in Waalwijk to produce its EcoBase carpet tile backing to meet customers' growing demand for this sustainable product. Available since 2010, EcoBase has been designed for disassembly from the outset.

Overall, 100% of an EcoBase-backed carpet tile with PA6 yarn is recyclable.¹ The PA6 yarn and backing are recycled without loss of quality; used yarn becomes new yarn and used backing new backing. Recycling EcoBase-backed carpet tiles with ECONYL® yarn delivers up to 84%² CO2 savings compared to incineration.

¹ 76% is recycled in a closed-loop and the remaining 24% is co-processed in the cement industry, with small variances per collection.

² Based on end-of-life stage only at Tarkett's Carpet Recycling Center, for the same product, externally verified by Bureau Veritas.



Post-consumer carpet tiles collected through Tarkett's ReStart program



Fluff - high purity yarn (95%) - is generated by Tarkett's recycling center, before it is sent to Aquafil



Shredded EcoBase backing separated from the carpet tile and recycled for the production of new EcoBase



New EcoBase backing production line

Tarkett has invested approximately 15 million euros on this whole set of initiatives aimed at closing the loop on carpet tiles in Europe.

“Technological innovation now makes it possible to multiply the life cycles of building materials. Together with Aquafil, we are accelerating our circular economy journey and leading our industry's progress in carpet recycling,” says Fabrice Barthélemy, Tarkett's CEO.

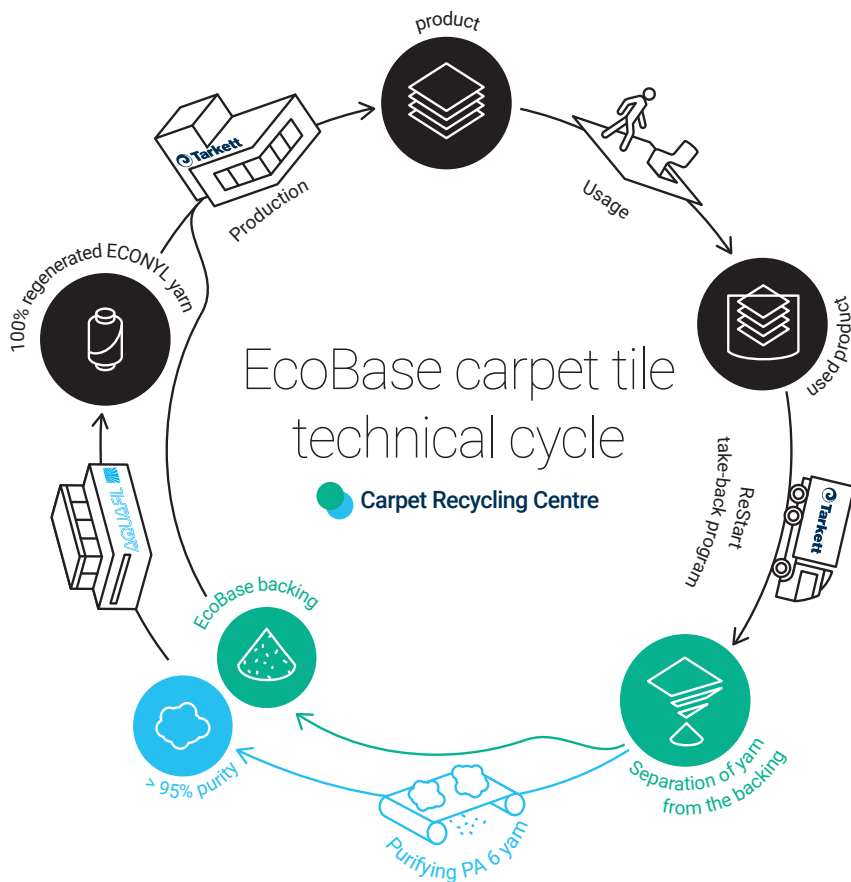
“This is a fundamental step forward in maximising the value of materials and preventing carpet tiles from being incinerated or sent to landfill. Truly closing the loop on flooring is a key driver of Tarkett’s strategy to preserve natural resources and protect the environment.”

Giulio Bonazzi, Aquafil’s CEO, comments: “We are delighted to help Tarkett with the last mile of its journey to close the loop on carpet tile production. We must urgently transform the way products are designed, produced and consumed. Through our collaboration with Tarkett, we will strengthen our commitment to realising this vision by increasing the reutilisation of yarns and helping to design out waste.”

Tarkett has sourced PA6 and ECONYL® nylon yarn from Aquafil for more than a decade and uses ECONYL® in its Desso AirMaster carpet tiles, for example. Now, the partnership is going full circle, with Aquafil sourcing post-use PA6 yarn from Tarkett to create its regenerated ECONYL® yarn.

“Closing the loop is a collaborative endeavour and we invite our customers to join us in making this journey together through our ReStart® flooring take-back and recycling programme,” concludes Fabrice Barthélemy.

“The construction and renovation sector is undergoing a major transformation. Tarkett is playing an active role in this unprecedented mobilization of innovative players committed to reducing the carbon footprint of building materials and to extending their lifespan. In working with us, our customers have the opportunity to make the right choices to create sustainable buildings and spaces for future generations.”



Tarkett is the only carpet-maker in Europe to have verified evidence of closing the loop on carpet tile production, as documented by the Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for EcoBase-backed tiles.

This change of scale in flooring will also be amplified in Europe with the development of a European Green Deal by the European Commission that promotes recycling channels and encourages the use of sustainable materials, accelerating the shift to the circular economy.³

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About ReStart®

Tarkett launched its ReStart® flooring take-back and recycling programme in 2010. Through ReStart®, customers can return post-installation off-cuts and post-use flooring to Tarkett for recycling. Between 2010 and 2018, Tarkett has collected 102,000 tonnes of vinyl, linoleum, carpet flooring worldwide for recycling.

About Ecobase

EcoBase is Tarkett's 100% recyclable Cradle to Cradle Gold-certified™ carpet tile backing. Made from 100% positively defined materials.⁴ It has achieved Cradle to Cradle® Platinum level for material health. It includes 75% upcycled chalk from the Dutch drinking water industry and is also fully recyclable in closed-loop with no loss of quality as assured by Lloyd's Register. Available for Tarkett's entire carpet tile range produced in Europe, every material used to make EcoBase can be recycled at Waalwijk's recycling facility (NL), generating fewer carbon emissions than creating new carpet from scratch.

About Tarkett

With a history of more than 135 years, Tarkett is a worldwide leader in innovative flooring and sports surface solutions, with net sales of more than €2.8 billion in 2018. Offering a wide range of products including vinyl, linoleum, rubber, carpet, wood, laminate, artificial turf and athletics tracks, the Group serves customers in over 100 countries across the globe. Tarkett has 13,000 employees and 34 industrial sites and sells 1.3 million square meters of flooring every day, for hospitals, schools, housing, hotels, offices, stores and sports fields. Committed to change the game with circular economy, the Group has implemented an eco-innovation strategy based on Cradle to Cradle® principles, with the ultimate goal of contributing to people's health and wellbeing, and preserving natural capital. Tarkett is listed on Euronext Paris (compartment A, ISIN: FR0004188670, ticker: TKT) and is included in the SBF 120 and CAC Mid 60 indices. www.tarkett.com.

About ECONYL®

ECONYL® is a brand of regenerated nylon that is made from recycled waste instead of oil and is also regenerable an infinite number of times without any compromise in quality. ECONYL® yarn helps divert global waste streams from landfills and oceans such as fishnets, carpet and industrial plastic. Designers use ECONYL® to produce a wide range of textile products such as sportswear, swimwear, bags, eyewear and carpets.

About Aquafil

Since 1965, Aquafil has been one of the leading players, both in Italy and globally, in the production of polyamide 6 (nylon 6). The Aquafil Group has a presence in eight countries on three continents, employing more than 2,900 staff at 16 plants located in Italy, Scotland, Slovenia, Croatia, the USA, Thailand and China. To learn more about the company, please visit: <https://www.aquafil.com>.

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³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/mission-letter-frans-timmermans-2019_en.pdf

⁴ 'Positively defined' is a Cradle to Cradle eco-design term and indicates that all the materials used to make the component have been independently assessed and judged to be Green (optimal) or Yellow (tolerable), in line with the Cradle to Cradle Certified CM Product Standard Version 3.1.