

HOW CIRCULAR IS THE MINERAL WOOL INDUSTRY?

A great potential for waste recovery

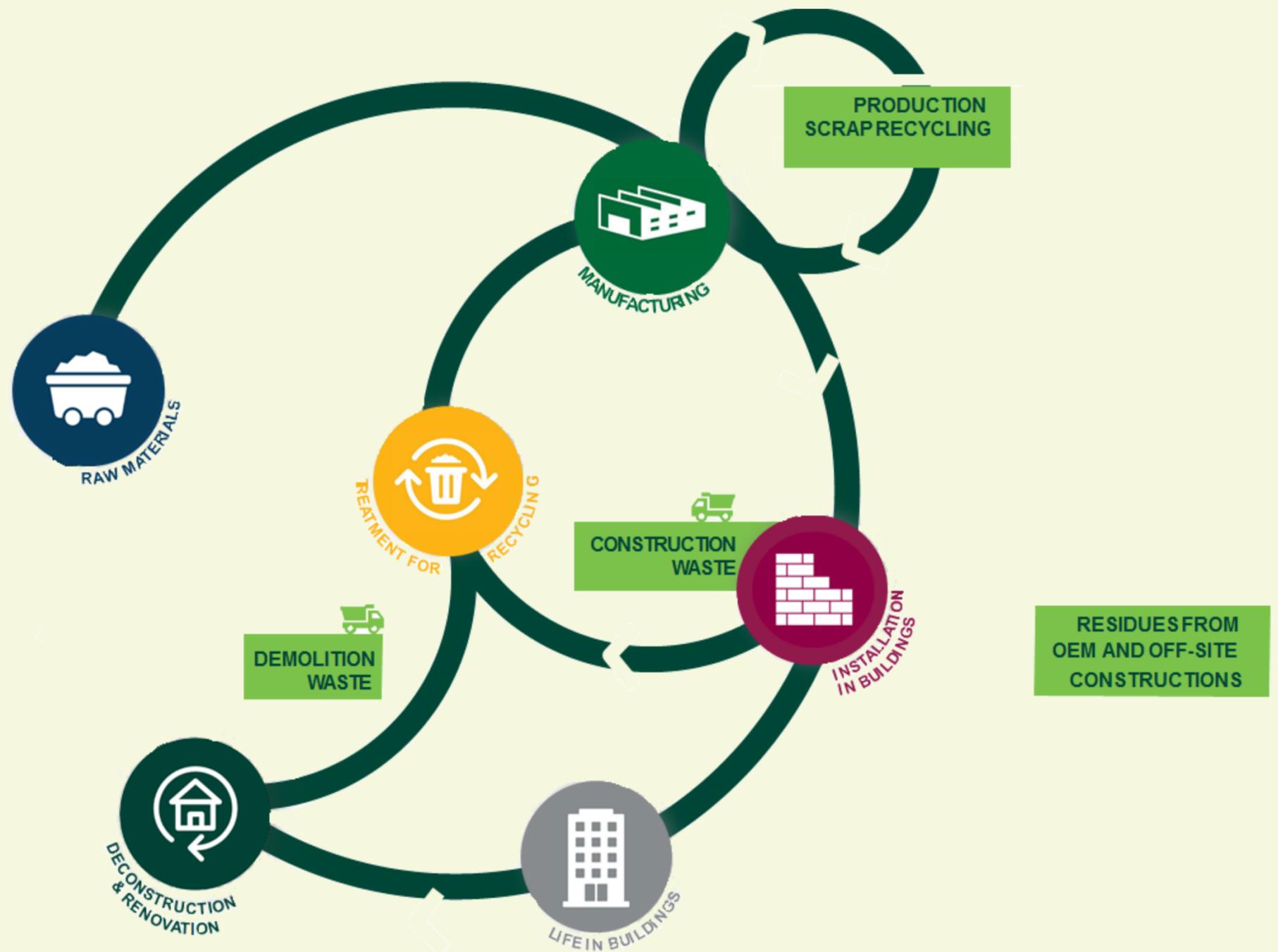
The technology to recycle mineral wool has been developed, our industry works scaling up the circular model that is indicated below.



Our studies estimate that 570kt of Mineral Wool waste will be produced each year in the EU by 2035. With the EU renovation wave afoot, this amount may be much higher.

25% of recycled material is used on average in the manufacture of mineral wool. In certain cases, this percentage can go up to 70%.

There is potential for a much higher recovery rates with the existing technology.



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Avoided landfilling
- Avoided extraction of virgin non-renewable Raw Materials
- Increased protection of biodiversity
- Reduced international shipment of Critical Raw Materials
- Reduced Energy consumption and Carbon emissions

DID YOU KNOW?

Local take-back schemes of off-cuts generated during construction projects or manufacturing processes can be re-manufactured into new mineral wool products, such as blowing wool or ceiling tiles. They can also be used by other industries to make bricks or expanded clay.



Main challenges for a circular Mineral Wool market

Economics

- As the cost of landfill remains low, it is difficult for alternative recovery options to become economically viable.
- The cost of the raw materials derived from recycling (secondary raw materials) might be more expensive than the cost of virgin raw materials.

Sorting and handling

- The handling and classification of Mineral Wool Insulation waste fall under different national and regulatory practices.

Legislation

- The overlap between the EU Chemicals and Waste legislations can create bottlenecks as there are currently a variety of local practices in Member States and no EU harmonised End of Waste criteria for Mineral Wool.
- This creates complex permitting procedures for handling, transport and recovery that creates negative incentives for the recovery of Mineral Wool.



How can the EU help? Our asks

Before installation

- Minimum recycled content requirements in the CPR.
- Tracking of materials based on building material passports or open standards would facilitate dismantling, reuse and recycling.
- Any proof/documentation needed should be in an easily trackable digital format.

At the end of life

- Mainstream deconstruction practices instead of demolition.
- Mixed waste can be difficult to recycle. Deconstruction practices that sort and separate wastes from start would significantly ease the recovery of mineral wool.
- Set material specific recovery/recycling targets for glass wool and stone wool.
- Increase the cost of landfill for recyclable products and ban it progressively.

Before the recycling centre

- Facilitate and reduce administrative permitting requirements combined with a commitment to value-chain education and maintain existing worker protection requirements.
- Consider the destination of the shipment, whether it is destined for landfill or recovery. In case of recycling, the procedure should be EU-wide, simplified and faster.
- In any other case, there should be clear guidelines between Member States on the treatment of these shipments.