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'We will establish 5 national nodes in India to promote sustainable compliance methodologies'

Eco-Tex has been actively promoting environment-friendly textile production the world over, educating the sourcing countries about the requirements of buyers, specially in Europe. In an interview with Reena Mital, Dr Ahmad Ansari of Eco-Tex, Germany, talks about the various projects that the organisation has undertaken in India, and other Asian textile producing countries.

How important will certifications like CSM, etc be for India in the post-quota world?

The quota-free trade from 2005 will be a highly competitive one for apparel and textile producers in sourcing countries. Only those producers will stand in the market who will be able to show their best performance, and be able to meet various requirements like environment and social responsibility. Under this scenario, sensitive producers in Asian countries (including India) are now ready to improve their performance and are looking for sustainable management methodologies, which help them in organising and increasing their performance level.

In this changed economic scenario, we are going to establish five Capacity Building National Nodes in India which will engage in awareness programmes and seminars on promotion of sustainable compliance methodologies (eg, CSM

This Week

EDIT

Opportunities gallore

The PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (PHDCCI) recent report saying that the domestic textile industry is estimated to swell to over Rs 2,60,000 crore by the year 2010, is once again a reiteration that there is huge potential that needs to be explored.

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2000). The establishment of these national nodes will be executed under various EU-Asia Eco Programs, through which we will introduce CSM 2000 on a large scale to the Indian textile and garment producing community. The awareness programme and other activities will start from the beginning of 2004.

In addition, we have already opened a Liaison Office (Eco-Tex India) in Tirupur, which will coordinate various national and international organisations including Eco-Tex Germany, National Nodes in India.

What about countries like Vietnam, China, Malaysia, etc, how are these countries viewing such certifications?

The Vietnamese are quite open and ready to improve their standards by all possible means. We conducted an awareness seminar in April in Vietnam in cooperation with the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry which has decided to go for CSM 2000 for all industry sectors. Moreover National Apparel and Textile Federation has also accepted CSM 2000 as best compliance solutions. We have also joined hands with Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce as well as with Vietnamese Apparel Federation.

As in India, we are also going to establish five national nodes in China and one in each south Asian countries for compliance, capacity building, which will promote CSM on larger scales.

China is fast emerging as an important textile sourcing centre. What are the compliance levels in this country?

The Chinese are also quite open and ready to improve their standards on ecology and social aspects. In China, there are already a few companies certified with CSM standard. Few others are under process of implementation and certification. We are going to open a liaison office in Hong Kong, which will coordinate all five national nodes of capacity building which will

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engage in promoting and implementing CSM 2000. We have various partner organisations like Hong Kong Export Association, Hong Kong Productivity Council and Clothing Industry Training Authority (CITA), and we are in the process of entering into a cooperation with these bodies, for promoting CSM 2000 and other capacity building activities in China and Hong Kong.

There are additional developments in the form of China-EU Task Force on sustainable trade, investments and purchasing under EU-China Round Table, where Chinese IAF member and local authorities from textile cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian, Ningbo and Hangzhou are ready to cooperate with our partner organisation in Brussels (STIC- Sustainable Trade and Innovation Centre). STIC is also promoting sustainable management approaches and has chosen CSM as sustainable compliance management methodology.

Another major development in this area has been from the largest Japanese retailer. AEON (formerly JUSCO) has assigned Eco-Tex to check and improve social standards of its 5,000 or so supplying companies through Eco-Tex social monitoring system.

Most of these suppliers are based in China. We are going to start this project officially by the end of June and will first conduct an awareness seminar for AEON suppliers and coach them to implement the social monitoring system. Once these supplying companies are able to work on our social monitoring system, which is based on CSM concepts, we will obviously go for implementation of CSM.

What is the technology level of testing facilities in the sourcing countries, and what role, if any, can Eco-Tex play in this area?

We are involved in a project for improvement of quality standards in four sourcing countries - India, Bangladesh, China and Indonesia. We will

install a management system at the producers' level in these countries and will coach them to incorporate quality criteria in backward supply chain and give them a chance of reducing quality testing and inspection only to relevant points. We are now going to establish a partnership with locally existing laboratories and inspection organisations in these countries. We will train these organisations along our begin-of-pipe approach for quality improvement and standard.



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