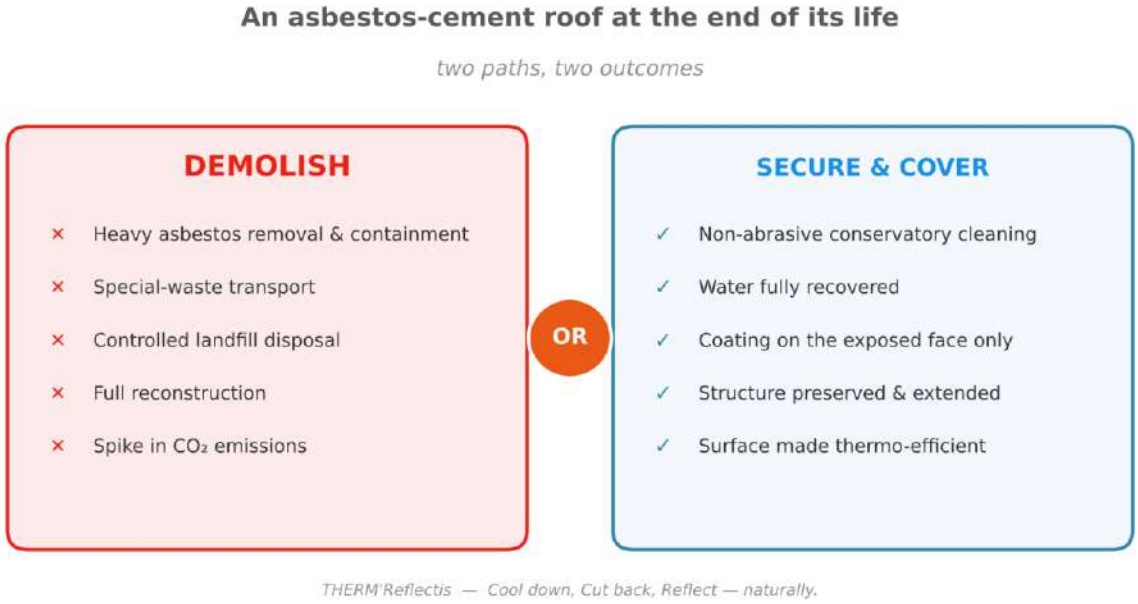
Asbestos: what if we didn't demolish?

The second life of fibre-cement roofs

In Switzerland, thousands of asbestos-cement roofs are reaching the end of their life. The usual reflex is demolition. Yet demolishing means generating most of a project's greenhouse gases, producing special waste and erasing a structure that is still sound. What if, instead of destroying, we secured, covered and valorised?

By Joël Kohli, Founder & Director



Faced with an asbestos roof at the end of its life, two paths open up — and their outcomes, climatic and health-related alike, are nothing alike.

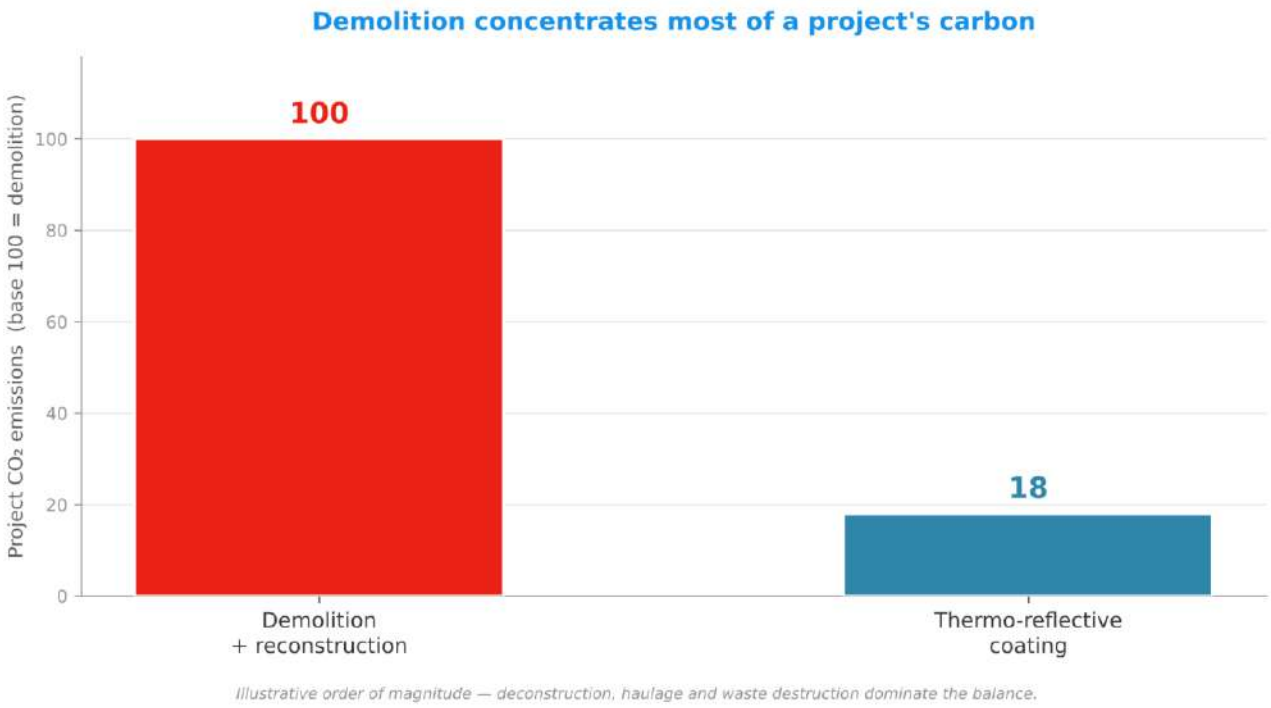
There is a cumbersome legacy on many of our buildings. Switzerland banned asbestos back in 1990, seven years before France. But a ban does not make the existing stock disappear: any fibre-cement element produced before 1990 must be presumed to contain asbestos.

And fibre cement covered, from the 1950s to the early 1980s, a considerable share of our industrial and agricultural halls, our depots and our collective buildings. These roofs are ageing today — and every owner faces the same question: **what to do with them?**

The demolition reflex comes at a high cost — to the environment first

In construction, it is not so much new materials that weigh on the carbon balance as end of life: dismantling, hauling away, destroying and treating the waste concentrate most of a project's greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions.

Demolishing an asbestos roof means chaining together a heavy asbestos-removal job (containment, mechanical stripping), special-waste transport, controlled-landfill disposal — **and then a full reconstruction.** Against the sustainability targets set by the Confederation — cutting GHGs by 2030, climate neutrality (net zero) by 2050 — this reflex becomes hard to justify whenever an alternative exists.



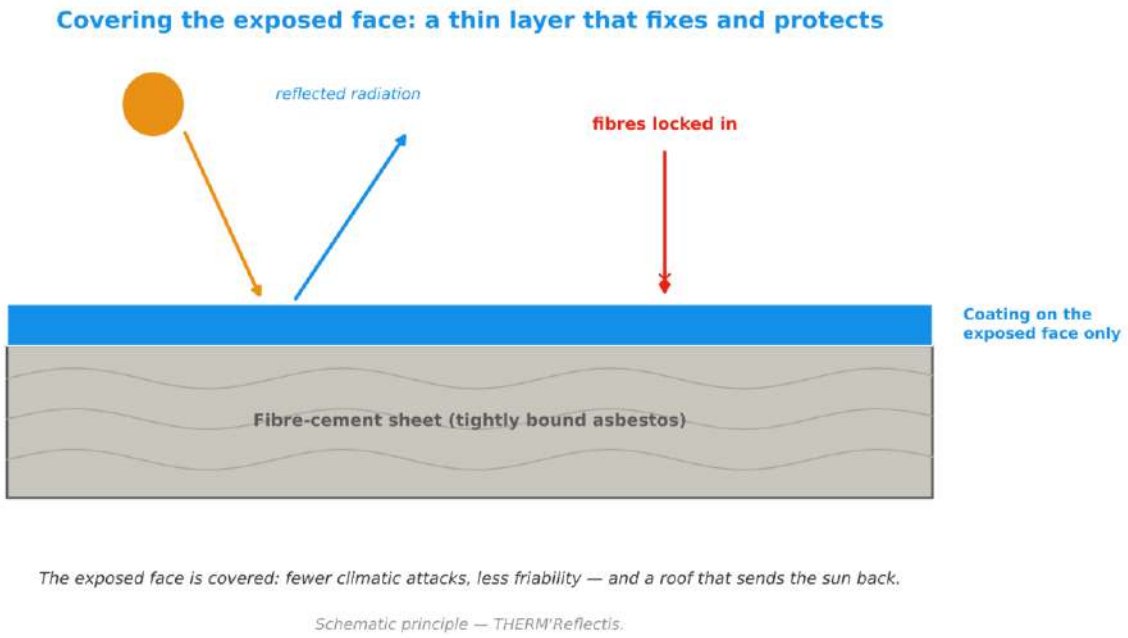
Deconstruction, haulage and waste destruction dominate a project's carbon balance. Covering rather than demolishing avoids most of it.

Secure rather than destroy: cover the exposed face

Swiss regulation acknowledges it: a fibre-cement roof in relatively good condition does not require immediate removal. Three strategies coexist — full removal (definitive, but costly and a generator of special waste), neutralisation (still emerging) and **stabilisation by surface covering**, accepted and often the most rational option where the substrate is not of concern.

Let us be precise on a point that makes all the difference: this is **not** about encapsulating the roof — which would mean confining both of its faces — but about **covering only the face exposed** to the weather. This is where the thermo-reflective approach makes full sense. Our solutions are **certified for encapsulation** — a technical qualification of the product — and, applied as a surface layer on the fibre cement, they cover and lock the exposed face: they shield the material from climatic attack — UV, freeze/thaw cycles, precipitation — which, over time, weakens the cement matrix and eventually exposes the fibres.

To health protection are added the thermal benefits our readers know well: a high solar reflectance index, a sharply lowered surface temperature, restored summer comfort under the roof and measurable air-conditioning savings — not to mention full compatibility with photovoltaics.



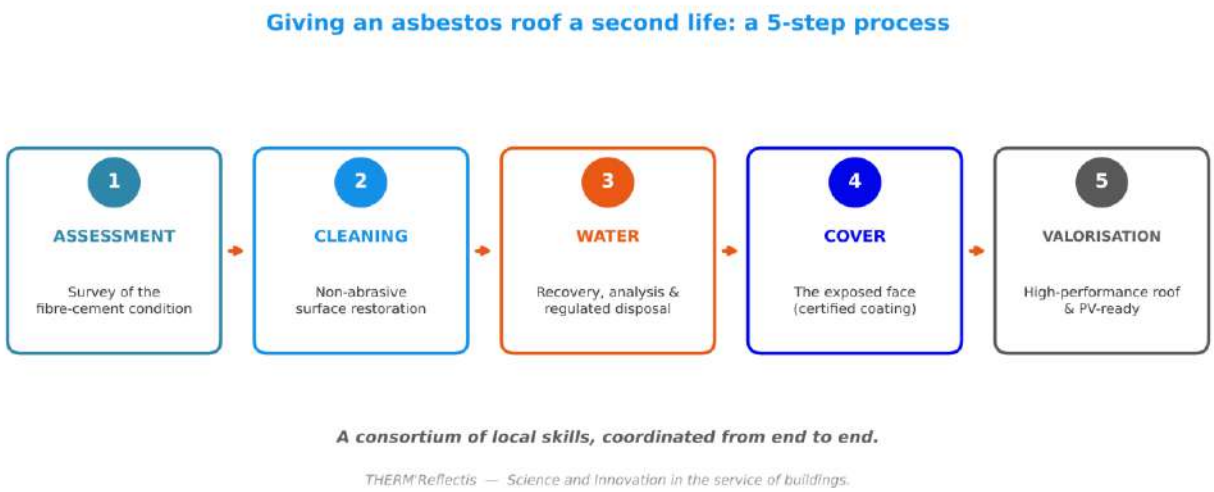
Schematic principle: the thin reflective layer covers the exposed face of the fibre cement, limits fibre release and sends solar radiation back.

A complete value chain, carried by local skills

Covering an asbestos roof cannot be improvised. That is precisely why THERM'Reflectis does not position itself as a mere applicator, but is structuring a **consortium of skills** able to take on the operation from end to end, through short supply chains and with as many regional contributors as possible:

1. **Assessment** — survey of the fibre-cement condition and its degradation, by a recognised expert.
2. **Conservatory cleaning** — surface restoration by strictly non-abrasive means (sponges, pressure-free clean-water rinsing), the opposite of stripping.
3. **Study and control of the cleaning water** — full recovery, characterisation in an accredited laboratory and disposal through the regulated channel (special waste).
4. **Covering the exposed face** — application of a thermo-reflective coating certified for encapsulation, which covers and locks the exposed face of the substrate.
5. **Covering and valorisation** — the secured roof becomes high-performance: solar reflection, photovoltaic support, extended service life.

Each link mobilises specialised know-how — geologist and asbestos-diagnosis expert, surface-cleaning company, accredited laboratory, trained applicator. The ambition is not to do everything in-house, but to **coordinate** these skills in the service of the owner.



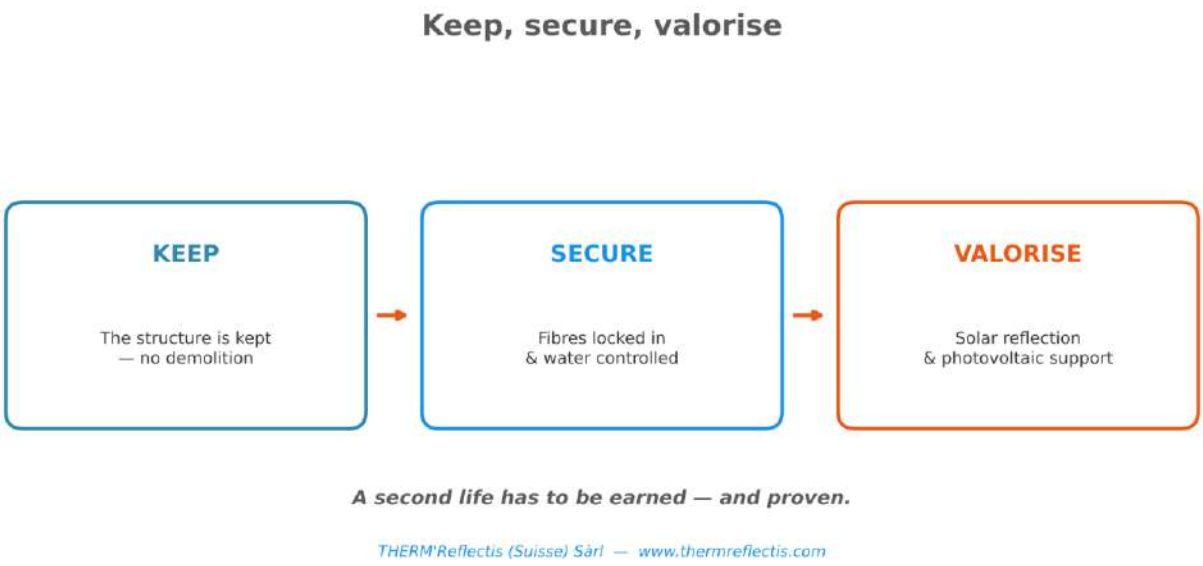
From assessment to valorisation: five steps, a single common thread, delivered by a consortium of local skills coordinated from end to end.

Building the framework, not only the structure

This type of operation — a gentle conservatory cleaning of an asbestos surface **kept in place**, with a view to covering it — falls outside the classic asbestos-removal case. It is not about removing or stripping the asbestos, but about preparing the surface, with an expected fibre release far lower than that of a heavy-load job.

This particularity calls for a suitable framework. That is why THERM'Reflectis has engaged, on a pilot project, in **dialogue with the cantonal authorities of Vaud** (Directorate-General for the Environment). The principle is clear and fully accepted on our part: asbestos fibres are waste, hence **zero discharge** — full recovery of the water, no release, compliant disposal. The question we are submitting is one of **proportionality**: should the requirements be calibrated on a high-load asbestos removal, or adjusted to the real fibre load of a non-abrasive cleaning?

To objectify this point, we are funding a real-condition test phase, on a limited surface, with measurement by an accredited laboratory of the real fibre load in the rinse water and in the air. The goal goes beyond the single project: to contribute, together with the competent service and independent experts, to defining a reproducible methodology for this type of conservatory intervention — an approach set to multiply as covering solutions develop.



Keep, secure, valorise: three gestures that turn an asbestos liability into a thermo-efficient asset.

Keep, secure, valorise

Faced with an asbestos roof, demolition is no longer the only horizon. Where the condition of the substrate allows it, securing and covering it means avoiding the emissions of deconstruction, sparing special waste, extending the life of a structure — and, as a bonus, turning it into a thermo-efficient surface. This is exactly the "renovate rather than demolish" logic we championed last week, pushed to its most demanding case.

THERM'Reflectis is building this value chain step by step, with rigour and in coordination with the authorities. Because a second life has to be earned — **and proven.**

Before demolishing, let us ask the right question: **what if it all started by securing what is already there?**

***Sources** : ChemRRO (ORRChim), Annex 1.6 — ban on asbestos in Switzerland (1990) · Suva — factsheets 33031 (outdoor work), 33047 (non-abrasive cleaning), CFST/EKAS directive 6503 (2025 ed.) · ADWO (OLED, SR 814.600) — disposal of asbestos waste · OCW (OTConst), art. 3 — prior identification of hazardous substances · WPO (OEaux), art. 10 — "zero discharge" principle · FOEN — Polludoc report on the state of the art (2024) · Federal Council — Report on the compatibility of the building sector with net zero, 20 August 2025 · Climate and Innovation Act (CliA/LCI) — targets of -50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.*

Do you manage a building, a public facility or a property portfolio covered in asbestos fibre cement?

👉 Request a THERM'Reflectis diagnosis

Cool, Reduce, Reflect — naturally.

Our approach in 4 steps:

***Diagnosis** thermal and structural → **Planning** tailored → **Application** certified → **Monitoring** of the gains*

Was your building designed to meet this new challenge?

Your potential is unique. Whether it is an industrial site, a collective facility or a heritage building, **an asbestos roof may hold a possible second life** — provided it is revealed with method.

> ***Stop letting this potential lie dormant.***
> ***Every surface counts.***
> ***Every degree gained makes a difference.***
> ***Every project contributes to a more sustainable future.***

Contact THERM'Reflectis: let's turn your potential into performance together!

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YOUR POTENTIAL + OUR EXPERTISE = GUARANTEED RESULTS

"Revealing the hidden potential of every surface to create tomorrow's lasting value of Switzerland.
Your project, our mission."