

Sustainability in the textile industry

Properly assess the global supply chain with OEKO-TEX®

Social and environmental concerns will soon play a greater role in public procurement. Although the aim is simple, the implementation may prove to be difficult.

Given the global supply chains within the textile industry, even experts face numerous challenges when evaluating the sustainability of uniforms and protective clothing. Due to its international nature and the sheer volume of third parties in the production chain, responsibility is increasingly placed on those releasing new textiles onto the market. Public procurement stipulates that clothing must be safe, produced in environmentally friendly production facilities and under decent working conditions. Yet how can procurers gauge whether the supplier complies with these provisions? Thanks to public procurement regulation, the adherence to such sustainability requirements can now be determined from labels. Labelled textile products offer guidance and help consumers make responsible decisions when purchasing workwear. Yet when bombarded with hundreds of worldwide labels and certificates, selecting the right one is by no means an easy feat, so much so that the phrase “label labyrinth” was coined.

In pursuit of a suitable label, it makes sense to draw on those tried and tested designs. Since 1992 OEKO-TEX® has been developing various solutions for environmentally friendly and socially responsible textiles. The guiding principles of OEKO-TEX® are based on transparency, traceability, credibility and trust. Now available on the market, OEKO-TEX® certificates and labels allow textile manufacturers to prove compliance with environmental and social regulations in their production chains. Whether it is the use of chemicals in production, the continuous improvement of the supplier’s working and production conditions or the safety of the final product - it can all be independently and credibly verified with the help of the various products developed by the OEKO-TEX® Association.

With the label MADE IN GREEN by OEKO-TEX®, for example, procurers can even trace the production process of the finished garment. Through a bar code or the product ID on the label, the different stages of production can be viewed. On the website www.siegelklarheit.de, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commends the transparency that the MADE IN GREEN label offers consumers, classifying it as a “very good option”.

Likewise, if the new legal status wishes to make procurement procedures simpler, then sustainability regulation requires a new approach. Relying on a trustworthy partner is certainly advantageous. For 25 years, OEKO-TEX® has offered easy solutions, enabling procurers to successfully overcome the increasing demands of the market; ensuring everything from chemical management, environmentally friendly manufacturing processes and fair working conditions to labels clearly

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displaying product performance. The OEKO-TEX® system provides the optimal basis for this as it continually refines its standards and always focused on current market developments.



The MADE IN GREEN by OEKO-TEX® label offers buyers the safety that products bearing the label are produced sustainably, and enables them at the same time to transparently trace the manufacturing of the article. © OEKO-TEX®

About OEKO-TEX®

With 25 years of experience, OEKO-TEX® leads the world in empowering and enabling consumers and companies to protect our planet by making responsible decisions. OEKO-TEX® provides standardised solutions which optimise customers' manufacturing processes and help deliver high quality, more sustainable products. All of the products within the OEKO-TEX® portfolio are used to strengthen our customers' systems, processes or products and, ultimately, they help create more sustainable companies. To date, 10,000 manufacturers, brands, and retailers in almost 100 countries are working with OEKO-TEX® to ensure that their products are tested for potentially harmful substances and millions of consumers around the world look for OEKO-TEX® labels before making buying decisions. OEKO-TEX® certified products and suppliers can be located in the OEKO-TEX® Online Buying Guide at www.oeko-tex.com/products. Connect with OEKO-TEX® on Facebook, on LinkedIn, and on Twitter.