

## 6 start-ups felicitated at ITMF Annual Conference 2023 in China



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The International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) Annual Conference 2023, held from November 4–6, 2023, drew to a close in Keqiao, China, marking a significant event co-hosted by the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) and the Shaoxing Municipal People's Government. In a ceremony that celebrated innovation and sustainability, the ITMF Start-up Awards were presented for the second time, recognising six start-ups for their groundbreaking contributions to the textile industry.

The awards aim to bridge the gap between emerging start-ups and established entities in the textile value chain, fostering an environment of innovation and collaboration. The winners, evaluated by an international jury, excelled in criteria spanning business propositions, sustainability, recyclability, digitalisation, and efficiency. They showcased their ideas in a dedicated 'Start-up Session' during the conference, ITMF said in a press release.

Furthermore, the ITMF Awards were presented in the categories of 'Sustainability & Innovation' and 'International Cooperation'. These awards highlight the industry's commitment to the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, celebrating achievements in sustainable practices, innovation, and international collaborations that foster progress and create win-win situations.

The ITMF Annual Conference served as a platform to honour those leading the textile industry towards a more sustainable and collaborative future. The event underscored the importance of integrating innovation with environmental respect, showcasing how international cooperation can drive the industry forward in alignment with global sustainability goals.

The ITMF Start-up Award 2023 saw a diverse group of winners, each recognised for their innovative contributions to the textile industry. In alphabetical order, the winners included CarboScreen from Germany, with their online monitoring system for carbon fibre manufacturing; Cebiotex SL from Spain, presenting a biocompatible and biodegradable implant matrix; Colorifix from the UK, who showcased a biological dyeing process; Rheiazymes AG from Switzerland, with their molecular bio-recycling technology; Shaoxing Qian Yong Textile Co from China, detailing their exploration in the textile digital printing industry for SMEs; and TreeToTextile AB from Sweden, introducing a new biobased fibre with a low climate impact.

In addition to these start-up awards, an international jury selected winners for the ITMF Awards 2023. For the ITMF Sustainability & Innovation Award 2023, the recipients in alphabetical order were Qingdao Jifa Group from China for their supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> assisted dyeing of polyester; Qingdao University from China for their marine bio-based fibres project; Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya from Spain for their work in upcycling fibres of clothing and textile waste into building materials; UPM Biorefining from Germany for their innovative approach to the future of fabrics with renewable materials in collaboration with VAUDE; and Winner Medical from China for their biodegradable nanofibre masks.

Furthermore, the ITMF International Cooperation Award 2023 recognised partnerships that fostered innovation and sustainable practices. Winners included Kelheim Fibres from Germany and Santoni from Italy for their advanced machine technology paired with performance viscose fibres; Lenzing from Austria and Södra from Sweden for enabling the circular textile industry; Magnolab from Italy for setting up a textile innovation district; Satori from Germany for accelerating international growth for fabric mills through B2B e-commerce; and the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STAR Network Asia) for their project focused on improving purchasing practices.