



SK chemicals Builds Regional Circular Economy Models for Waste Banners

Descrizione

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SEOUL, South Korea, Oct. 6, 2026 /PRNewswire/ ??? SK chemicals is moving to build a collaborative framework for a circular economy for waste banners.

SK chemicals announced on 6th that it has formed the Waste Banner Resource Circulation Consortium with MOA, Daehan Media, Upcloth, and the Resource Circulation Team of Seogwipo City, Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, and is launching full-scale collaboration. The consortium was established following the challenge on waste banner processing and circular economy development that SK chemicals put forward at the Solveathon idea competition, held in conjunction with the Social Value Festa and hosted by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety.

The four participating organizations will each take charge of collecting waste banners in their respective regions, while drawing on their individual expertise in areas such as pre-processing, distribution, and sales to build, together with SK chemicals, the entire process spanning recycling, product manufacturing, and distribution.

By region, MOA and Daehan Media will be responsible for collecting waste banners in the Gyeongsang region, Upcloth in the Honam region, and Seogwipo City in Jeju. Upcloth, which has experience operating collection and sorting systems based at local Self-Sufficiency Centers, will also pursue local job creation by employing participants in self-sufficiency programs and people with disabilities.

Waste banners collected through the four organizations's collaboration will be sent to MOA, which specializes in pre-processing, to be processed into a form and quality suitable for chemical recycling. They will then be converted into feedstock using SK chemicals's depolymerization technology and transformed into materials that can once again be used to make banners. Daehan Media will take part as the production partner for the chemically recycled banner fabric, supplying it to each region through its nationwide sales network.

Seogwipo City, the only local government among the participating organizations, will also work on establishing the necessary institutional framework so that the entire cycle, from the collection of waste banners to the reuse of chemically recycled banners, can be completed within the region.

The company estimates that more than 1,000 tons of waste banners are generated each year in the Gyeongsang, Honam, and Jeju regions participating in the project. It expects that once resource circulation systems for waste banners are established in each region through this project, the volume of waste banners sent to landfills and incinerators will be significantly reduced, and the foundation for resource circulation will be expanded.

Because banners are typically used only once for events, elections, and similar purposes, most have been landfilled or incinerated after a short period of use. To address the waste problem, efforts have been made to upcycle waste banners into products such as tote bags and waste collection bags, but critics have pointed out that these, too, amount to no more than one-time recycling.

According to the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment, approximately 6,000 tons of waste banners are generated in Korea each year, and about 70% of them are reportedly landfilled or incinerated.

The initiative is significant in that it tackles the waste banner problem by building a sustainable structure in which waste banners are turned back into banners through depolymerization technology. SK chemicals's depolymerization technology breaks waste plastics down to the molecular level, returns them to feedstock, and then repolymerizes them. Unlike conventional mechanical recycling, which involves shredding, washing, and remelting waste, depolymerization converts waste into feedstock through a chemical process, structurally eliminating the effects of prior use, color, and impurities. As a result, while mechanical recycling is currently limited to high-quality waste streams such as clear PET bottles, depolymerization makes it easier to recover resources from a wide variety of waste plastics, including textile-based waste banners. In addition, because quality does not degrade even after repeated recycling, it is regarded as a technology ideally suited to recycling waste banners.

Through the consortium, SK chemicals aims to build a new model for region-based waste banner circulation, in which waste generated in a region is turned back into resources within that same region. The company plans to establish and standardize provincial-level collection and sorting systems for waste banners, along with the institutional foundation to support them, taking into account each region's characteristics and existing collection systems. It then intends to expand its reach by replicating this model in other regions.

A representative of SK chemicals said, "Waste banners are a waste issue that most local communities are grappling with, but each region's circumstances and approaches differ to some extent. Through collaboration with the participating organizations, we will broaden the scope to the metropolitan and provincial level to build waste banner circulation systems, and create real success stories of turning waste banners back into banners."

Meanwhile, SK chemicals has been steadily expanding its cooperation with local governments to establish a stable collection and recycling system for waste banners. Starting with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on waste banner resource recovery signed with the City of Gunsan and Revelop

in August 2024, the company went on to sign MOUs with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety and the cities of Sejong, Gangneung, Cheongju, Naju, and Changwon in June 2025, and with the City of Seoul in August of the same year. In addition, together with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety and the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it held an open call for ideas on building a nationwide supply chain through the 2026 Solveathon for Overcoming Regional Decline, broadening its search for partners to include the private sector.

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Categoria

1. Comunicati

Tag

1. ImmediaPress

Data di creazione

Ottobre 6, 2026

Autore

redazione