

eco-tex History

the roots

In 1992 companies worldwide founded the eco-tex Consortium; already at the beginning of 1993 more than 250 companies from all textile producing industries, apparel industry, leading Styling und Design Groups, the trade and the chemical industries had joined the eco-tex Consortium. In 1996 all activities were taken over by the eco-tex Institute for Applied Ecology. Our business is focused on textile, garment, leather, shoes, accessory, dyestuff & chemical industry and retail. In 2001, eco-tex starts working on services for other industries such as toys, cosmetics and food.

the aims

eco-tex aims are an implementation of environmental, social and management standards worldwide in cooperation with all types of enterprises, mainly with small and medium enterprises. In view of a steadily growing responsibility on environmental and social requirements from the market, there is need to adjust national to international standards. This permanent process is based on a newly developed Auditing System. In terms of environmental requirements, it is covering all processes and input products allowing an immediate weak-point analysis and offering the necessary assistance whenever corrective actions are needed to reach a CP (Cleaner Production) - Standard. In terms of social requirements, it is covering all essential codes of conduct assuring compliance with social, health and safety criteria by pre-assessment, auditing, evaluation and installation of measures to achieve a sustainable development. Ending in a self-commitment-system, covering the full supply chain in all interested industries at the highest possible compliance level.

the activities

A full Auditing System was developed based on detailed questionnaires for each industry step from fibre to the final garment including all production steps down to accessories, trimmings and packaging. On top of that a sophisticated evaluation system has been developed, allowing an immediate judgement of the status of any production unit.

In 1993, a full EMS - Audit System (ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM) and the related evaluation scheme were presented. In 1994, a number of EMS-Audits were made worldwide and the Management Systems installed.

1994 was the year of the development and presentation of concepts for the textile trade (ECO-MONITORING). The reason was a growing need to assure environmental and social criteria and parameter at all production levels involved in worldwide sourcing areas. Not just to analyze at high costs final garments or their components as an alibi function but to know who is producing at the required quality and/or price level and build a transparent relation between buyer and supplier for the benefit of both parties.

The concept was successfully offered to Migros, Zurich - the largest Swiss Retailer, who has appointed us to audit and assure the compliance chain for their textile products worldwide.

Reaching already in 2002, about 60% (or more than 30 Million pieces) of their complete textile assortment to comply with their extremely strict environmental and social requirements. eco-tex maintains a database concerning status and supply chain of each product of more than 3.000 manufacturers.

the social aspect

Right from the beginning social criteria and requirements were integrated parts of the auditing system touching all relevant areas such as Working Conditions, Health & Safety and Social Justice. Following a different approach while taking into consideration also the local requirements of the countries and suppliers chosen as sourcing areas, eco-tex has identified the ultimate cause of shortcomings: lack of education! In 1993 **K.I.D.S. (Kids In Deficiency Situations)** was founded. This foundation offers a different and more pragmatic and transparent approach to the problem of children in poverty or rather Child Labour. Means i.e. optional school or vocational training for working kids with full salaries. Plus medical assistance! Several projects are already actively running in India. The non-profit organisation intends to expand its activities in the field of Education, Training and Employment to wipe out exemplary the gap in living standards between developed and developing countries.

In 2003 MIGROS started activities on Social Code of Conduct issues with eco-tex being responsible for the development of the tools and monitoring procedure.

Also in 2003, the biggest Japanese retailer AEON was won as a customer for the CoC Social Monitoring concept to prepare, audit and monitor his producers.

the developments & status

Already existing systems, standards and methodologies in the areas of CP, EMS and Monitoring were successfully implemented and underwent continuous improvements. All systems are installed and in use in a large number of textile and garment producing companies worldwide.

In 2001 eco-tex handled more than 5.500 audits for CP-Systems (Cleaner Production); in several large vertical mills EMS-Systems were installed.

The eco-tex system based on screening, evaluation, optimisation and assistance is subject to a continuous further development referring the supply-chain-management. It answers both international growing requirements and local conditions to improve producing and consuming quality for achieving global sustainable development. This process is accompanied by several Sustainability Projects with international organisations like CSC, CDG, DEG, EPE, GTZ and STIC.

the solution for producers

Based on the largely approved and working auditing systems in the areas CP, EMS and Monitoring we have developed a COMPLIANCE & SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CSM 2000). This system defines standards between buying and supplying partners and guarantees a full coverage of all commonly defined criteria within the areas of Quality, Environment, Health & Safety and Social Requirements. Also in view of a necessary flexibility to adjust at any time to eventual new or updated criteria or requirements of legal, market or customer origin, CSM helps to improve the competitive situation of the company. The first companies have been successfully audited and certified, using their CSM 2000 logo and report to demonstrate their performance to customers and business partners.