

The Netherlands' first plastic waste recycling plant is in Almere

Opening Green Plastic Factory: a solution for hard to recycle plastic

The Green Plastic Factory in Almere has been officially opened on 29 April. The factory emerged from an innovation partnership between the Municipality of Almere, Save Plastics, a circular company, and the Interreg TRANSFORM-CE project. It is a solution to transform single use plastic from local waste stream into new valuable products.

High-grade plastic, familiar to many in the form of PET bottles, is relatively easy to recycle. But about half of all the plastic in the Netherlands is low-grade plastic that consists of various types of plastic that are hard to separate properly and are often very dirty. In the Netherlands, this plastic is usually incinerated. A real shame, says the Municipality of Almere. The town's Alderman for Sustainability, Jan Hoek, says that "Almere takes the circular economy very seriously and the Municipality plays an active role. In 2018, we started looking for an entrepreneur to start a plastic processing factory in our town. Our idea was that items for the public space could be produced from hard to recycle plastic waste from households in Almere. We could then buy items such as river bank protection, lamp posts and benches and use them in our town. We would then close the loop and create a local circular economy for plastic waste. We have come a long way and are thrilled that the factory can now be opened."

Innovation partnership

As part of being the solution to re-use plastic from local waste stream, the Municipality not only supplies the collected materials, but also buys the products that are made from it. This guaranteed procurement is helping get the initiative off the ground and is made possible by a relatively new method of tendering called the Innovation Partnership. This is a collaboration in which the client and the supplier start collaborating at an early stage without knowing up front what will happen. This tendering process can be used to buy products that are not yet on the market or do not yet meet the required quality standards. It allows the Municipality and businesses to work on innovations, and the products that emerge from the development cycle can then be purchased by the Municipality. The Innovation Partnership includes partners in both the Netherlands and Europe (see below).

The Green Plastic Factory

The Green Plastic Factory, located in an industrial zone called the Vaart in Almere, is a pilot factory that is starting small scale production. The factory is scalable and its capacity can be adapted to meet increasing demand. The factory is not only used by Save Plastics to manufacture items from recycled plastic, but is also used to process the collected plastic. This dual purpose is new for the recycling industry and it could serve as an example for other cities in the Netherlands and in Europe.

'Save-tasta' tiny house at the Floriade

The Green Plastic Factory products will also be displayed at the horticultural expo, the Floriade 2022. They will include benches, decking and fences. There will also be a prototype of the 'save-tasta' tiny house. The house symbolises the enormous potential of recycled plastic waste. The modular building blocks for the house are produced in the Green Plastic Factory. The 20 m² prototype contains 7,482 kg of plastic waste. This equates to about five million sandwich bags. By recycling instead of incinerating, 7,419 kg of CO₂ emissions are saved. This equates to driving 62,352 km in a car. The prototype can be seen at the Floriade from April 2022.

ERFD

The Green Plastic Factory in Almere is an initiative of the Municipality of Almere and is supported by Dutch project partners – the Province of Flevoland, Cirwinn and the Utrecht University of Applied Science – and European project partners. The latter partners are members of the TRANSFORM-CE project of the Interreg North West Europe programme that is part of the European Regional Development Fund (ERFD).

Note to the editor

For interviews, tours or technical questions, please contact Bram Peters, Director of Save Plastics on +31 (0)6 53 15 29 26 or at bram@saveplastics.nl.

For more information about this press release from TRANSFORM-CE, please contact Miranda van Oostrom, Bureau MVO on [0031 64143 2866](tel:0031641432866) or at miranda@bureaumvo.nl

For more information about the press release from Municipality of Almere, please phone the Municipality of Almere's press office: +31 (0)6 51 00 21 07.

Website: www.nweurope.eu/transform-ce