

EU Ecolabel Product Group: Textiles



“Sustainability is at the heart of our business, and the EU Ecolabel on our product ranges is the highest priority for Camira Fabrics Ltd in our sustainability programme. It demonstrates our ability to produce the highest level of environmentally sensitive fabrics, demonstrating environmental excellence through their life cycle, and Ecolabel is for us the most well respected, independent accreditation throughout Europe, our biggest export market. This is a significant selling point for a British manufacturer designing, manufacturing and supplying fabrics that are exported in huge volumes worldwide.”

Why did Camira Fabrics apply for the EU Ecolabel?

Camira is an award winning UK textile innovator, specialising in the design and manufacture of contract fabrics for commercial interiors and mass passenger transport. Based in West Yorkshire’s textile heartland, it extends its global reach into 80 countries worldwide with showrooms in London and Shanghai, and bases in Europe, the US and Australasia. Its annual sales output stands at 10 million linear metres.

Against a backdrop of escalating worldwide demand for petro-chemical synthetic fibres, Camira has been designing and manufacturing environmental and sustainable textiles for nearly two decades, recognising sustainability as a model for growth and the desire for natural fibres. It currently holds the Queens Award for Sustainable Development.

Paul Arnold continues: *‘Our credentials for manufacturing to the highest ISO standards, our wide product range of natural fibre textiles and our ranges such as ‘Second Nature’ in the past, were widely recognised, but customers were increasingly seeking the added confidence of independent third party certification. This is where the EU Ecolabel comes into its own, providing a robust, trusted, established mark of approval that contributes to sustainable sourcing and tenders with an environmental focus. Customers are increasingly using sustainability as a determining factor on choice.’*

The Application Process

Due to customers prioritising environmental credentials, Camira initially applied for the EU Ecolabel award in 2010 for its 100% recycled polyester products Lucia, Urban and Xtreme, closely followed by another recycled range called Manhattan.

Paul says: *‘Initially, colleagues found the application process a challenge, getting to grips with the standard, the requirements and the declarations which required a meticulously thorough approach, but I know they found the regular helpline guidance from the UK Ecolabel Delivery team invaluable and they provided support, knowledge and expertise to help navigate the application procedure.’*

And of course, the process is effective in delivering environmental improvement in that it guides the applicant deeper into the supply chain, helps the applicant trace the constituent parts and by implementing small changes, improves company processes along the way. Our advice is to prepare well, process map the product, be diligent and thorough, and contact all key suppliers well in advance of developing an application.’

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Ecolabel Products

Camira Fabrics was first awarded its EU Ecolabel licence in January 2011 for its Lucia, Urban and Xtreme range, followed by Manhattan fabric in September 2011, all made from 100% recycled polyester. Its Ecolabel licence number is UK/016/005.

It has continued to add to its range of EU Ecolabel licensed products since 2011, and now has almost 400 individual textile coverings available, believing that the EU Ecolabel helps attract customer interest. Its first 100% wool product, the Laneve branded Blazer and Blazer Check ranges were licenced in April 2012, and by 2013, these were followed by its first bast (plant) fibre products, the hemp and wool blend ranges of Hemp and Hebden. Totalling 9 products now, its EU Ecolabel range also includes a closed loop recycled content polyester called 'X2', and Sting made from a blend of pure new wool and fibre from the common stinging nettle.



Xtreme



Blazer



Hemp



X2

Results

Paul is delighted with the results in prioritising the EU Ecolabel: *'The marketing of our sustainability credentials, the environmental literature that accompanies our product ranges and the standards to which we operate our manufacturing facility is vastly strengthened by the increasing products meeting EU Ecolabel standards, signalling the products' soundness through the supply chain, manufacturing, use and disposal.'*

He continues: *'It's part of what makes Camira stand out, the increasing proportion of our ranges with the standard alerts our customers, in particular Northern European countries, that our top selling fabrics comply with the stringent EU Ecolabel environmental criteria.'*

In April 2015, Camira was proud to announce that it had been awarded its second Queen's Award for Sustainable Development, marking five years of continuous environmental advancement and best in class performance. Sustainability is Camira's ethos, embedded at the heart of its business and it continues to grow its range of EU Ecolabel licensed products.

UK Ecolabel Delivery Helpline: 01355 593930

E-mail: ecolabel@tuvnel.com

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-an-eu-ecolabel>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ecolabel>