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OrthoLite® Announces Exclusive Partnership with Novamont to Create the First Circular Foam Material Solution in Footwear

AMHERST, Mass., U.S. / Novara, Italy (March 13, 2023) – [OrthoLite®](#), the global leader of sustainable, performance and comfort insoles and footwear materials solutions, and [Novamont](#), the international leader in the development, production and eco-design of biodegradable and compostable bioplastics and biochemicals, announce an exclusive partnership in the creation of [OrthoLite Cirql™](#), the world's first circular foam material solution for footwear.

OrthoLite Cirql foam is a [patented](#) footwear materials solution combining OrthoLite's 26 years of expertise and innovation in foaming polymers and Novamont's world-leading bio-based, compostable and recyclable polymer to provide the first technology capable of greatly reducing the high impact of the manufacturing process with multiple end-of-life disposal options.

According to a new Life Cycle Assessment carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a typical pair of running shoes generates 14 kg/30 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to running a 100-watt light bulb for a week. Every year, in the United States alone, people throw away more than 300 million pairs of shoes, 95% of which end up in landfills.

OrthoLite Cirql will offer a scalable and [truly circular](#) material to OrthoLite's 500+ footwear brand partners and factory stakeholders in 2023.

"OrthoLite Cirql illuminates the path forward to truly circular footwear," said Glenn Barrett, CEO and Founder of OrthoLite. "We are excited to be partnering with Novamont to escalate scalable solutions to drive positive change in the global footwear industry. This partnership is built on trust and transparency, as well as a relentless commitment to equip our 500-plus global footwear brand partners to have access to single-source circular materials, starting with the midsole."

OrthoLite sought out the high-tech bio-polymer company because of Novamont's pioneering activities in the field of the circular bioeconomy and for its 30 years of experience in the development of chemical and biotechnological processes to create low-impact certified biodegradable and compostable solutions with multiple end of life options for everyday life, including: packaging, separating organic waste collection, retail purchasing, disposable tableware, farming, lubricants, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and more.



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“Proving by facts that it is possible to ‘do more with less,’ Novamont has always based its model on the development of products conceived as true catalysts for change, which are capable of activating much greater systemic effects than the product itself, and not as mere substitutes for traditional ones,” explained Catia Bastioli, CEO and Founder of Novamont. “Our philosophy has always been to avoid the problems of pollutant accumulation in the environment, and the fruitful collaboration with OrthoLite, a company that is also committed in finding solutions and not just products, allows us to bring our approach to the footwear industry for the first time.”

OrthoLite Cirql is free from “forever chemicals” and responsibly sourced from non-GMO traditional vegetable raw materials derived from plants plus synthetic biodegradable materials. The material can be returned to the production cycle by low-energy, advanced chemical recycling to help keep materials in use or back to nature as fully compostable through selected industrial composting methods and processors. Using existing and new, closed loop, take back, recycling streams for footwear, scalable end of life management will involve collaboration with footwear brands and the waste management sector. OrthoLite Cirql will also help avoid the accumulation of persistent microplastics as particles will biodegrade similar to natural polymers such as cellulose.

Novamont Research developed a tailor made bio-polymer material for the OrthoLite Cirql's chemical-free foaming process which uses nitrogen (from the air we breathe) combined with renewable energy. Unlike the conventional foaming methods currently used, no dangerous or toxic chemical additives are used in the production of Cirql. The biopolymer pellets are melted and mixed with liquid nitrogen under extreme pressure, in a unique injection molding process that results in incredibly efficient cycle times that reduce energy consumption and create a finished part with no downtime, polymerization or waste.

Certified as a B Corp in 2020 with a top-tier ranking, Novamont is a member of the United Nations' Global Compact network, a leadership platform for the development and implementation of responsible corporate policies and practices. OrthoLite Cirql marks the company's debut in the footwear industry. Together, the partners are bringing a global solution for environmental improvement across the global footwear industry, a market currently valued at around \$400 billion.

Operating sustainably has also been central to OrthoLite's DNA since its founding more than 25 years ago, beginning with footwear insoles containing recycled rubber. As the insole supplier of choice for more than 470 leading footwear brands worldwide, across all categories – outdoor, athletic, running, comfort, golf, lifestyle, and fashion – OrthoLite insoles are utilized in more than 500+ million pairs of shoes every year. With trust-based relationships through its wholly-owned and vertically integrated global supply chain and production facilities located in countries around the world, OrthoLite's commitment to sustainable, circular solutions has an immense and measurable global impact. The brand's current goal is to achieve zero waste, which is a significant



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step toward pollution reduction and the regeneration of natural systems—central tenets of circular, sustainable solutions.

OrthoLite Cirql is committed to full transparency and third-party validation, and has undergone extensive [third-party testing](#) and analysis including a complete Life Cycle IVL Assessment. OrthoLite Cirql is Certified Industrial Compostable – ([Din Certco](#)), REACH-certified (EU) and USDA Certified Bio Preferred®, RSL compliant ([Intertek](#)), certified GMO-free, certified Vegan and Hypoallergenic.

OrthoLite's Cirql headquarters is in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam where its factory achieved an overall verified score of 95% from the Higg Index in 2022. As a [vertically integrated](#) company with its owned and operated factories across the globe, OrthoLite understands how to implement scalability with its brand partners and their Tier 1 footwear factories. OrthoLite has room to scale capacity on site at its factory in Vietnam and will work with the footwear brands and their factory partners who will meet the larger demands of the brands when it comes to scaling it. Novamont, headquartered in Novara, Italy, is also a global, vertically integrated company with the means to scale and grow this innovation in stride with OrthoLite. OrthoLite Cirql is moving from the lab into production scale in the back half of 2023.

For more information about OrthoLite Cirql, visit [OrthoLiteCirql.com](#). For more information about Novamont, visit [Novamont.com](#).

About OrthoLite®

OrthoLite is the world's leading supplier of open-cell foam technology, and the innovator and creator of [OrthoLite Cirql™](#), the patented, revolutionary alternative to conventional EVA plastics

that provides footwear brands and their factory partners with the most sustainable, circular choice in materials. OrthoLite's innovative footwear solutions are available to brands that share a vision for the future of sustainable footwear. Currently OrthoLite is found in more than 550 million shoes across all categories each year from brands such as Adidas, Altra, Asics, Brooks, Clarks, Cole Haan, Converse, Danner, ECCO, Fendi, HOKA, Hugo Boss, Justin, New Balance, On, Reebok, Rothy's, Salomon, Skechers, The North Face, Timberland, Toms, Under Armour, and Vans.

OrthoLite has a long-standing history of meaningful partnerships and sponsorships that demonstrate a dedicated commitment to supporting its customers, consumers, brand partners and the footwear industry. OrthoLite is the Official Insole sponsor of the New York Yankees, and strong supporter of the [Two Ten Foundation](#). Stay up to date with company news by visiting [OrthoLite.com](#) and [OrthoLiteCirql.com](#), and following OrthoLite on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). To learn more about the benefits of OrthoLite, visit [www.ortholite.com](#).



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About Novamont:

Novamont is a Benefit Company, certified B Corporation, world leader in the production of bioplastics and in the development of biochemicals and bioproducts through the integration of chemistry, environment and agriculture. With 650 employees, the group has a turnover of approximately 414 million euro and constantly invests in research and innovation (50 million euro in 2021, employing 20% of staff); it holds approximately 1,400 patents and patent applications. It has headquarters in Novara, production plants in Terni, Bottrighe (Rovigo province) and Patrica (Frosinone province) and research laboratories in Novara, Terni and Piana di Monte Verna (Caserta province). It has set up a joint venture with Versalis (Eni group) in Porto Torres (Sassari province) and Mater-Agro, a company for the development and distribution of agricultural solutions with Coldiretti. It is active internationally with offices in Germany, France, Spain and the United States. Through its distributors, Novamont is present in more than 40 countries on all continents. In 2021 it acquired BioBag International, a world leader in the development, production and marketing of certified biodegradable and compostable applications, with headquarters in Askim (Norway), a production plant in Dagö (Estonia) and a presence in nine other countries worldwide. For more information, please visit www.novamont.com.