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REFRESH participates in WindEnergy Hamburg as member of Wind Innovation Cluster Hub

REFRESH, an EU-funded project developing sustainable repurposing and recycling solutions for decommissioned wind turbine blades, is attending WindEnergy Hamburg 2026, 22-25 September, as a member of the new Wind Innovation Cluster Hub. Gees Recycling, the project's mechanical recycling expert, will represent REFRESH at the event.

REFRESH is preparing to exploit the results of four years of research. The project's technologies cover the entire end-of-life blade value chain, from dismantling, cutting and sorting, through optimised recycling processes, to new products, supported by a traceability platform and sustainability analyses. A key element of the project is Gees' new 6000 tonne/year mechanical recycling line, which is currently being commissioned at its facility in Aviano, Italy. This will transform composite materials from end-of-life blades into panels for applications in construction and other markets.

"WindEnergy Hamburg provides an excellent platform to share the innovations and experience developed in REFRESH with industry stakeholders," says Giorgio Betteto, R&D CTO, Gees Recycling. "As the project draws to a successful conclusion, we are eager to explore opportunities and collaborations to scale these technologies in the market. Moreover, we will show different applications of recycled materials destined for the wind energy sector, like formwork for turbine foundations made with the recycled panels and recycled fibres, plus battery enclosures and components for electrical grid equipment."

The full achievements of the REFRESH consortium will be presented during the project's closing event on 2nd December in Brussels.

A hub for European wind energy innovation

The Wind Innovation Cluster Hub, coordinated by PNO Innovation and launched in August, makes its first public appearance in Hamburg. The initiative brings together 20 Horizon Europe projects to coordinate communication and stakeholder engagement

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across the European wind energy sector, share lessons learned across projects, develop joint positions towards policymakers, and provide the industry with a single point of contact for wind energy R&I.

REFRESH participates in the Hub's Circularity, Sustainable and High-Performance Materials working group. Information about REFRESH and the other participating projects will be available at the Hub **stand 440 in hall A4**. Giorgio Betteto will also present REFRESH's key innovations during the Wind Innovation Cluster Hub **Speakers' Corner session on 22 September, at 15:45-16:45.**

New solutions for blade circularity

Most components of a wind turbine have established recycling routes, but the blades, which mainly comprise composite materials, present a complex challenge. Existing recycling solutions for glass fibre reinforced composites are not yet widely available or economically competitive. As wind parks older than 20-25 years are now being decommissioned, building a new circular economy strategy for blades is crucial.

The REFRESH innovations span the complete value chain:

- Technologies for blade cutting, shredding and materials sorting (ETAT9, MTB);
- New, upscaled lines for mechanical recycling (Gees Recycling) and advanced thermal recycling (Gjenkraft);
- Experimental microwave-assisted pyrolysis and solvolysis processes (CIRCE);
- A thermochemical process to valorise process dust (Enecolab);
- Repurposing strategies and new products incorporating recycled materials for wind energy, construction and further markets (CETMA, TECNALIA, ACCIONA);
- A blockchain traceability platform and decision-making algorithm (TECNALIA).

A comprehensive life cycle assessment (LCA) of the REFRESH recycling processes and new products, conducted by RINA, will be published when the project concludes in December.

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The new Gees recycling line produces panels from blade materials. (Image © Gees Recycling.)

About REFRESH

REFRESH – *Smart dismantling, sorting and **RE**cycling of glass **F**ibre **RE**inforced composite from wind power **S**ector through **H**olistic approach* – is a European project aiming to develop and demonstrate a novel circular, smart system enabling improved recycling of glass fibre reinforced composites derived from wind turbine dismantling or reblading.

The project consortium brings together 11 organisations from five countries: project coordinator RINA Consulting (Italy), ACCIONA Construccion (Spain), CETMA (Italy), CIRCE (Spain), Enecolab Srl (Italy), ETAT9 (France), EuCIA (Belgium), Gees Recycling (Italy), Gjenkraft AS (Norway), MTB (France), and TECNALIA (Spain).

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