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Eco-Tex's CSM 2000 gaining popularity among Asian suppliers



Europeans look at 'Begin-of-pipe' approach to eco norms

*Ecological norms are playing an important role in textile manufacturing and sourcing in the west. European buyers have started to look at the entire textile production and supply chain, to have optimised ecological production processes and products. **Reena Mital** reports.*

Ecological norms are playing an important role in textile manufacturing and sourcing in the west, especially Europe. European manufacturers today, are not just avoiding the use of a number of harmful dyes and chemicals in the final product, but have started to look at the entire textile production and supply chain. According to Mr Willie Beuth, Eco-Tex Institute for Applied Ecology, Koln, Germany, "Begin-of-pipe approach towards eco monitoring principles is becoming important, rather than the end-of-pipe approach which has been conventionally followed. This means that eco parameters would come into play right from the fibre production stage, and in cotton, from the cultivation of the crop, moving on to spinning, fabric manufacturing, processing, CMT, packaging, storage and transport. The inputs going into all these activities should meet the eco standards."

This means that a weak point analysis would be undertaken at the earliest stage in the production chain, and environmental

This Week

EDIT

Better days ahead

The recent rally in textile counters was overdue for some time now. The domestic industry is certainly turning around, if one goes by the financial performance of textile companies for the fiscal ended March 2003.

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optimisation generated during the process, he stated. "This further increases the importance of eco monitoring and eco labels, for textile suppliers," Mr Beuth opined.

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Eco-Tex, since 1992 has been specialising in eco monitoring, social monitoring and quality monitoring for a number of sectors - textiles, garments, leather, shoes, accessories, dyestuffs and chemicals, retail, toys, cosmetics, food. According to Mr Beuth, "The Indian textile and clothing suppliers have to comply to eco norms, if they are to survive in the market after 2004, when competition would get very fierce. Even as a number of textile and garment producers and exporters in India have been complying to such norms, the general level of compliance in the Indian industry is not very good. And so is the case in China, where manufacturers keep changing their suppliers of accessories and inputs, to save some money. Price today, is not the only deciding factor for international buyers. Quality, at very competitive prices is what the suppliers have to work at. Moreover, orders are also getting smaller. In this scenario, building up a structure that will address the eco norms at every stage is essential."

Presenting a brief case study on Migros, he stated that this company has achieved ecologically optimised textile and garment production, and has adopted the begin-of-pipe approach to eco monitoring. Migros today manufactures more than 3,280 different articles, and has a production of more than 34 million pieces. The company had a turnover of around Euro 300 million in 2002. And has as many as 240 suppliers worldwide, who have to comply to the strict eco norms of the company, to remain a supplier to Migros. "Since 1995, we have been auditing and monitoring the complete garment and textile production chain based on ecological, social and quality requirements, for the company. Applying the principles of screening, evaluation, optimisation and assistance, the company is today on the path to continuous and sustainable development."

The eco monitoring principles largely revolve around minimising environmentally related impacts through avoidance, reduction, improvements, recognition, assessment and optimisation. This firstly entails conducting product- and process-audits in all production steps from fibre to apparel manufacturing including all used accessories. After the audit comes the monitoring, which entails defining the supply chain, getting the audit status, making an audit checklist, that is, documentation of all substances and materials in the use plus processes, evaluation and weak-point analysis, implementation of corrective actions. Suppliers who fulfill these requirements would finally be granted the Migros eco-label.

What are the Migros eco criteria

- No use of chlorine containing bleaching agents
- No use of banned dyestuffs
- Complete and detailed documentation
- on all steps of production by completed and signed audit questionnaires
- on all used substances by material safety data sheets and/or Eco-tex questionnaires for auxiliary and colorant producers including toxicity and ecological data
- No use of PCP
- No use of PVC
- No use of kerosene, mineral turpentine oil or similar products in printing
- Preparation of information flow in fibre origin, suppliers and fibre composition
- Effluent water treatment as per national or regional legislation
- Reduction of ecologically relevant and harmful substances during production including heavy metals, formaldehyde, APEO.
- Socially acceptable working conditions (workplace safety, medical treatment, housing, lodging, etc)
- Children's support (schooling, vocational

training, etc)

"Migros is also promoting organic cotton, and for spring/summer 2003, the company has manufactured as many as 500,000 pieces of garments from organic cotton. The company expects a turnover of Euro 4.7 million from this," informed Mr Beuth. The company has eco requirements for organic cotton suppliers too.

Migros requirements for organic cotton suppliers

- Certified 'eco supplier'
- CoC has to be accomplished
- Transparent producing structures
- Clearly defined supply chain
- Clearly structured organisation
- Separate handling of organic and conventional cotton
- Separate storage of organic cotton at raw stage, yarn, etc
- Clearing of machines before production (spinning, knitting)
- Organic cotton visually marked through stamps on fabric

With European buyers increasingly demanding strict compliance to eco norms, and also social norms, Eco-tex has come out with an integrated management system, CSM 2000. According to Mr Beuth, "CSM 2000 has gained wide popularity in Vietnam, China, Japan, Malaysia, where a large number of textile and clothing manufacturers have achieved this certification." The Compliance and Supply Chain Management (CSM) 2000 integrated management standards has quality, environment, health and safety, and social responsibility as its compliance areas. CSM 2000 has been developed by Eco-tex on ISO principles, and has been licensed globally to one organisation for audit and certification. "This is a very flexible system, and allows incorporation of not just national or regional legislations, but also other certifications that may have been achieved earlier. "In fact national, regional and local laws and regulations are the basic requirements for compliance. CSM 2000 also allows company

specific extensions of requirements and become mandatory once defined," stressed Mr Beuth.

Advantages of CSM 2000

- All requirements can be covered in one system in all actual and upcoming compliance areas
- Compliance performance can be quickly demonstrated to interested parties.
- Handling of production will be improved
- Risk of corporate damage is reduced
- Fewer testing and selection of core suppliers will reduce costs.



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