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ROLLING OUT THE GREEN CARPET FOR COPENHAGEN DIGNITARIES

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By [Barbara Kessler](#)
Green Right Now

When they roll out the red carpet in Copenhagen, it will be green.



Copenhagen carpet, green even though it's red

Actually, it will be red in color — we wouldn't want our world leaders walking on a tertiary color. But it will be eco-friendly, because among those firms that will get to show their green wares on this world stage are a Belgian company that makes carpets for large events, and a US bioplastic maker that's replaced oil-based fibers in carpet with a plant-based product called INGEO.

The carpet, by French carpet producer [Sommer Needlepunch](#) (which is owned by Belgian DS Textile Platform group), is 20,000 square meters of cushy, red floor covering made with INGEO bioplastic fibers, developed by Minnesota's [NatureWorks LLC](#).

The carpet will cover the floors of the Bella Center at the [Copenhagen Climate Conference](#), where thousands of government and NGO leaders will converge to discuss needed global carbon reductions over the next two weeks. (The conference runs from Dec. 7-18)

This unique collaboration is reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of making an event carpet this size by 60 percent compared with using fibers from polypropylene — the usual fossil-based material used in such carpeting, according to NatureWorks.

The Eco2Punch carpet is already winning awards and getting attention in the industry. Sommer Needlepunch is proud to be the first company to find a cradle-to-grave solution for event carpet, thanks to its partners in the project, said Patrick van Pottelberge, who noted that the carpet suffers from no compromises in quality and meets Europe's stringent flammability standards.

When it's rolled up after the Copenhagen Climate Conference, the carpet will be recycled via a process that returns it to a lactic acid that can be used as an industrial feedstock for making more Ingeo products.

“The carpet going into Copenhagen will be collected by another company in Europe (Galactic). They will depolymerize it, to recover the feedstock, which we can use it to make plastic,” said Steve Davies, marketing director for NatureWorks.

The beauty of this type of recycling, he said, is that it doesn’t result in a lesser, secondary use, but a recapture of the vast majority of the original material, which can be used to remake the same product or something similar.

And while “event carpet” is a fairly boutique item, similar efficiencies are helping create ever more eco-friendly applications in the residential and commercial carpet markets, he said. The INGEO plastic, when used as the only ingredient for a carpet does not have the durability of nylon carpet. In pure form, it’s perfect for the temporary carpet. But as a hybrid blend with tougher nylon, it can reduce the energy required to make everyday carpet, he said.

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