

Case Study:

Certification Scheme for Recycled PET



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Company

various

Industry

Consumer Goods

Region

China

Intertek Solutions

R-PET Management
System Certification

“Ensuring that a fiber contains R-PET – not virgin PET– was a new challenge for the industry. Intertek’s R-PET Certification is now included in the purchasing protocol of top international apparel companies as part of their commitment to assuring the ‘green’ in their supply chain.”

- Intertek

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Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is a thermoplastic polymer resin of the polyester family that has proven to be a useful innovation as a material to contain the food, beverage and other liquids that we use every day. However PET’s impact on the environment presents a significant concern as global population growth means that we are consuming and discarding more of this ‘white pollution’ than ever before. PET recycling technologies enable manufacturers to use it to make ‘eco-friendly’ apparel as part of their environmental ‘green’ strategies. However the process of verifying that a product actually contains the recycled elements as claimed has become a new challenge.



The Challenge

Turning ‘White Pollution’ into Fibers.

PET is lightweight, durable and is easily processed from petroleum as a raw material. However, its non-degradable characteristics and consumption of petroleum is damaging to the environment. Scientists in many countries have developed different PET recycling (R-PET) technologies and the recycling of PET into fibers for textiles and apparel is now a sizeable industry.

China has developed a large R-PET industry with a total annual capacity of seven million tons in 2010, with Chinese R-PET short fiber accounting for 80% of the total global R-PET capacity. Many international brands are now buyers of R-PET as they increase their use of recycled fibres in their products as part of their environmental commitments and ‘green’ business programs.

Due to the quick growth of the industry there has been a lack of verification of R-PET vendors. “Buyers and end-consumers of recycled fibers and apparel are reliant on their representation that they have used R-PET to make their fibers – and not virgin PET. There

have been some instances of products made from virgin PET feedstocks being passed off down a supply chain as green R-PET,” explains James Wang, General Manager of Intertek China Domestic Market Services. The industry has sought better visibility and assurance around R-PET fibre production.

The Solution

In 2010 Intertek launched an R-PET certification program after two years of intensive work with companies and their supply chains and drawing on its extensive experience in the certification field.

Intertek’s R-PET Management System Certification (MSC) enables manufacturers of R-PET products to prove their abilities to manufacture these products. It also provides a reference point for that company’s trading partners.

To obtain the certification, the manufacturer must be independently audited by Intertek auditors against the MSC criteria and factories must make their paperwork and purchasing records available for inspection to provide evidence of appropriate sourcing, production and tracing methods for R-PET.



Supporting Chinese Producers

In late 2010 Intertek presented the first seven certifications for R-PET Management Systems to the following companies:

Ningbo Dafa Chemical Fiber Co. Ltd, Cixi Jiangnan Chemical Fiber Co. Ltd, Zhejiang Anshun Chemical Fiber Co. Ltd, Zhejiang Conyunka Fiber Co. Ltd, Haiyan Haili Green Fiber Co. Ltd, Longfu Recycling Energy Scientech Co. Ltd and Hangzhou Beiteng Textile Co. Ltd. Ningbo Dafa also achieved Intertek's Eco-Certification, which is a certification for ecological safety products/qualities as well. By the end of June this year, another six companies in China have achieved the R-PET Management System Certification including Zhaoqing Tifo New Fiber Co., Ltd, Suzhou Polyfiber Co., Ltd, Nantec Textile Co., Ltd, Shinkong Gynthetic Fibers Co., Ltd, Zhangjiagang Chengxing Chemical Fiber Co., Ltd, Hanyoung Shoes Materials (Guangzhou) Co., Ltd



Industry Response

Intertek's program has helped increase the visibility of the R-PET supply chain for buyers, sellers and traders in China and abroad.

The world's top international sports apparel retailers have been supportive of Intertek's program. "Intertek's R-PET certification is now included in recycled material purchasing Standard Operation Procedure documents as one of the standards for R-PET purchasing. Intertek R-PET certificates are also listed as recognized indicators of R-PET assessment and validation," explains Heidi Lv, Certification Procedure Executive at Intertek.

Since the programme was launched, it has been recognized by the Recycled Fiber Committee of China Chemical Fiber Industry Association (CCFIA) as a tool to assess and evaluate R-PET. Intertek continues to work with international apparel brands in China to discuss quality and verification issues and help educate the industry on best practice and developing trends.

Intertek's R-PET Management System Certification has become a useful reference for buyers to evaluate suppliers and for suppliers to demonstrate their credibility and make their products more competitive.

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