

# inspired tomorrow\_°

sustainability report 2022



# CONTENT

ABOUT B&C

About us

Key achievements

About our value chain

About our commitment

Commitments and involvements

1

OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

Responsible purchasing practices

Traceability of the supply chain

B&C Code of Conduct

Audits, controls, and verifications

2

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Resource consumption

Sustainable material

3

CERTIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

4





About us	_1.1
Key achievements	_1.2
• About our value chain	_1.3
• About our commitment	_1.4
Commitments and involvements	_1.5

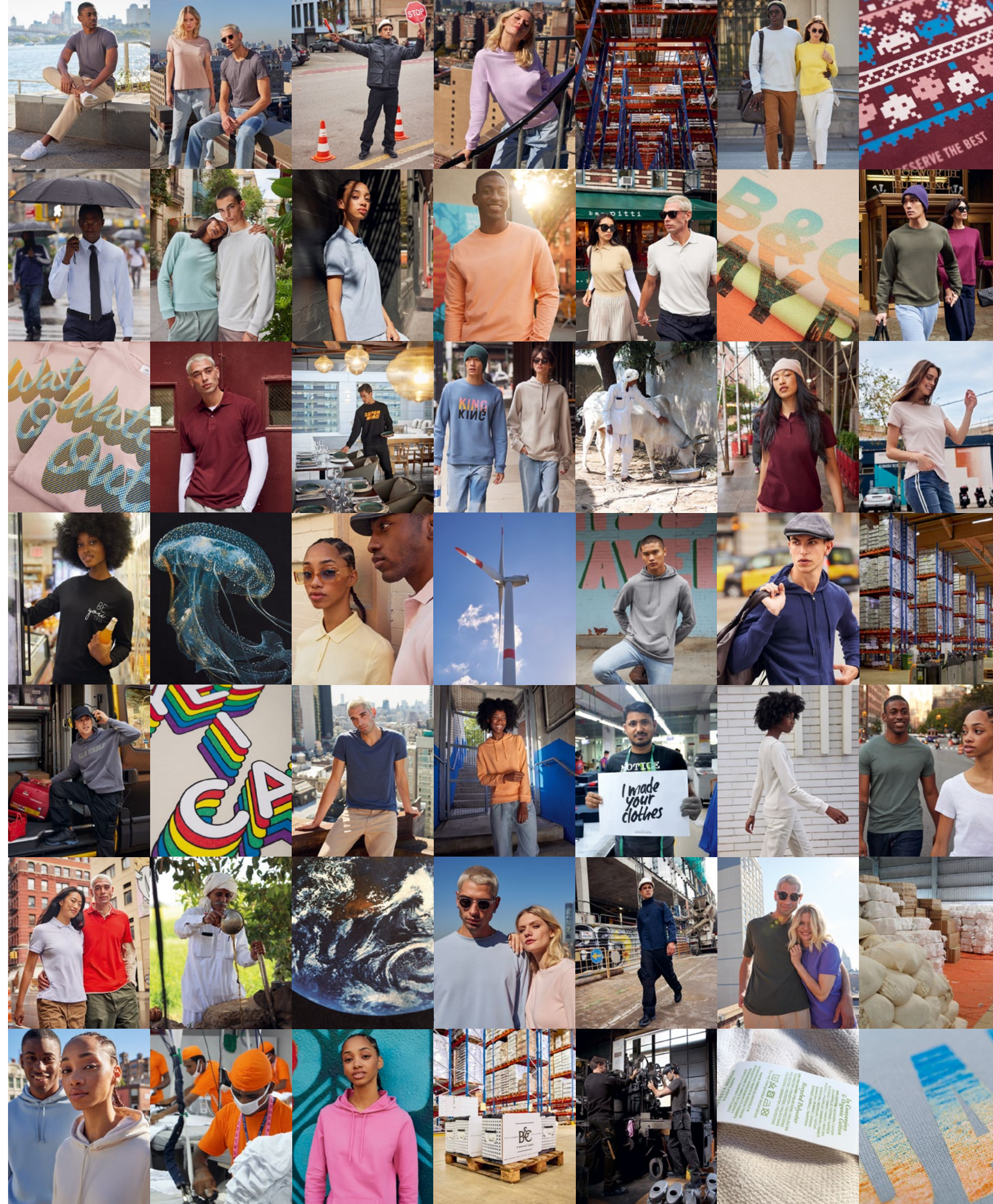
# ABOUT B&C



# \_1.1 About us

## ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS B&C...

For 25 years, B&C has been weaving its story in the European customisable textile industry. A story with a cast of enthusiasts, which has gradually enabled us to establish ourselves in sectors as diverse as events, merchandising, e-tail and retail, corporate clothing and workwear, tourism, sport and the voluntary sector. More recently, we added booming sectors to our success story such as the film, music and gaming industry, and of course influencers. No matter the market, we always approach it with the same passion, creativity, proximity and a constant concern for sustainability. Thanks to these strong values, embodied at every level of the company, we are one of the top players in Europe, recognised for the quality of our services. Over the years, we have strongly developed our offer and business, while making it a point of honour to remain true to our values and our roots.







#### HQ IN BELGIUM

- > Product Management & Design
- > Quality Management
- > Sustainability Management
- > Communication
- > Customer Service
- > Finance, IT & HR
- > Logistics
- > Sourcing Management

#### DISTRIBUTION

- > Distribution through promotional textile wholesalers
- > Local Sales Field presence
- > Marketing Support

#### PRODUCTION OFFICE IN ASIA

- > Sourcing
- > Production
- > Quality control
- > Social Compliance Monitoring

As was the case 25 years ago, our head office is still in Belgium, on the outskirts of Brussels. This is where our Product Management & Design, Quality Management, Sustainability Management, Communication, Customer Service, Finance, IT & HR, Logistics and Sourcing Management flourishes. But we are also firmly rooted in our markets thanks to our local Field Sales presence.

Purchasing, production and quality control are managed directly by our office in Asia, as close as possible to the production units, in order to guarantee scrupulous monitoring of quality and social compliance.

At B&C, our reputation lies in our strengths.

These naturally include the quality of our products, available in a wide range of styles and colours, our services but also the special relationship we have with our customers. A relationship of trust, based on listening and proximity, which enables us to advise them in their own language, to identify their needs as accurately as possible and, above all, to respond to these as quickly as possible.

Because this is another one of our strengths at B&C: together with our partners, we have built a reliable and highly responsive supply chain.

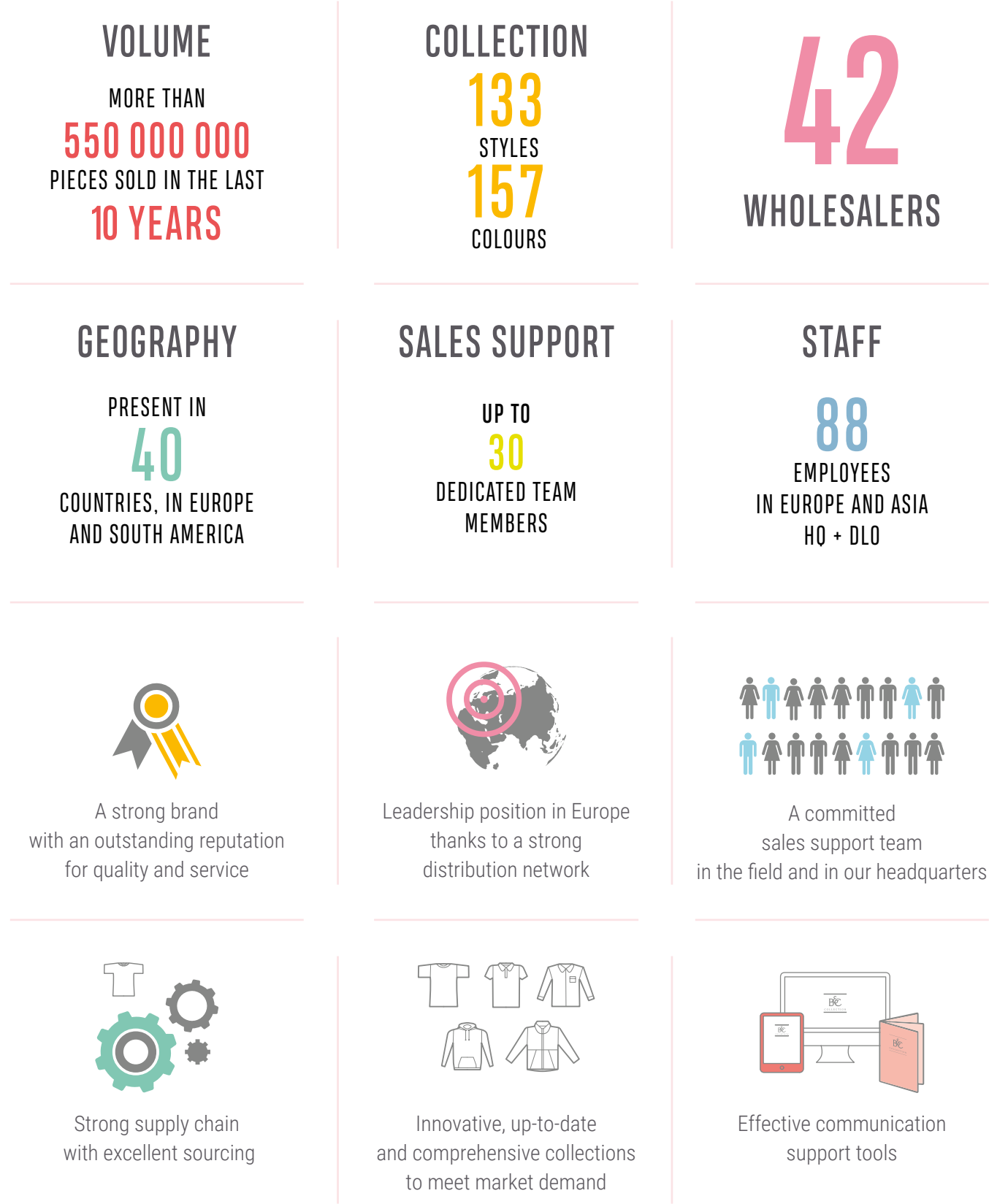
No delivery delays!

Our extensive network of wholesalers and resellers, spread across Europe, delivers our products to the most remote areas in less than 48 hours.

Thanks to a strong sales force presence and our modern approach to the market, based on digital, database, CRM and ERP systems, we accompany them every step of the way by providing them with all the marketing and sales support they need.

In short, we offer unparalleled products and services in our market.





Today, we are proud to serve our customers throughout Europe and South America, represented in the various markets by our 42 wholesalers and some 35,000 resellers. It is thanks to this strong network, as well as to the varied, innovative and daring collections, that we have been selling an average of 55 million items every year for the past 10 years.

In total, 133 styles and 157 colours designed to meet all our buyers' needs in real time. Icing on the cake: one third of our T-shirts, polo shirts and sweatshirts are now made of 'more sustainable' fabrics. Look for the **B&C inspired tomorrow\_° line**.



**inspired tomorrow\_°**

B&C has its eyes firmly focused on the future, which we obviously want to be more sustainable, with all the obligations this can have.

That's why we've created a brand-new label, **inspired tomorrow\_°**, to reflect our holistic vision.

On top of our holistic vision for sustainability, this label also identifies a line of 30 products made of more sustainable material.

Look for the signs **\_°** at the end of the product name or for the **inspired tomorrow\_°** logo displayed on the product information sheet to discover and select them.



Of course, our greatest pride remains our commitment to sustainability.

This commitment began 25 years ago and has only grown stronger over time, in our production and operating methods, in the content of our products and, of course, in our partnerships with the biggest environmental and supporting fair fashion development organisations.

In the last two years, we have taken another step forward by appointing 4 in-house staff members whose mission is entirely dedicated to sustainability issues. We have also become a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which will undoubtedly guide us in the future.

Because we believe that sustainability is not just about Organic Cotton - far from it. Most of the B&C collection is produced, transported, or stocked in a way that better respects people, and the planet (using less water, fewer pesticides or less energy). It is with this in mind, with great pride in the projects we have already accomplished and great motivation for the challenges ahead, that we publish our sustainability report each year.



- B&C is an MSF Corporate Partner
- B&C is a LEADER member of **FWF**
- B&C is a **Carbon Neutral company**
- **Organic In Conversion Cotton** becomes fabric of choice for the B&C inspired tomorrow\_° collection
- B&C supported the opening of a **Fair Price Shop**
- B&C started to buy In **Conversion cotton** to support in transition farmers
- B&C launched **inspired tomorrow\_°** label
- B&C CSR team established a **Sustainability team of 4 people**
- B&C became a member of The Shift and a signatory of the **UN SDGs**
- B&C became **PETA certified**
- B&C launched **Organic Cotton & Recycled Polyester** sweatshirts
- and launched its first collection supporting **better farming practices** through **BC Better Cotton Initiative**.
- B&C became **RCS Recycled Claim Standard** and a member of **Textile Exchange** and **Better Cotton**
- B&C started operating in a **green warehouse**
- Launch of the Inspire collection, the **first affordable, Organic Cotton Printwear collection**
- B&C became **OCS Organic cotton certified**
- Due diligence work with partner factories and optimisation of the suppliers' portfolio
- B&C launched the **first organic GOTS / Fairtrade collection** on the Market
- B&C became a **Fair Wear Foundation (FWF)** member
- A **CSR Team was located in Hong-Kong** to centralise the factories' Sustainability & CSR verification
- BSCI-FTA became **BSCI-amfori**
- B&C is a **founding member of BSCI** under the FTA
- **Liaison Offices were opened in China and Cambodia** to monitor and verify the factories
- **No child labour Policy with zero tolerance**
- First **Code of Conduct** was implemented
- B&C became **Oeko-Tex100** class II certified
- **Liaison Offices were opened in India and Pakistan** to monitor and verify the factories
- B&C was founded and **Liaison Office opened in Dhaka** to monitor and verify the factories



# \_1.2

## Our key achievements

### Achieved in 2022



We are a  
**Fair Wear Foundation member**  
since 2017 as a Brand (B&C).  
In 2022 we became an official  
**Fair Wear Foundation Leader.**



We're proud to be  
an **MSF Corporate Partner**,  
supporting medical and humanitarian  
aid efforts around the world.



We want to take action now to reduce  
our environmental impact by calculating  
**our Corporate Carbon Footprint**,  
continuously working to reduce it  
and offsetting unavoidable emissions  
through carbon offset projects.

Since its creation in 1997, B&C has always been focused on sustainability. Today, 25 years later, we are proud to share with you the second B&C Sustainability Report. You will discover our main achievements, the result of numerous commitments and concrete initiatives.

Our path to sustainability is an ongoing journey and we will be happy to keep you informed about it regularly!



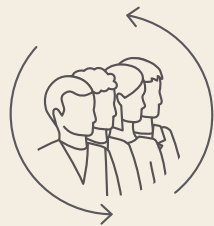
We've partnered with one of  
our supplier factories to open the first  
**Fair Price Shop**  
on their premises.



We offset our carbon footprint  
by investing in the  
**Clean Cookstove project**  
in Bangladesh.







Since 2021 B&C has a dedicated Sustainability department with 4 people, making it one of the most staffed within our industry.

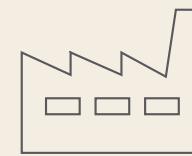


B&C is a signatory of the 17 SDGs and focuses on 7 priority SDGs.



**360°**  
Sustainability,  
a holistic approach

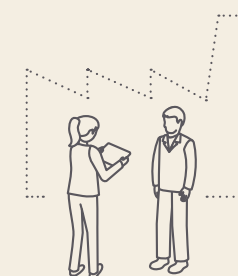
Sustainability is not only a department, it's a mindset.



Monitoring  
**100%**  
of Tier 1 (manufacturing)  
and 95% of Tier 2 (fabric maker)  
supplier factories



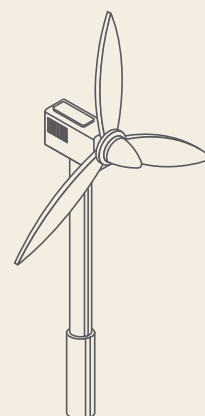
More than  
**80 %**  
of our volume  
is produced in partner factories  
with which we have  
been working for 15+ years.



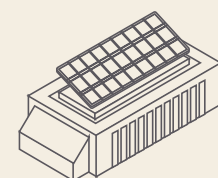
**We have our own office  
in Bangladesh.**  
Our 23 employees based in Bangladesh follow up purchases and production on a daily basis, 14 of them also regularly visit our factories.



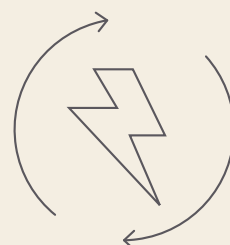
together  
**we inspire**  
the market



Our warehouse produced over  
**10.000 MWh/year**  
of renewable energy.



Electricity at our partner  
warehouse is  
**100 %**  
renewable and  
produced on site  
by solar panels and windturbines.







We work with **10 factories**,  
employing and providing wages  
to **30,973 workers** and employees  
in 3 countries  
(Bangladesh, Pakistan, China),  
and among those, 5,618 workers  
and employees work directly for B&C  
product development  
and production.



We are a member of **Textile Exchange**,  
a non-profit entity that promotes sustainability  
in the textile industry.

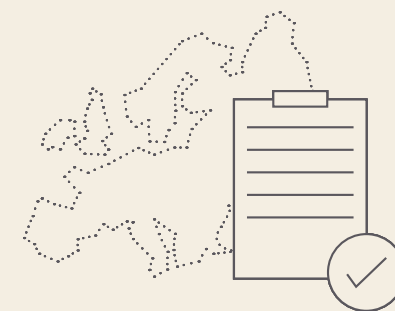


We have a monitoring  
threshold of  
**99 %**  
for our partner factories  
by Fair Wear Foundation.



Member of amfori, the leading global business  
association for open and sustainable trade.  
For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)

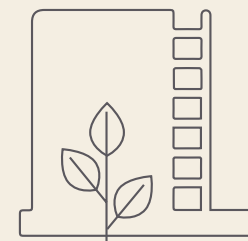
We are a member of amfori-BSCI  
since its creation.



We built and implemented  
a comprehensive Supply Chain  
Due Diligence process  
(we are ready for upcoming European legislation).



Our HQ uses  
**100% green electricity.**



100% of our partner factories  
**are equipped with an efficient ETP**  
(Effluent treatment plant).

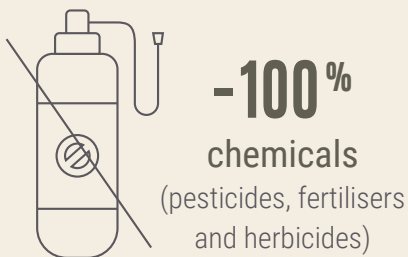
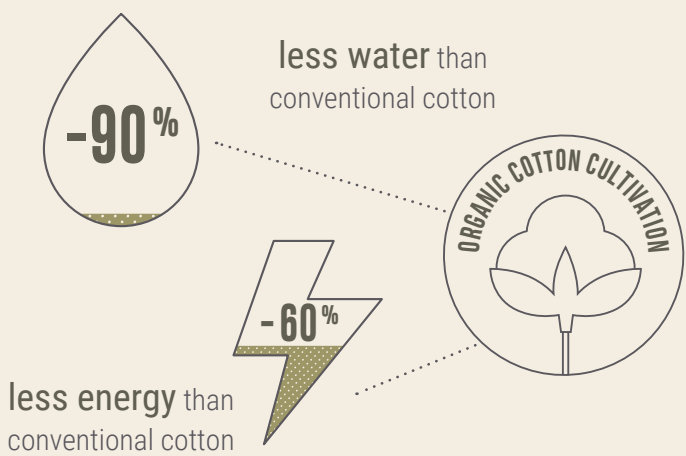




X2 IN 2 YEARS

More sustainable cotton

The volume of styles sold that are produced with **sustainable cotton** (Organic Cotton and Better Cotton) doubled in 2022 compared to 2020 (X4 versus 2019).



Source: Textile Exchange

Organic Cotton is grown without chemical fertilisers or pesticides and its seeds are not genetically modified.



100% of our Organic/Organic In Conversion Cotton is fully traceable and certified.



We have partnered with **Better Cotton**, to improve cotton farming globally.



Today **33%** of our T-shirt, Polo shirt and Sweatshirt styles are made of more sustainable cotton (certified Organic, Organic in Conversion or Better Cotton) to serve the market needs.

				Total
More sustainable cotton	37%	17%	39%	32%
Conventional cotton	63%	83%	61%	68%



=



Each sweatshirt contains **5 post-consumed recycled 1,5L pet bottles.**

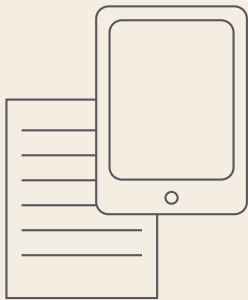


90% of our references are made from fibres of natural origin.





We actively support  
**FashionRevolution.org**  
because we are proud of where we produce.



**100 %**  
of our communication tools are  
**sustainably sourced and produced.**



We sort and recycle  
**100 %**  
of our recyclable office waste.





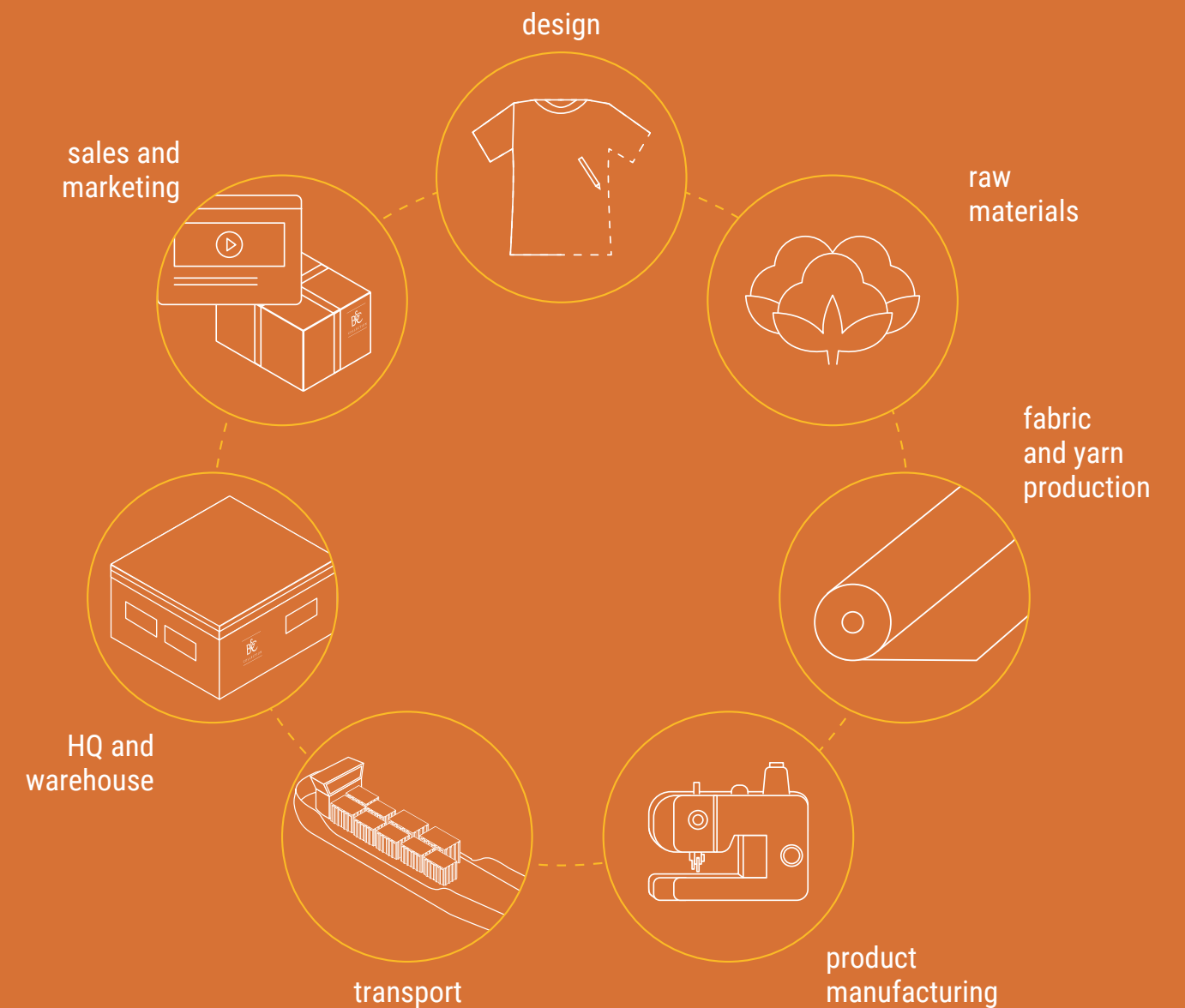
# \_1.3

## About our value chain

At B&C we have a strong commitment and willingness to use our buying power to improve working conditions and limit our impact on the environment. We do this to lead the change in our market toward a more sustainable imprint industry.

To achieve this, it is our responsibility to make sure our value chain works to its full potential. Our value chain outlines the full stages of the processes involved in the production and life cycle of our products, from design to customer.

**IMPROVE  
WORKING CONDITIONS  
AND LIMIT OUR IMPACT  
ON THE ENVIRONMENT**





# \_1.4

## About our commitment

WHAT IS  
SUSTAINABILITY?  
**WE BELIEVE  
IN A TRULY  
HOLISTIC  
APPROACH**



Impact can be  
made anywhere.  
Not everything  
is visible.

All human activities and all production processes have a social or an environmental impact. Some are very small, some are more important, but all of them matter if we want to make a substantial change.

From using Fair Trade sugar in our daily coffee to selecting a carbon neutral warehouse, equipped with windmills providing enough renewable energy for its activities and thousands of households in the neighborhood, it all has an impact.

Sustainability is not only a department, it is a mindset across the B&C organisation.

At B&C everything can have an impact, the way we design our products, the way we develop our products, the way we produce our products, the way we transport our products, the way we communicate, the way we travel, the way our employees think, every team has specific goals in improving eco-sustainability.



“Sustainability  
is not only  
a department,  
it’s a Mindset”

# B&C’s four pillars



Our approach is holistic, taking into account ecological, social and economic factors, recognising that all must be considered together to deliver lasting prosperity.



## PEOPLE

At B&C, we care about people’s livelihood, health and safety. The main risks in this area are in the production chain.

We develop, update and monitor the best Due Diligence processes with up-to-date **CSR Policies**: supplier self-assessments, internal audits, third parties audits, Sustainability Policy, Supplier handbook, Sourcing Policy, Operations SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), etc.

The follow-up procedure is carried out both directly by us, and jointly with our stakeholders and external auditors.

Workers’ labour rights and human rights are of the upmost importance to us. Labour relations will be undertaken in an equitable manner, by defending individual rights and basic principles.



## PLANET

We know how carbon emissions, waste and pollution can be harmful to the planet, and we want to act positively to reduce our footprint, being an actor of change in our market.

For example:

**Fibres:** 90% of our collection is made of natural fibres such as cotton. Moreover, we increase our share of more sustainable cotton, like Better Cotton, In Conversion Organic Cotton or Organic Cotton year-on-year. Our timeless range of garments significantly reduces the potential seasonal unsold products, which do not have to be burned or destroyed.

**Supply chain:** we trace our supply chain up to Tier 1 (Garment producers) and Tier 2 (Fabric producers) to monitor our production processes and their footprint. We work hand-in-hand with our supplier’s factories to limit the impacts, waste, water use and energy consumption.

**Logistics:** for import transport, warehousing and export transport, we work with logistics services providers who are committed to sustainability in order to measure and reduce the carbon footprint.



## PRODUCT

We are passionate about **creativity and innovation**, we do R&D on new fibres, designs, trims and packaging.

**We love to inspire others!**

Our products are our core business, we are known for our excellence in perfect printability and durable quality products, and the market favours our products. We manage our product portfolio with a multi-fibre approach and make use of **sustainable certified fibres** as much as we can.

We work on product supply chain **traceability**, and we aim to be **transparent** in our supply chain mapping, within the obvious boundaries of business confidentiality.

We follow innovation processes, and we want to be a front runner in recycling expertise.



## PROSPERITY

The basis of a **holistic sustainability** approach is that Profit supports the other two basic sustainability pillars, namely People and Planet.

However, we prefer the term Prosperity, as it does not only meet SDG 8 “Decent Work & Economic Growth”, but also and especially encompasses SDG 17 “Partnership”.

We consider Prosperity to be essential to the development of the company because by working in partnership with our customers, resellers, and suppliers, we collaborate in a trans-alliance ecosystem in which each partner benefits from each other’s prosperity. In this way we create a virtuous circle that allows us to continue supporting our other pillars: People, Planet and Product.

We are **future-minded** because we believe that continuous re-invention allows us to move forward by meeting the needs of the future while remaining pragmatic.

We are committed to the UN SDGs, and we are measuring and developing monitoring tools and reporting.

We communicate publicly about our commitments to the UN SDGs.



WE WILL USE OUR BUYING POWER  
TO **IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS**  
AND **LIMIT OUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

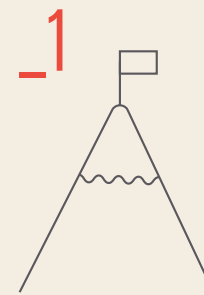
WE WILL PROMOTE **MORE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS**

SUSTAINABILITY PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK  
IN WHICH WE CAN PLAN OUR ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE:  
**INSPIRED TOMORROW\_°**

**WE CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE WAY WE OPERATE,**  
TAKING PEOPLE, PLANET, PRODUCTS AND PROSPERITY INTO ACCOUNT



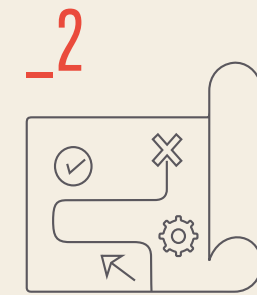
We turn  
our vision  
and strategy  
into action  
by working with...



## ... Projects

Our vision and ambitions are translated into concrete projects at department and function levels.

Each department and function has their own sustainability projects.



## ... Roadmaps

We have strategic plans, targets and actions building our global sustainability roadmap. We have roadmaps for specific sustainability areas, for example energy, water, innovation, equality, or wages.



## ... Standards and Policies

Our sustainability standards ensure that we and our business partners operate in a sustainable way.

They include our Code of Conduct, Sustainability & Responsibility Policy, Suppliers CSR Guidelines, etc.



## ... Methods and follow-up

These are the processes, sequences, and techniques we use to build the projects and monitor our progress.

They ensure that our strategy is fully-integrated across our company.



# \_1.5 Commitments and involvements

B&C IS  
A SIGNATORY OF  
**THE UNITED  
NATIONS  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**  
(SDGs)



At B&C we see sustainability as a continuously developing work programme.

We carry out specific projects with a holistic, 360° approach to sustainability and our products comply with the European health and safety standards.

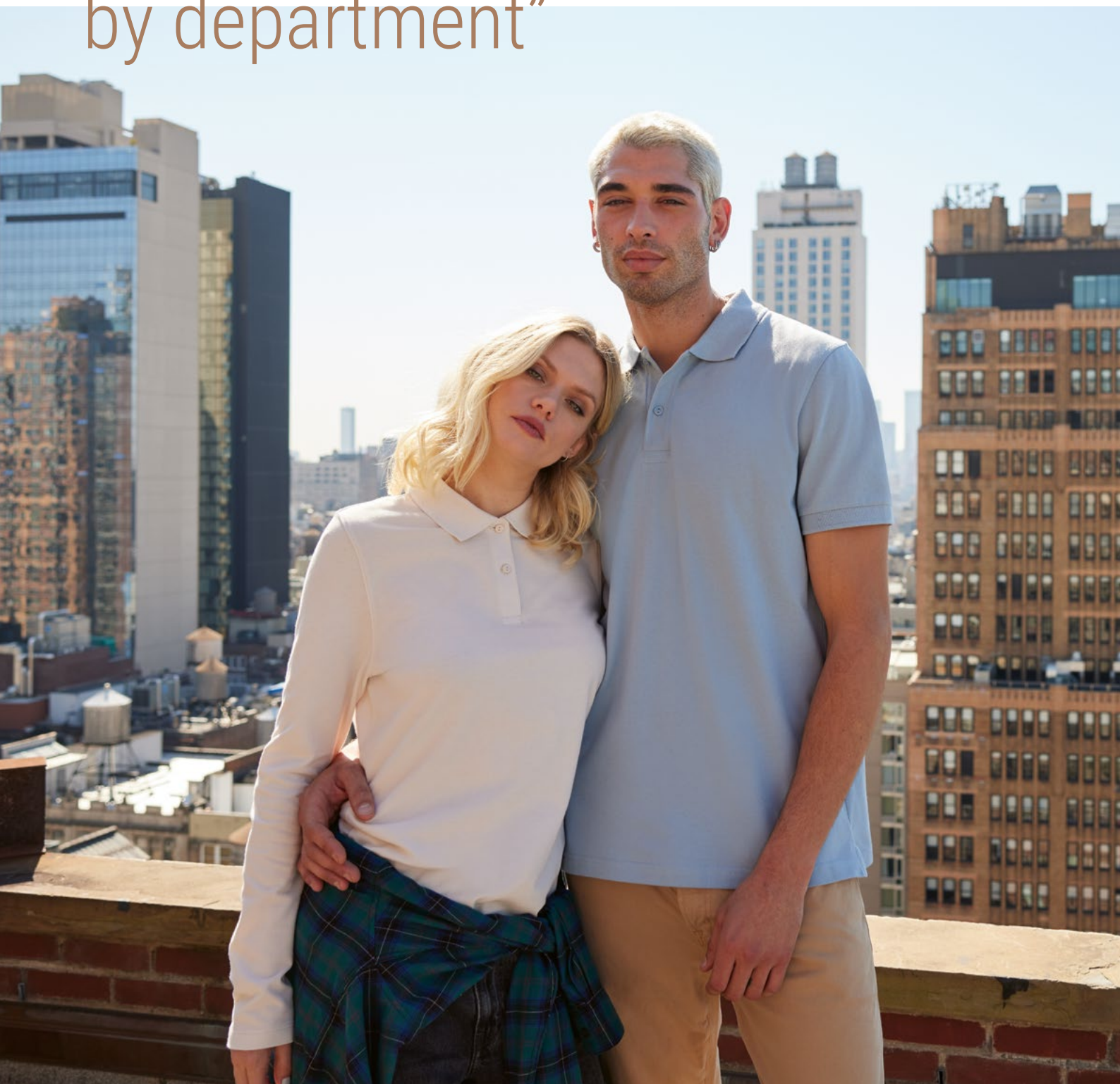
B&C is a signatory of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating its commitment to the UN's approach to social and environmental sustainability.

We work to meet our goals at all times and in every department.





# “SDGs guided us to build our strategic sustainability action plan by department”



## What are the SDGs?

In 2015, all UN member states agreed on **17 global sustainable development goals\* to be achieved by 2030**. These include ending poverty and hunger, creating decent work and economic growth, achieving equality, and combating climate change. These goals are among the starting points of B&C's sustainability strategy.

The UN sustainable development goals are a universal call to action to fight poverty and inequalities, protect the planet and tackle climate change by 2030. To achieve these goals, all of us must make an effort.

The textile industry has a major impact on the global economy and the environment. That's why we have aligned our sustainability framework with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make sure we're tackling the most important issues.

## What does “we are a signatory” mean\*?

By being a signatory of the charter we are committed to enforcing the UN SDGs in our markets. It is a commitment to a common goal. It drives the company towards more sustainable supply chains through multi-stakeholder collaboration, but also to make sustainable decisions in all departments, and implement comprehensive HRDD, Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence.



\* B&C is a signatory of SDGs commitment via The Shift.



# WE ARE PROUD TO ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO 7 OUT OF 17 SDGs

We agree that the 17 SDG's are key to reaching the UN global objective of ending poverty and protecting the planet. But some are less relevant to our Textile Imprint Market, and we strongly believe that by focusing on 7 higher priority development goals, we will be more efficient and able to achieve concrete deliverables.



## No poverty

- > We support NGOs acting for higher wages, like the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF).
- > We monitor wage levels in all our factories, and implement concrete actions.
- > We support a Fair Price Shop in a partner factory.



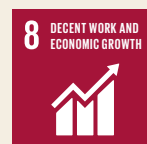
## Good health and well-being

- > At B&C, we do not use any hazardous chemicals or substances that harm the health of workers in our partner factories or the end consumers who wear our clothes, as proven by our Oeko-tex certificate. We avoid polluting the air, the soil or the water.
- > We support initiatives that contribute to a healthier life for farmers through appropriate equipment or reduction of hazardous chemicals usage.
- > Our Code of Conduct strictly regulates overtime, bans child labour, etc.



## Gender equality

- > Our Code of Conduct requires “no discrimination” of any kind by factory management:
  - No wages difference between male and female workers
  - Promotion of more female supervisors in sewing line factories
  - We do not only fight against gender discrimination, but also against discrimination based on race, political views, religion, physical aspects, etc.
  - Together with the FWF, we provide training in factories to prevent violence and harassment in the work place. We encourage implementation of Anti-harassment Committees in all factories.
- > At B&C HQ, we have a high percentage of women present in our Governance bodies (50% of the Management Committee).



## Decent work and economic growth

- > All our suppliers are audited by third party auditors approved by the FWF and BSCI and comply with ILO (International Labour Organisation) requirements which ensure fair working hours and wages, equal pay between genders, no discrimination, forced or child labour. In addition to this, safety measures and ethical business practices are in place.
- > 100% of workers and employees are covered by Policies that formalise the company's commitment to decent work (through our Code of Conduct and Responsible Practices).
- > By sourcing from Asian countries for more than 20 years, we contribute to their economic growth and improve the livelihood of their populations.



## Responsible consumption and production

- > We follow the ILO standards and the FWF code of labour practices.
- > We run Social, Environmental and Governance Due Diligence processes when selecting our new suppliers.
- > We have a few factories to better monitor them.
- > We have full traceability and 100% monitoring of tier 1 and 95% of tier 2 factories.
- > We have a team of 23 people in Dhaka, out of which 14 are regularly visiting our factories.
- > A team of 4 people is dedicated to sustainability internally.



## Climate action

- > We have increased our % of more sustainable fibres to reduce our environmental impact.
- > We avoid air freight and favor sea freight to lower our Carbon Footprint thanks to a well managed planning forecast.
- > Our European HQ and Asian office are Carbon Neutral.
- > We offset our carbon Footprint by supporting the clean Cookstove project in Bangladesh.



## Partnership for the goals

- > We believe none of the above could be achieved on our own: partnership is key.
- > We partner with our suppliers, our customers, NGOs, associations, standard owners, and certification bodies, to contribute to a better future.
- > Internally, sustainability is not the responsibility of just one department, it's a cross-functional mindset across all departments.



“We all have a role to play”



We have sustainability projects per department and a dedicated team to initiate and monitor the plans.

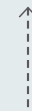
**AT B&C, FOUR PEOPLE HAVE THE SOLE OBJECTIVE AND TASK OF TAKING CARE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR ORGANISATION.**

We continuously strengthen the governance of our sustainability strategy with the help of a cross-functional forum which reviews the action plan's performance and sets key priorities within each department.

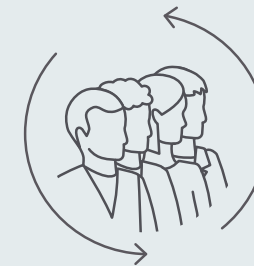
# HOW WE ORGANISE SUSTAINABILITY



MANAGING DIRECTOR



HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY  
3 Sustainability & Corporate  
Responsibility experts



Our **Head of Sustainability**, who reports directly to our **Managing Director** (to guarantee independence), is responsible for ensuring that our sustainable development vision and strategy are implemented with the Heads of department. Twice a year, the sustainability manager reports to our Executive Management Team on performance (against key sustainability indicators). Once a year, reports to the Board of Directors and Shareholders.

Our global sustainability department consists of four experts who set projects, action plans, Policies and monitoring procedures to ensure that the implementation of our sustainability strategy is systematic.

We work directly with our business partners to assess their performance against our sustainability commitments and support them in implementing improvements.

In Bangladesh, our Compliance Manager is a former auditor. She has developed close relationships with our suppliers and is driving consistent and efficient checks, follow-ups and improvement processes internally.

Our suppliers welcome our sustainability team and collaborate with it to enable quick improvements.



Responsible purchasing practices	_2.1
Supply chain traceability	_2.2
B&C Code of Conduct	_2.3
Audits, controls and verifications	_2.4

# OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

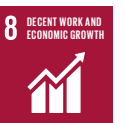


# \_2.1

## What are responsible purchasing practices?

At B&C we are committed to developing responsible purchasing practices that ensure we are a fair business partner. Our purchasing practices support the textile and garment industry to develop in a sustainable way and offer long-term benefits to garment workers and suppliers.

Most textile brands are not textile manufacturers, they are textile buyers. This is fundamental to understanding the role of purchasing practices.



- WORKING WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF FACTORIES
- HAVING A TEAM OF 23 PEOPLE ON SITE
- NOT WORKING WITH SUBCONTRACTORS
- AVOIDING EXCESSIVE OVERTIME
- HAVING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS AND SUPPLIERS
- BEING CERTIFIED AND AUDITED





B&C does not own any production facilities. Since its inception in 1997, it has always sourced its production from business partners in Asia.

Partnership is key in the way B&C deals with its suppliers. We are proud to share knowledge with them, and allow them to invest in greener technologies and better working conditions thanks to our big volume orders. Thanks to B&C healthy business, we contribute to the well-being of thousands of workers (60% are women - source: BGMEA) in our production countries.



### Why are responsible purchasing practices important?

Responsible purchasing practices are fundamental to safeguarding the fair treatment of garment workers and to providing a healthy work environment. B&C, in line with the HREDD (Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence) process, feels it is its responsibility to select business partners that share its commitment to reducing the social and environmental impacts of our industry.

### The key to being a responsible buyer includes:

Responsible purchasing practices encompass a fair FOB price, reasonable and respected payment term, acceptable lead time, long term planning aiming at ordering regular quantities per month,...

1. **Fair FOB Price:** by negotiating Fair FOB prices, B&C allows its suppliers to pay decent wages to their workers, and have enough money to invest in building safety, and in new safer and greener equipment.
2. **Reasonable and Respected payment terms:** by paying factories at fair payment term, and by respecting them, we give factories the means to pay the workers accordingly, and have enough cash to avoid late wage payments.

3. **Acceptable lead time:** by giving factories enough time to produce the ordered quantities, we aim at avoiding excessive overtime and sub-contracting. Sub-contracting is a common practice in the Textile Industry and reduces your monitoring abilities. This is where drama can happen...

4. **Long-term planning and even quantities:** in contrast to the Fashion industry where products have to be in the shops at a specific time the imprint market does not renew styles and colours so often. It allows us to place big orders, for many months in advance. Factories therefore have the possibility to plan and spread their production evenly through the year. This again helps avoid overtime, sub-contracting or the hiring of seasonal workers.

All these good practices contribute to safer and improved working conditions.

“B&C HAS  
LONG-TERM  
RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH ITS PARTNER-  
SUPPLIERS”





B&C,  
26 years  
of experience  
and  
**long-term  
relationships  
with our partner  
suppliers**  
(factories)

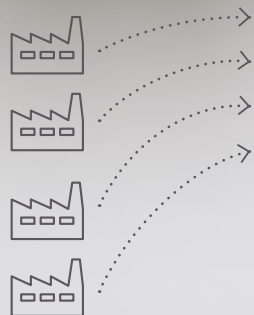
We have a strong local presence in our sourcing markets, which means we can have genuine partnerships with our suppliers and collaborate closely with them on a daily basis. We see this as a crucial part of being a responsible buyer.





More than  
**80 %**

**of our volume is produced in partner factories** with which we have had a working relationship for **more than 15 years**. We know each other by heart.



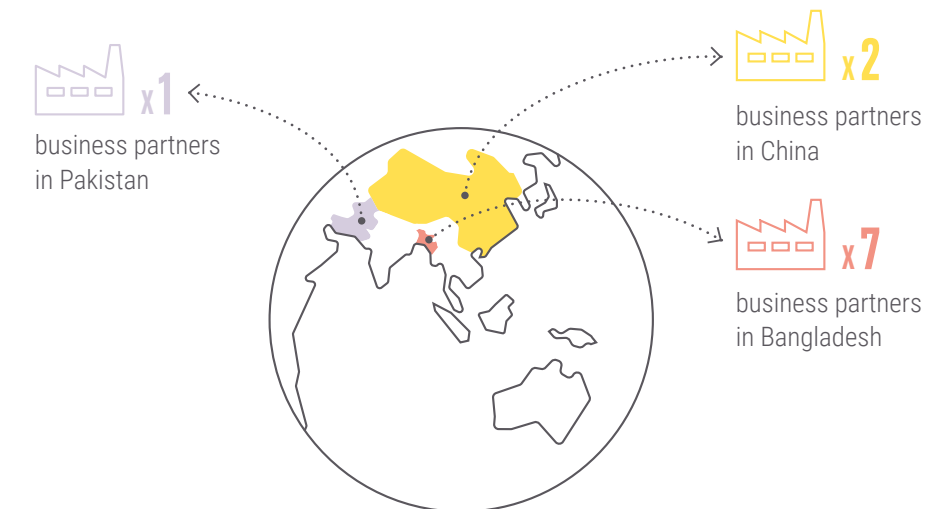
**95 %**

of our volumes comes from only **four factories**

We provide our suppliers with production plans well in advance. This avoids subcontractors and excessive overtime for partners' workers.

For the main suppliers producing all year round, we book capacity several months in advance enabling our partner suppliers to invest and organise their factories efficiently.

### Only 10 partner factories



We partner with a small number of factories. This enables higher leverage, influence and close collaboration to progress daily on our sustainability journey.

Our factories are certified with the highest standards of social and environmental compliance.



**STANDARD 100**  
2204091  
Centexbel

Oeko Tex  
certification



OCS for  
organic products



RCS for  
Recycled Polyester



**amfori**  
Trade with purpose

Member of amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade. For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)

FWF and amfori BSCI for social and environmental compliance

They also need to enforce our Code of Conduct which is aligned with the FWF, amfori BSCI, UN Global Compact Code of Conduct and OECD guidelines.





# HOW WE SELECT FACTORIES



We select our supplier partner factories following a Sourcing methodology and a strict Due Diligence process.

Factories are selected and visited by our Sourcing department to evaluate the working feasibility (technology, quality control, production volumes, customer portfolio, prices and management mindset). When the Sourcing and Quality departments feel confident to start working with a new factory, our Sourcing & Corporate Sustainability teams follow a strict Due Diligence process in several steps:

- > Country Risk assessment
- > Risk Mapping (Social, Environmental, Governance)
- > Analysis of existing audits and new audit planification
- > GO/NO GO decision

B&C - The Cotton Group Due Diligence process also consists in following up on laws and supply chain mapping, developing risk mitigation tools, and grievance mechanisms at factory level.



# \_2.2 Supply chain traceability

Every year we work on improving our due diligence process to collect the right information, and better understand and measure the risks with each production factory, in order to keep progressing towards better supply chain traceability.





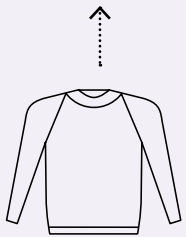
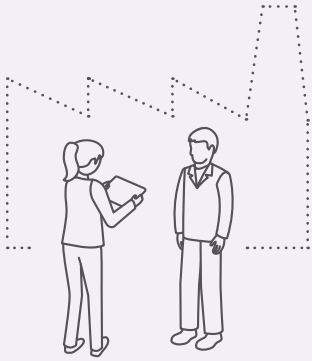
QUALITY CONTROL

Given the nature of our production system, we have quality control teams that visit our partner factories daily, carrying out both quality controls and any other aspect related to production. While carrying out said monitoring, our experts check that our Code of Conduct is respected.

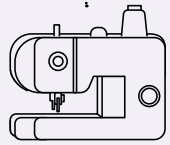
POLICY CONTROL

Our policy of control and the characteristics of our production processes do not allow for subcontracting of the production of our garments. Subcontracting is the transfer of part of production to a third party without the Brand's knowledge or authorisation. All our suppliers have complete vertical production processes in-house.

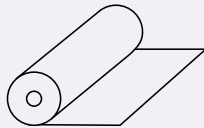
Traceability audits consist of **unannounced visits** to the factories by B&C - The Cotton Group staff to ensure that the production of each product is carried out in those factories that have been previously assigned and approved by us.



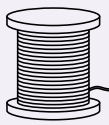
**Tier 0**  
Brands and retailers



**Tier 1**  
Garment producers



**Tier 2**  
Fabric producers



**Tier 3**  
Yarn producers



**Tier 4**  
Fibre producers

**BY WORKING WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF FACTORIES, that are vertically integrated from knitting to shipping of finished goods, we have a clear vision of our Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers.**

- > **Tier 1** are the CMT factories, where Cutting, Sewing, Trimming and packing take place. They are production sites where goods are finished and ready to ship.
- > **Tier 2** are the Fabric Mills, where knitting/weaving, dyeing and finishing of the fabrics take place. At this stage of the supply chain, processed yarns become fabrics that will be used for CMT (Tier 1).
- > As far as spinners (**Tier 3**) and Ginners (**Tier 4**) are concerned, a lot of different actors, (including traders and brokers) are involved. This complex supply chain, and the blending of cotton from different sources at these stages, make traceability up to the farm quite complex.
- > For some parts of our supply, we also connect directly with farmers. In this case, traceability is complete up to **Tier 4**.



# Suppliers are aligned with our commitments



Within B&C - The Cotton Group, the Operations Management & Sourcing Department work with CSR, the Quality Department, purchasing teams and other departments involved in the selection of new suppliers through the analysis and prior verification of our production locations. This ensures that B&C - The Cotton Group requirements are met in all areas before order confirmation.

We prioritise consolidating the relationships of trust with suppliers, ensuring their codes of conduct are aligned with our own corporate social responsibility commitments, in order to inculcate and ensure good practices from an employment, social and environmental perspective in the supply chain.

The B&C Code of Conduct includes labour standards, anti-corruption, environmental standards, animal welfare, enforcement & compliance commitments. The signature of the Code of Conduct is a mandatory requirement before B&C places its first purchase order.

This is based on the principles and philosophy of the United Nations Global Compact, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also includes all the applicable conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and follows the FWF Code of Labour Practices.



# \_2.3 B&C Code of Conduct

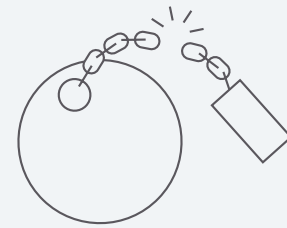
**The B&C Code-of-Conduct describes the rules and principles that our suppliers are committed to respect. It has to be acknowledged and signed by all our suppliers, before we place our first order.**

It covers 12 key principles (summarised in the overview below), amongst which the 8 principles of the International Labor Organisation (ILO), plus safety, environmental, animal welfare and anti-bribery commitments. B&C requires that its suppliers sign The FWF Code-of-Labour practices and the amfori-BSCI code-of-conduct.



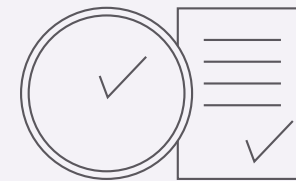
## Employment relationship

Working relationships shall be legally binding.



## No forced labour

There shall be no use of forced, including bonded or prison labour.



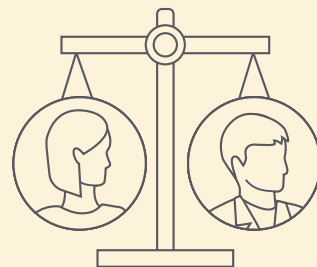
## Working hours

Hours of work shall comply with applicable laws and industry standards. Overtime allowances must be aligned with local law.



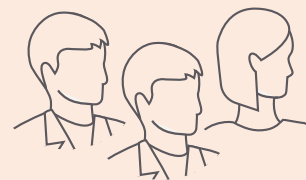
## Healthy working conditions

A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided, and best occupational health and safety practice shall be promoted.



## No discrimination

Employees shall not be subject to discrimination of any kind.



## Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining

The right to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively shall be recognised.



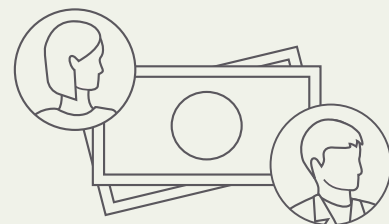
## No harassment or abuse

Every worker shall be treated with dignity and respect. No harm or abuse shall be done.



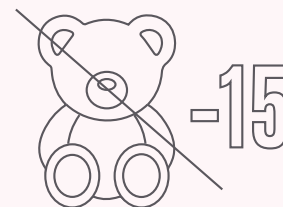
## Fire and building safety

All measures to prevent accidents and illnesses shall be taken.



## Payment of a decent wage

Wages shall meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and always be sufficient to meet basic needs of workers.



## No child labour

There shall be no workers under the age for completion of compulsory education and in any case under 15.



## Environmental standards

Measures to mitigate the impact on the environment (soil, air, water, biodiversity and animal welfare) shall be taken.



## No corruption or bribery

Full integrity is expected from all business parties.



# B&C Code of Conduct - other aspects



Communication	<p>A copy of the present code must be displayed at the main personnel entrances and exits at the manufacturer’s facilities, both in English and in the local language.</p> <p>The aforementioned copy must contain a contact e-mail address for B&amp;C - The Cotton Group’s CSR department in case any employee requires or wishes to make use of it.</p>	Auditing	<p>The compliance with the content of the Code of Conduct will be periodically audited at the different suppliers’ factories and facilities, both internally and externally.</p> <p>Said auditing may be carried out jointly with other organisations.</p>
Area of application	<p>All the above points are of mandatory compliance for all manufacturers who work with B&amp;C - The Cotton Group.</p> <p>In order to achieve this goal, manufacturers shall authorise B&amp;C - The Cotton Group to carry out, either itself or via third parties, inspections to ensure the application of the present code.</p> <p>In addition, they grant supervisors’ access to documentation and all means necessary to achieve said goal.</p> <p>Such audits may be carried out according to schedule or without prior notice.</p>	Corrective action	<p>Any situation which implies non-compliance with the above points shall require corrective action by the manufacturer, within an established period. It should be noted that B&amp;C - The Cotton Group will participate in said corrective action by providing technical support. In the case where corrective action has not been applied or in the event of serious social emergencies or other significant events where the manufacturers have not taken the required corrective measures, B&amp;C - The Cotton Group will proceed to stop any relationship with said manufacturer.</p>
Acceptance and commitment on manufacturers’ side	<p>All manufacturers accept and undertake to comply with all the points mentioned in the present Code, and any possible subsequent modifications to it, by signing and stamping all the pages of one copy, which shall always be available at B&amp;C - The Cotton Group.</p>	Contact	<p>CSR@bc-collection.eu</p>



# \_2.4

## Audits, controls and verifications



We have efficient and secured tools which allow quick and up-to-date access to our database of partner suppliers. All supplier data; information about their production capacities, the different set-ups they own, their annual volume, their production specialty, their corrective action plans; are collected and gathered. This way, all the departments involved in the production process (Sourcing, Operations, Planning, Quality, CSR,...) have access to a common source of information.

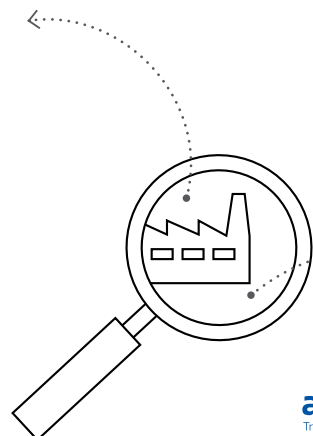
In July 2017, B&C joined forces independently with the **Fair Wear Foundation (FWF - fairwear.org)**, the leading non-profit multi-stakeholder organisation composed of 149 members, dedicated to improving labour conditions in garment factories. By partnering with the FWF, we work to improve the social performance of our supply chain. Being a member of the FWF includes following and enforcing the FWF Code of Conduct, a system based on the same principles as the B&C Code of Conduct.

B&C is also a member of **amfori BSCI**, the leading global trade association dedicated to an open, sustainable trade.

# 23



Our **23 employees based in Bangladesh** follow up purchases and production on a daily basis, 14 of them regularly visit our factories. Rather than a yearly snapshot we have a daily picture of our production lines.



On top of having employees performing recurrent audits, **external audits are made each year by third parties.**



Member of amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade. For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)

# 99 %

of our production took place in **externally/independently** audited factories.\*

\*As a point of reference, the minimum monitoring threshold requirement for Fairwear Foundation to be a long term member is at 80%.



The external audits carried out in the factories are undertaken by different first level auditing companies. On certain occasions, the internal CSR audit team may also participate in the external audits or perform the follow-up of a specific aspect of the Code of Conduct.



We have  
**23 employees**  
working daily  
in our own  
liaison office  
in Bangladesh



#### **B&C DHAKA LIAISON OFFICE**

9th Floor, Concord Bilkis Tower, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

We have **daily contact** with our partner suppliers.

B&C Quality Controllers have a **day-to-day presence in the factories**. This team also checks, on a daily basis, that the Code of Conduct is strictly applied in the production chains.

**100% of our team are locals** and the head of our B&C Asian Office has **25+ years of experience in Asia**.

#### **The responsibilities of our Asian team are:**

- > Quality control
- > Planning control
- > Production follow-up
- > Sustainability
- > Corporate responsibility.

**In Bangladesh our Compliance Manager is a former social compliance auditor.** She develops close relationships with our suppliers and drives consistent and efficient checks, follow-ups and improvement processes. With the support of our team based in Europe and the Head of the Asian office, she covers the following aspects:

#### **Social, Environmental and Health & Safety.**

Our suppliers welcome our sustainability team and collaborate with it to enable quick improvements. Our Compliance Manager also works hand in hand with local representatives and the certification bodies and associations we are a member of.





# Fair Wear Foundation

The Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder organisation composed of 149 members **focused on improving labour conditions in garment factories.**

Internationally and at regional level across garment production countries, the FWF advocates for the rights of garment workers while engaging with factories, trade unions, NGOs and governments.

They develop a fair fashion norm by running demanding brand performance checks every year but also by running factory audits. Each factory audit results in publishing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that is reviewed and followed up on a regular basis with the FWF local liaison team.

Workplace Education Programmes (WEP) are also rolled out at selected factories to ensure good quality systematic training of workers and management on topics linked to the FWF Code of Labour Practice (i.e. anti-violence and harassment training, and the creation of anti-harassment committees).

Finally, a complaint hotline open to all factories' workers allows them to report online complaints violating the FWF Code of Labour Practice. After a complaint is registered, brands working with the factory concerned are notified and have to take part jointly in the remediation of the conflict. Complaints, as well as steps taken and feedback, are published on the member hub once resolved.

## AUDITS & FWF

To continuously improve the working conditions of the people making our garments, we collaborate closely with the FWF. We also encourage our partner factories in their Corporate Social Responsibility.

Every year we go through an extensive brand performance check driven by FWF, and our partner factories are audited by certified and approved independent 3rd party audit organisations to ensure independence and transparency of the reports.

In 2022 B&C has been acknowledged as a Fair Wear Foundation Leader member. It is a significant achievement, demonstrating B&C's deep commitment to improving working conditions in its factories, showing the way for others and sharing best practices.

[www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org)



Member of amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade. For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)

# amfori BSCI

B&C is a proud member of amfori BSCI.

The amfori Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) is an industry-driven movement enabling companies to **improve social performance in their supply chains.**

For this, amfori BSCI conducts audits to assess workplace standards across the global supply chain and ensure that all suppliers are treating workers ethically and legally.

The amfori BSCI's Code of Conduct, which B&C endorses by being a member, is based on 11 principles that add environmental and ethic criteria to the ones promoted by the FWF. This code, in addition to the FWF Code of Labour Practices, raises the standard of minimum expectations we undertake to implement with our suppliers.

amfori BSCI also proposes audit reports that are continuously updated, quality checked, and widely recognised. amfori BSCI's audit ranks audited factories from A (excellent) to E (poor).

Alongside the audit, a corrective action plan is delivered and detailed to implement ad-hoc remediation processes. This auditing service allows us to assess and monitor our suppliers, and ensure we are on the right path for improvement.

Being a member of amfori BSCI helps us partner with responsible suppliers and improves the sustainability of our supply chain.

[www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)





# Auditing process

AUDITS ARE CONDUCTED BY THIRD PARTY AUDITING COMPANIES,  
FOLLOWING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FWF OR BSCI AUDIT PROTOCOLS

We use external and independent social audits to control the implementation of the **B&C Code of Conduct**.

These checking procedures are carried out in supplier's factories.

All audits findings are summarised in a "Corrective Action" Plan (CAP) that our Compliance team will review on a monthly basis with factory management.

THE PROCEDURE FOR THE INITIAL SOCIAL AUDITS IS AS FOLLOWS

\_1

## Opening meeting

Audit team members will have a meeting with representatives of the supplier factory to explain the audit procedure.

\_2

## Interview with factory managers and/or factory owners

Interview with management is used as a source of information to verify compliance, but also to provide B&C with an understanding of management views and Policies and, if possible, to pinpoint underlying root causes for any identified areas of non-compliance.

\_3

## Exhaustive inspection of the factory installations

The audit team will walk through the sites of the factory with the factory's representatives to check and assess all areas (e.g. emergency exits, sanitary facilities, room temperature). Photographic records might be taken.

\_4

## Selection of a sample of employees in order to carry out interviews

Private and confidential interviews with workers may be performed inside and/or outside factory premises.

\_5

## Review of all relevant documentation

The audit team will review all relevant records and documents as per FWF/BSCI Audit Document Request List sent prior to inspection.

\_6

## Closing meeting

At the end of the audit, the audit team conducts an exit meeting with representatives of management (and if they are available: worker representatives) to discuss the audit conclusions, requirements for necessary corrective actions, recommendations, and a timeframe for implementation.



# Building Safety & Fire Prevention in Factories

## At B&C, worker safety is key

We have mechanisms in place to ensure best practices in building and fire safety are followed in all our partner factories, in every country where our garments are produced.

### Bangladesh

The majority of our garments are produced here, so our impact is significant. We therefore make sure that our active suppliers and any potential new partners comply to all necessary workplace safety standards.

We're pleased that most of our current partner factories are members of the BGMEA (Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association) which requires its members to undergo regular audits to ensure compliance with workplace safety and environmental sustainability standards. These audits are conducted by third-parties, either the RSC (see sidebar) or other independent auditing organisations approved by the BGMEA.

These audits can give rise to Corrective Action Plans being issued by the auditors, which they then follow-up with the individual factories to ensure that all safety measures are brought to compliance standards. Our Dhaka Liaison Office (DLO) compliance team are also often involved in these follow-up activities.

In addition to third party audits, our DLO quality controllers and managers work and visit factories every day. They are trained to detect obvious safety issues and to alert both factory and B&C Management so remedial action can be taken quickly.

Workers themselves are also involved in the safety process through regular safety trainings and fire-fighting drills held on factory premises.

### What is the RSC?

The ready-made garments Sustainability Council (RSC) is an unprecedented private national tripartite initiative to continue the significant accomplishments made in workplace safety in Bangladesh.

The organisations's vision is to deliver world-class sustainable workplace safety programmes and to make the ready-made garments industry a safer and better place to work.

The RSC conducts structural, electrical, fire & life safety and boiler safety inspections, supports and monitors remediation, conducts safety training, and operates an independent occupational safety & health complaints mechanism available to workers in covered ready-made garments factories.

The only supplier factory that has not yet had the opportunity to be audited by RSC (they are on the waiting list since mid-2022), has been audited by a third party private auditing company specialised in Fire & Building safety.



B&C Team - Dhaka Liaison Office (DLO).

### B&C's interest for safety goes beyond audits

Audits are important as they give us an official expert snapshot of the situation at one moment in time. But as for any other risks, prevention and mitigation are key. This is why we work on day-to-day safety issues with our factory partners :

- > regular worker training
- > fire detection and alarm systems installed in factories
- > strict rules guiding chemical storage and provision of PPE for workers dealing with them
- > dedicated staff assigned to fire-fighting and security management

### Pakistan and China

The three factories with which B&C Currently works are covered by recent official safety audits. These electrical, structural and fire safety audits are run by local third-party auditors or government representatives (fire-fighters).

We strive to make conditions for all workers safer and healthier by supporting our suppliers in their efforts to create better work places.



Chemicals correctly stored.



Worker Safety Committees trained



Resource consumption	_3.1
Sustainable material	_3.2
Committed to People	_3.3

# ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY





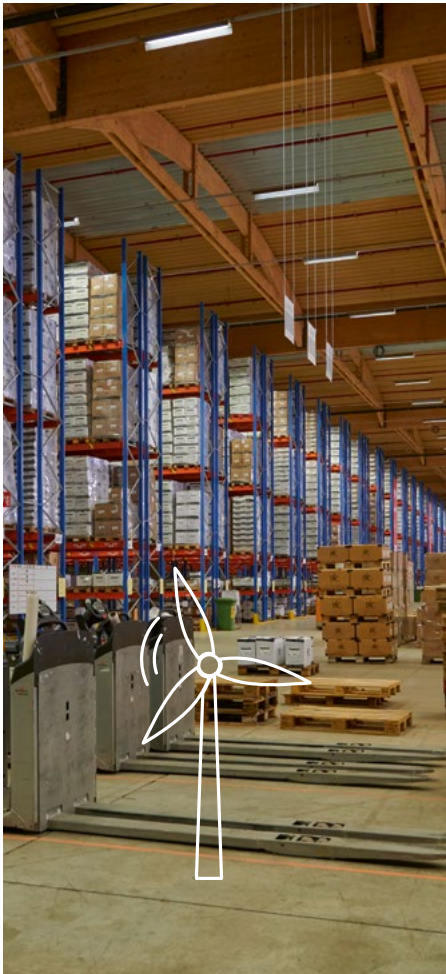
We are conscious of our responsibility to the environment and so consistently work towards reducing our environmental impact. This had led to our European and Asian HQs becoming Carbon Neutral in 2022.

We also continue to increase our support of sustainable fibres throughout our collection, and work on decreasing our impact across the full value chain (design, fabric production, product manufacturing, transport, warehousing, HQ offices and marketing).



# \_3.1

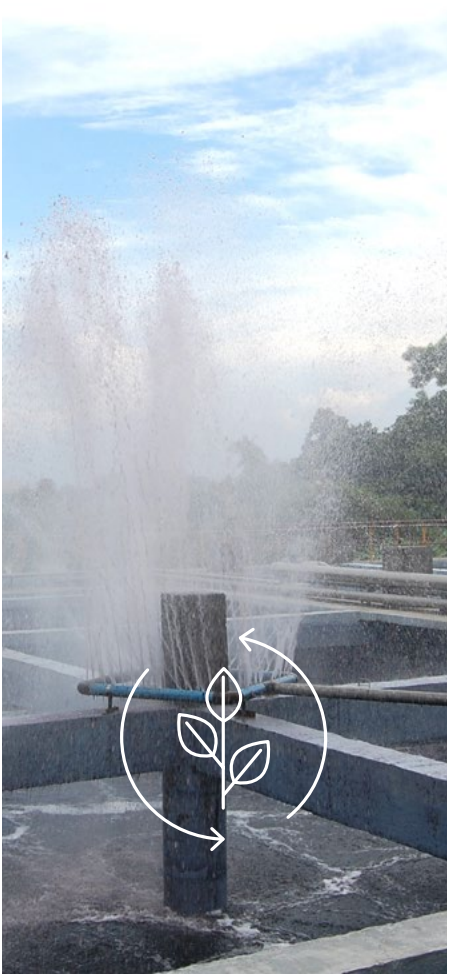
## Resource consumption



B&C OPERATES  
IN A GREEN WAREHOUSE



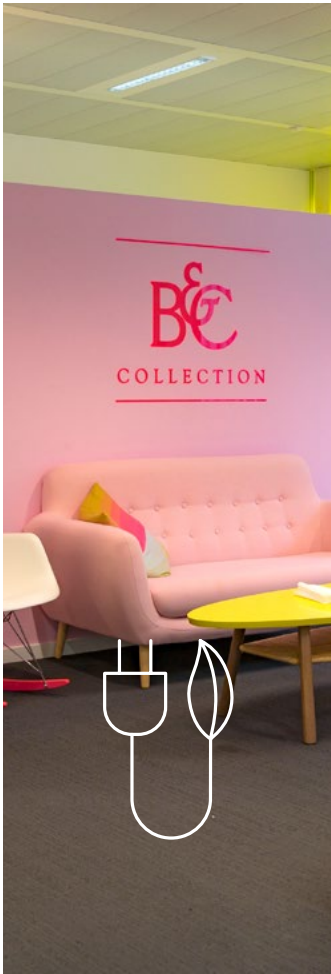
THE  
TRANSPORT CHALLENGE



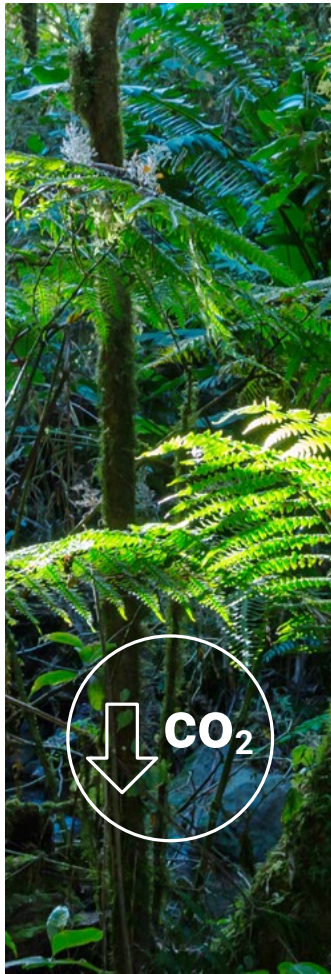
FACTORIES ETP  
(WATER EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANT)



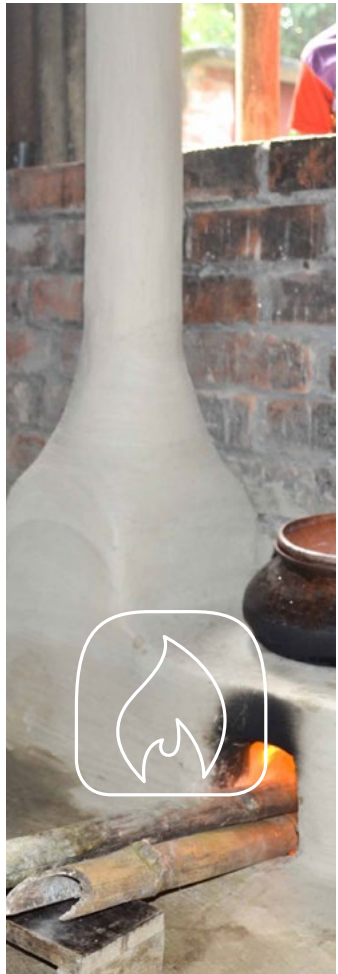
SUSTAINABILITY  
CRITERIA FOR  
MARKETING TOOLS



OUR HQ

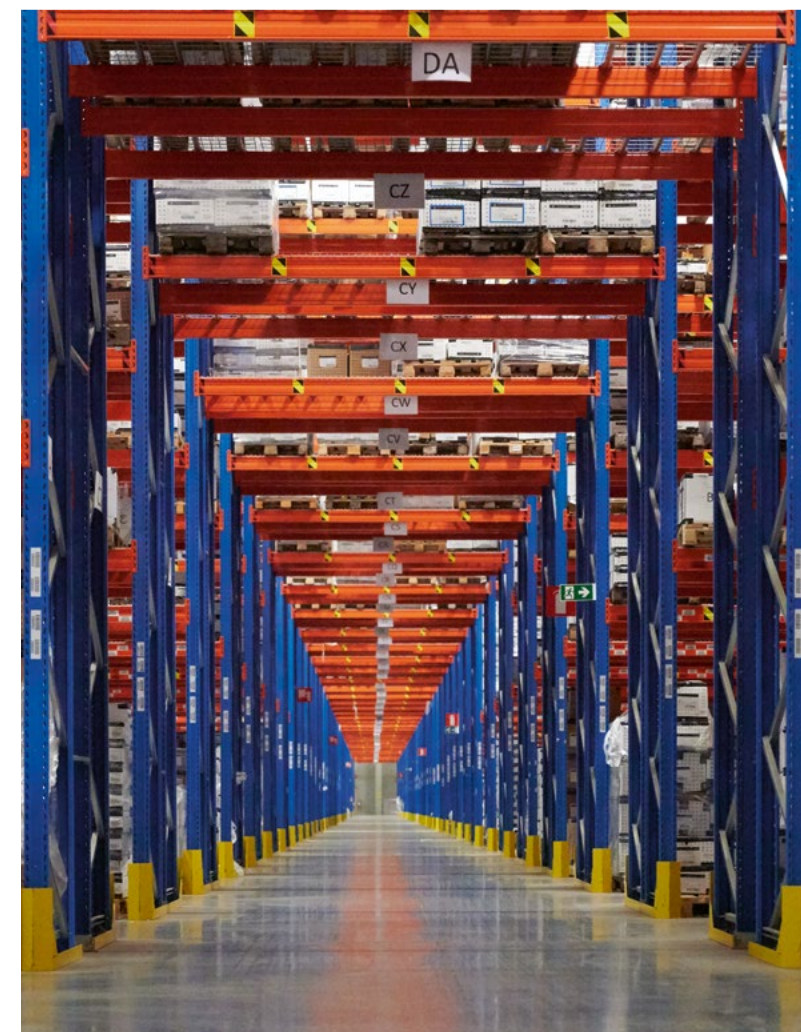
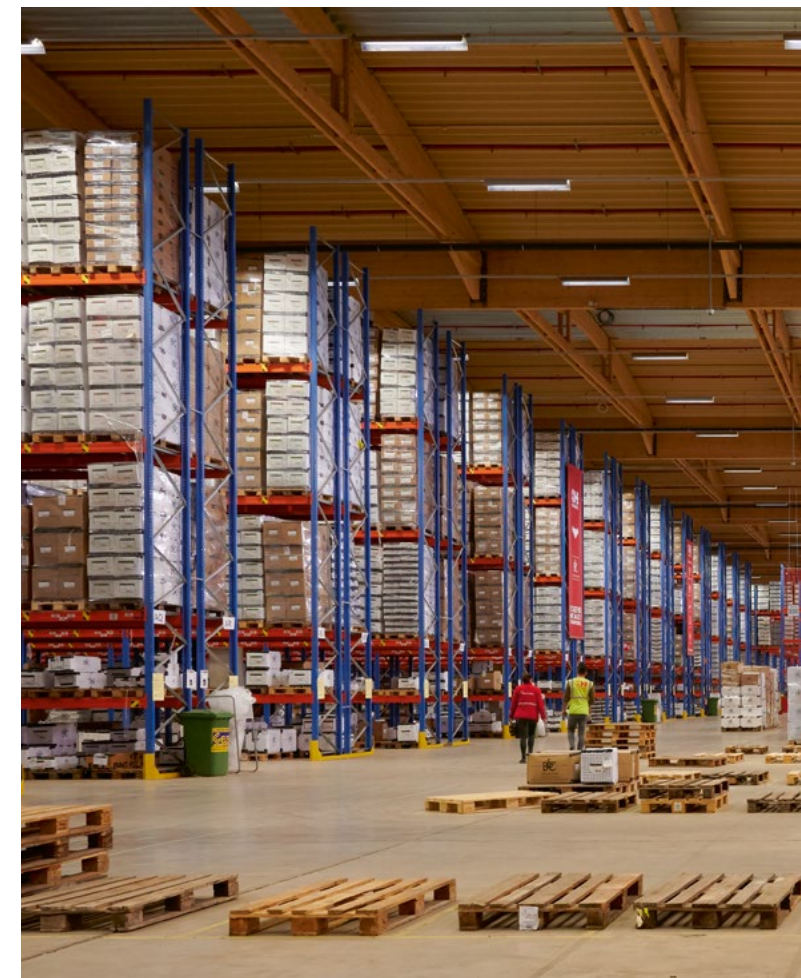


EUROPEAN HQ AND  
ASIAN OFFICE ARE  
CARBON NEUTRAL



CARBON OFFSET,  
CLEAN COOKSTOVES  
PROJECT

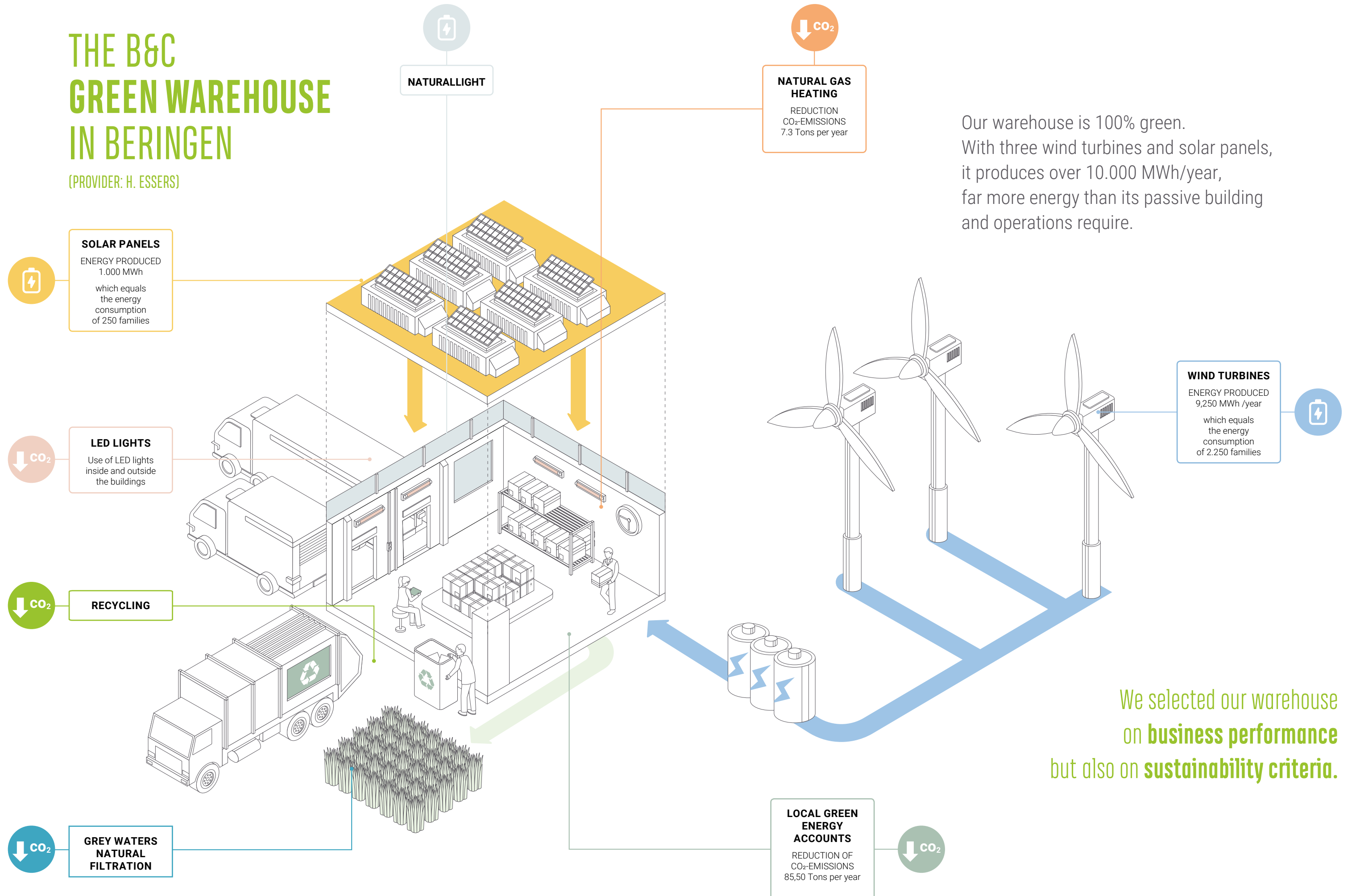






# THE B&C GREEN WAREHOUSE IN BERINGEN

(PROVIDER: H. ESSERS)





# The transport challenge

An important factor in the carbon footprint of our industry is transport and logistics.

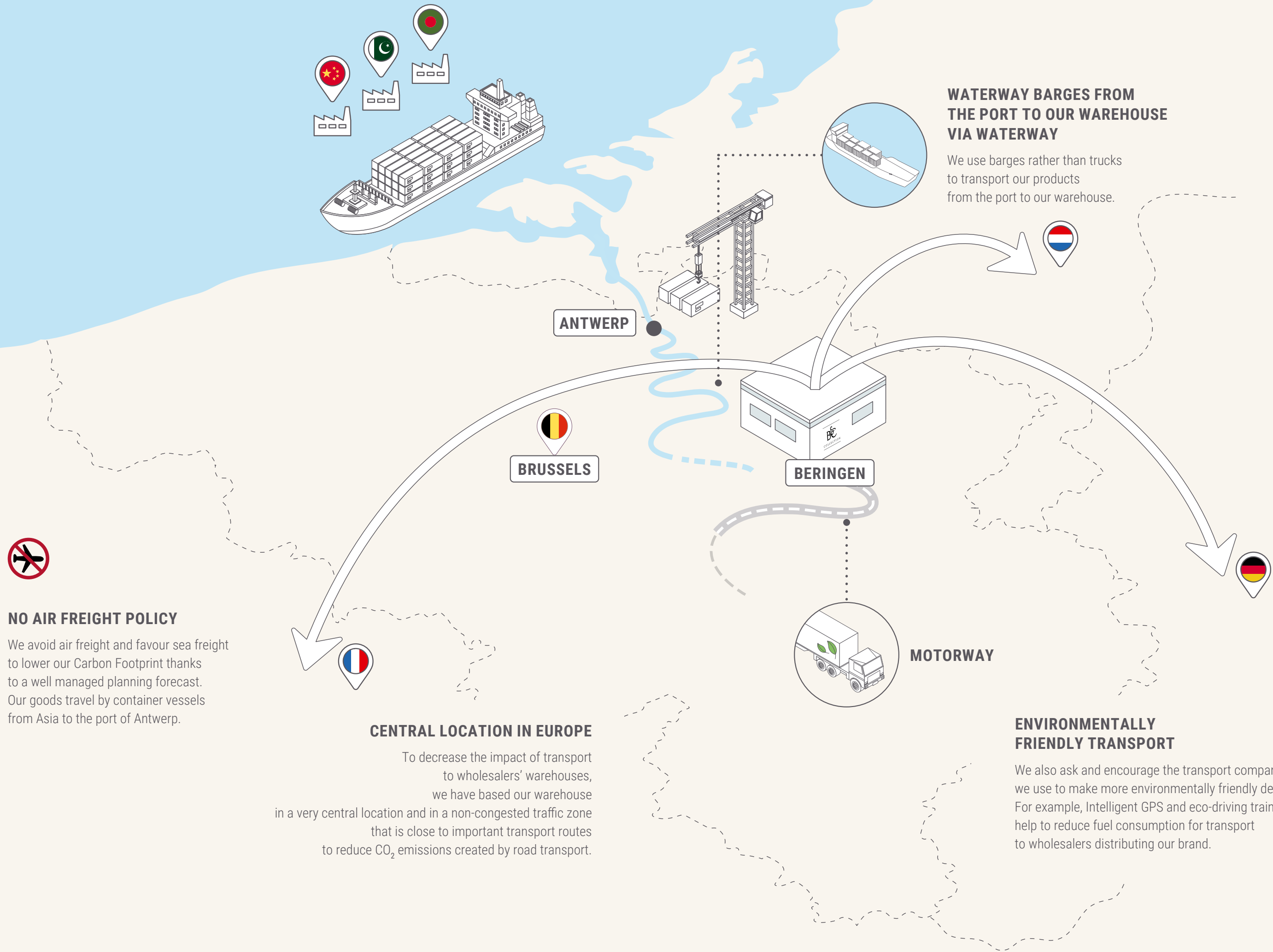
Transport represents around 6% of the greenhouse gas emissions in a garment's lifecycle.

By choosing the right modes of transport, we can reduce this impact even further.

Our logistic partner for sea-freight is committed to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30% by 2030.











Water Effluent Treatment Plant

# Our factories are equipped with ETP systems

## What is an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP)?

Effluent treatment plants are used to treat water emanating from Dyeing Mill sites where different types of chemicals and dyes are used to dye and finish yarns, fabrics or garments. Such water might be harmful for both the environment and the people. This kind of effluent treatment ensures that any contaminant will be expelled from the water meaning it can be reused (in cooling systems) or released back into nature.

## Why is it important?

Through this ETP system, we can re-use part of the treated water for alternative purposes instead of throwing it away. The ETP also cleans the output water which is released into the rivers, avoiding any soil or river contamination.





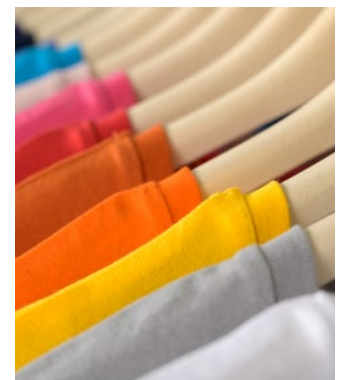
# Sustainability criteria for marketing tools



We use Green digital servers for all digital activities (websites, Blogs, CRM, newsletters, campaigns, etc.).



100% of printed tools are on 100% FSC certified paper or recycled paper.



100% of our hangers are recycled.



100% of giveaway packaging materials are either made of recycled materials or compostable and always recyclable.



Our partners signed our code of conduct.



# B&C european HQ and asian office are carbon neutral!

As a responsible company we feel it's our duty to reduce our environmental impact and so help prevent global warming exceeding 1.5° by the end of the century. Calculating our Corporate Carbon Footprint so we can consciously work to reduce it and offset it as necessary is key to our sustainability objectives. We're proud that we've achieved our Carbon Neutral Company\* goal in 2022, and we'll continue our efforts every year.

Working with Climate Partner, a certified 3<sup>rd</sup> party, and in accordance with the guidelines of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol), we measured the emissions produced by our Head Office in Waterloo and our Local Liaison office in Dhaka including energy consumption, office supplies, waste, company travel etc\*

We can only do this by making the best choices in energy, travel and office design and by implementing the right procedures in recycling and paperless communications. These are all things the whole B&C team is focused on, whatever their job.



\* This does not cover emissions produced in the production process, from farm to warehouse.



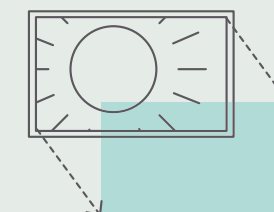
The good news is we've already **significantly reduced our emissions, by 44%** in fact since 2019. We're now looking forward, and we know we'll have to work hard to keep our emissions as low as possible in the future.



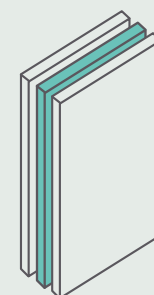
# Our HQ Offices are Carbon Neutral



100%



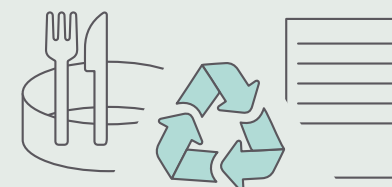
filtered windows



thermal insulation



lighting control

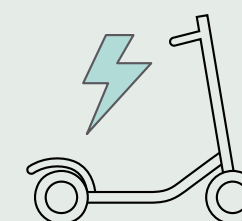


recycling system at every level

**Our commitment to the environment is also implemented at our Head Quarters based in Brussels through the application of eco-efficiency criteria. The main measures applied include:**

- > Our energy supplier is the most advanced in Green electricity supply.
- > Office plans are designed to maximise natural light in offices.
- > Our building is equipped with lighting control: motion sensors, occupancy sensors, and photosensors to reduce energy consumption to a maximum.
- > Thermal transmission materials to prevent heat or cold from entering the buildings (filtered windows, highly efficient thermal insulation).
- > Recycling is at every level: from your lunch box packaging to printing inks or paper, etc.
- > We are on our way to being paperless by:
  - Reviewing Office procedures
  - Replacing paper notebooks with digital tablet notebooks.
  - Favourizing pdf reading and filing.

**All HQ employees are offered to use free electric scooters** for short trips during the day, for private or professional purposes.



Green cloud servers





# \_3.2

## Sustainable material



In the most recent years, we have seen a **worldwide trend for organic products**, whether in food or non-food sectors. This is also valid for Organic Cotton (a cotton that is not genetically modified, and that is grown without any chemical inputs).

Organic Cotton only represents a little bit more than 1%\* of worldwide cotton production.

This low figure is due **to soil or weather conditions** in many parts of the world that make organic farming not possible, but also to the more labour intensive and demanding organic farming practices.

Optimistic scenarii consider that Organic Cotton proportion can hardly reach 5%\*\* by 2030.

Sources: \*Textile Exchange and \*\*Better Cotton



Organic Cotton  
only represents  
a little bit more than 1%\*  
of worldwide cotton production



# The best way to increase the amount of sustainable cotton produced is then to widely promote better farming practices.

The objective is to train farmers to better manage irrigation, use less chemicals, at the right moment, to preserve biodiversity,... in order to increase yields and improve their livelihood.

**This is what Better Cotton does in many cotton producing countries.**

B&C  
more sustainable  
material evolution

**X4** 2019  
2022

4X  
HIGHER  
IN 2022  
VS 2019

**Cotton counted for almost 90% of the fibres used by B&C in 2022.**

Cotton is a natural fibre that delivers the greatest softness for skin and is easily printable. It grows in subtropical regions, when not properly cultivated, it may require abundant chemical inputs and irrigation.

Therefore, The Cotton Group - B&C is increasing its share of "more sustainable cotton", by introducing product ranges made of Better cotton, Organic In Conversion Cotton or Organic Cotton.





# Better Cotton

Better Cotton aims at helping cotton growers converting to more environmentally friendly, and socially and economically sustainable farming methods (more efficient use of water and chemical inputs), but also to meet growing consumer demand for more sustainable cotton.

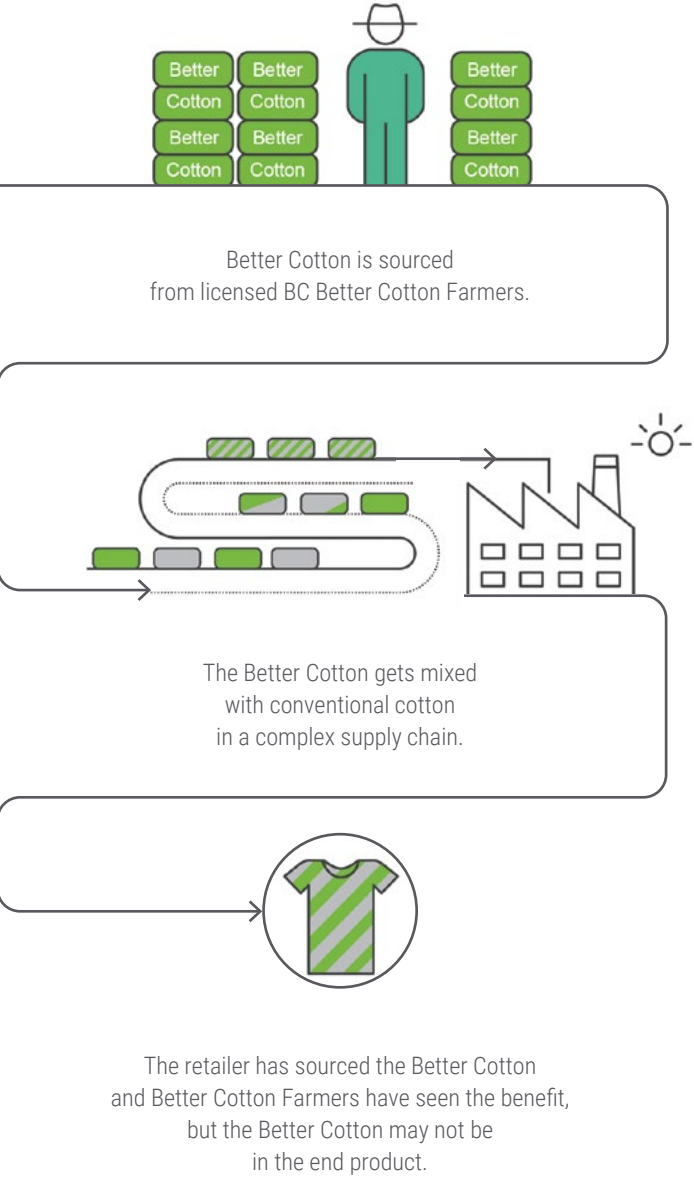


Fees paid by members also support trainings for farmers.

By choosing our ROYAL line cotton products, you're supporting our investment in Better Cotton's mission.



Those products are sourced via a system of **mass balance** and therefore may not contain Better Cotton.



©bettercotton.org

The 2,4 million trained farmers are now accounting for about 23% of worldwide cotton production



"It all began back in 2012, when a group of us, Better Cotton Farmers in Kanakya village, set up a committee to help other farmers in our community use pesticides and fertilisers more efficiently.

We wanted to promote plant-based natural alternatives, but they weren't readily available locally, so we had to find a way to make it easier for farmers to gain access to these products at reasonable prices.

And we also had to convince them to change their ways by showing them the results in the field."

Better Cotton Farmer Balubhai Parmar - "STORIES FROM THE FIELD" - bettercotton.org



©bettercotton.org





# Organic In Conversion Cotton

Organic “In Conversion” Cotton is grown on land which has started the conversion to organic methods.

**Although farmers follow organic farming guidelines (no use of pesticides, synthetic fertilisers, GMOs and other harmful chemicals), their soil can not yet be considered organic.**

This conversion period (up to 3 years) is **very difficult** for farmers, who experience economic and harvest consequences.



“We are committed to training and converting farmers to adopt organic farming practices, supporting them on their 3-year journey to organic certification.”





Buying Organic “In Conversion” Cotton helps support farmers in transition, and allows brands to directly **connect with farmer communities** offering better traceability of our cotton journey up to farm level.

In 2022, B&C launched its first range of Organic “In Conversion” Cotton products.







# Organic Cotton

**Organic Cotton** is grown using organic agricultural systems that replenish and maintain soil health and fertility, expand biologically diverse agriculture, and prohibit the use of synthetic toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilisers as well as genetically engineered seeds.

Third-party certification bodies (CBs) verify that organic producers meet strict national regulations addressing methods and materials allowed in organic production.



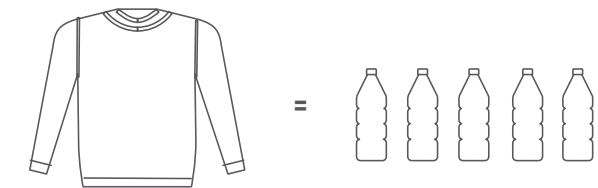
# Recycled Polyester

Polyester is the most used fibre in the worldwide textile industry and accounts for about 60% of total fibres.

Polyester is a petrol based product and as such, it contributes to GHG emissions. This is why we have started switching from first generation Polyester fibres to Recycled Polyester in some Sweatshirts and Poloshirts. Recycled Polyester accounted for 12% of our polyester use in 2022. Recycled Polyester transforms waste (old PET bottles) into a useful product (Polyester yarn) through a green and mechanical process.

RCS is a certification by Textile Exchange that guarantees the content of recycled fibres in our final garments.

Recycled Polyester uses up to 58% less water and reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 54% compared to virgin polyester



Every Recycled Polyester sweat-shirt we sell, removes 5 plastic PET bottles from the environment.

This data is gathered using the 'Higg Material Sustainability Index'. More information about their data and methodologies can be found on [howtohigg.org](https://www.howtohigg.org)







# inspired tomorrow\_°

Our **B&C inspired tomorrow\_°** products are created with extra consideration for the planet: each piece is made of more sustainable materials, like Better Cotton, Organic In Conversion Cotton, Organic Cotton or Recycled Polyester.

**At B&C we're committed to creating beautiful and fashionable garments at the best price in a sustainable way.** All our products are made with care and consideration for the people who make them and for the environment.

Garments containing more sustainable materials can be found across the collection — just look for our green **inspired tomorrow\_°** labels!

So, what do we count as **inspired tomorrow\_°**?

To qualify for a green hang tag, a product must contain **sustainable materials, such as Better Cotton, Organic In Conversion Cotton, Organic Cotton or Recycled Polyester.**

To evaluate the materials, we use external certifications.

By choosing **B&C inspired tomorrow\_°** products, you help us make the textile industry more sustainable!





## Our **B&C inspired tomorrow\_°** products

inspired  
tomorrow\_°

inspired  
tomorrow\_°

inspired  
tomorrow\_°

inspired  
tomorrow\_°

14

B&C Inspire tees

6

B&C Inspire sweatshirts

4

B&C polo shirts

B&C Inspire /duo  
B&C My Eco Polo /duo <sup>NEW</sup>

6

B&C Royal sweatshirts





# \_3.3

## Committed to People

In 2022 we brought our commitment to improving people's working and living conditions to life through 2 initiatives which have a direct impact, on a daily basis.

### Cookstove initiative

We can't reduce our emissions to zero but as it's important for us that our European HQ and Asian Office be Carbon Neutral, **we decided to offset the 540 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>** equivalent we produce by investing in recognised carbon offset projects such as the ones recognised by the Verified Carbon Standard, the Gold Standard and the Clean Development Mechanism.

We chose to support a project close to our production centres in Bangladesh. **The Clean Cookstove project provides families with cooking systems that minimise energy consumption** whilst limiting the negative health impacts and improving living conditions.

Families save energy, reduce carbon emissions and because smoke is led outside through a chimney they are no longer exposed to toxic smoke in their homes. It also helps to limit deforestation, as the cookstoves need less wood.



## Fair Price shop

**Improving the livelihood of workers** (and their families) in our partner factories is one of the key objectives of our social sustainability strategy, and one of the ways we can offer tangible support is through supporting **Fair Price Shops** on factory premises in partnership with our suppliers.

We're all affected by the current inflationary pressures, with prices from energy to daily necessities increasing more than we've known for many years in most European countries. But we're not alone, the cost of living has also increased in Asia, and notably in Bangladesh where daily necessities have seen increasing prices over recent months.

### WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE SHOP?

A shop distributing **essential commodities, accessible to workers** within the factory and located on factory premises. It increases the purchasing power of workers by offering discounts of 5%-20% on commodities such as rice, lentils, oil, soap, toothpaste etc. Operated by specialist organisations, **these shops also offer workers additional advantages such as medical insurance.**

We're very pleased that one of our factory partners has given us the opportunity to contribute to the establishment of a FAIR PRICE SHOP in their factories.

The shop was officially opened by our Managing Director Murielle Degeest and our partner's senior management in late December 2022. We're convinced this will allow workers involved in the production of our garments to access products that will help them and their families live better every day.

In addition to offering basic commodities at discounted prices, B&C's support can in future allow for extra promotions with special discounts on selected products. The licensed operator who will run the shop has also committed to providing free medical insurance to workers who are loyal shoppers. That's a great advantage for workers, their families and the community as a whole !







## WE ACT FOR PEOPLE: B&C corporate partner of Médecins Sans Frontières

The last couple of years have shown us how fragile health can be, even here in the developed world where we have accessible and high-quality healthcare. It has only served to reinforce how big the need is elsewhere in the world, where even the most basic health services are often out of reach of much of the population.

**Thanks to our official partnership with MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), we now help support medical and humanitarian aid around the world.**

At B&C we are constantly looking for ways in which we can actively bring to life our commitment to people. Better provision of healthcare, primarily of course in Bangladesh where we are closely bound to the local population, is now possible thanks to our corporate partnership with MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières).

MSF provides medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from healthcare. In Bangladesh for example, MSF runs an occupational health programme for people living in the Kamrangirchar slum area of Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. Activities include curative care for people diagnosed with illnesses/morbidities, preventive services (e.g tetanus vaccination) and more.

**In just one year, MSF teams conducted almost 5,000 occupational health consultations in Kamrangirchar.** We're proud to be able to contribute to their efforts.



**CORPORATE PARTNER**

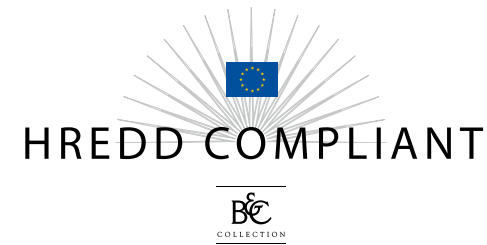
There is also a real crisis in Pakistan, where catastrophic flooding in Autumn 2022 has devastated homes and livelihoods, cutting off whole communities from food and water supplies and creating breeding grounds for diseases. These communities are ones we know and care about, as some are involved in the production of our garments. MSF are on the ground there, providing much needed humanitarian aid, which we also support through our partnership and contribution to their emergency fund.





In preparation in 2022, expected in early 2023:

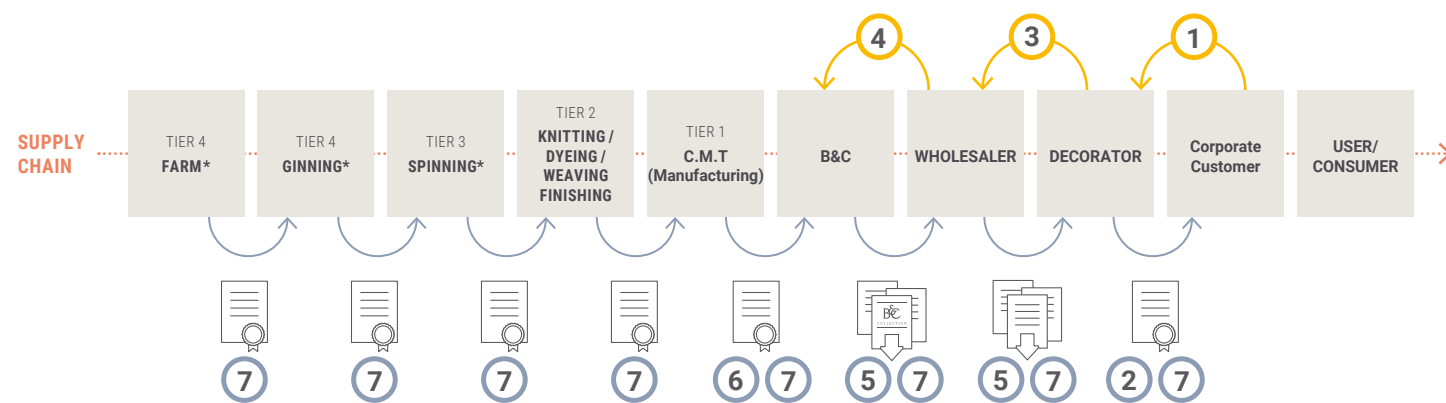
# B&C TO BE HREDD COMPLIANT!



## What is Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD)?

Nowadays, companies cannot afford to turn a blind eye to their supply chains anymore because their business practices can have far-reaching impacts on people and the environment. By taking a proactive approach to managing their supply chains through processes such as Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), companies can identify and prevent potential risks and impacts, as well as improve their performance on social and environmental issues.

Existing legislation in certain countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, UK) and an upcoming EU Directive mean that companies of a certain size (different from country to country) are or will be required to identify and, where necessary, prevent, end or mitigate the adverse impacts of their activities on human rights (i.e. child labour, exploitation of workers,...) and on the environment (i.e. pollution, biodiversity loss,...)



- 1 **Car manufacturer with more than 3000 employees** places order with a garment decorator in **Germany**. They must adapt their purchasing policies and check whether their decorator can offer HREDD compliant products/ services.
- 2 **The Decorator** must demonstrate to the **car manufacturer** that **the Due Diligence process** has been followed throughout the supply chain.
- 3 **The Decorator** will turn to the **wholesaler** to request **Due Diligence documentation** from the brand he is proposing.
- 4 **Wholesaler** will have to compile **Due Diligence documentation** from each of the brands he sells.
- 5 **The Brand** will provide the **wholesaler** with a **Toolkit** containing all pertinent documentation (policies, certifications, risk analysis etc).
- 6 **Factories** will share their **documentation** (certifications, audit results, self-assessment tools etc) with **brands** to demonstrate risk prevention, mitigation and remediation.
- 7 HREDD compliance starts at **the farm** and is applied at **every stage** of the supply chain.



Wet zorgplicht  
kinderarbeid



The Modern  
Slavery Act 2015



Loi n° 2017-399 relative  
au **Devoir de Vigilance**



Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz  
(LkSG)

## Who should be compliant?

The scope of the different local laws may differ slightly, but in general they concern (in the first instance) large EU companies or non-EU companies selling in Europe.

For example, a large European based company wanting to purchase decorated t-shirts for their teams must be able to prove HREDD compliance throughout the supply chain. They will need to show that the appropriate processes have been followed at every stage.

## B&C is HREDD compliant

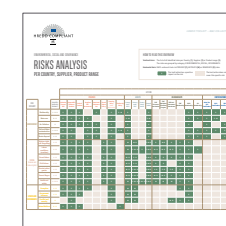
We have implemented the necessary processes in our own supply chain in order to be ready for local and/or European legislation which will require companies to demonstrate Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence across their supply chains.

### AN HREDD PROCESS INCLUDE 5 STEPS:

#### Policies



#### Risk analysis, prevention & mitigation tools



#### Remediation & complaints handling

## The B&C HREDD Toolkit

B&C has prepared a toolkit including its policies, processes, certifications, audits and memberships.

The contents of this toolkit will demonstrate that the necessary actions have been undertaken to prevent, mitigate and remediate any identified potential risks and harmful impacts in its supply-chain.



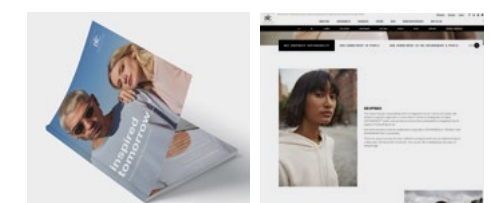
#### Partnerships



Member of amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade. For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)



#### Communication



\* The HREDD goes back to the raw materials, cotton, oil, ... however the textile sector is characterised by a very long and fragmented value chain and to standardise the quality of the yarns, the good spinning mills for instance mix cotton from different origins and periods. Total traceability and transparency in the textile sector is therefore very difficult and rare, but the whole industry is working on these issues to find global solutions. In the meantime, we must remain indulgent about what is feasible.



# CERTIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS







# Fair Wear Foundation

The Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organisation that aims to improve labour conditions in garment factories and is made up of more than 149 members.

Internationally and at regional level across garment production countries, the FWF advocates for the rights of garment workers while engaging with factories, trade unions, NGOs and governments.

They develop a fair fashion norm by running brand performance checks, factory audits and trainings as well as managing a complaint helpline. In addition, they provide their members with baseline resources (e.g., Code of Labour Practices, training) and in-person follow-up with brand liaison in the field.

**FWF 8 KEY POINTS CODE OF LABOUR PRACTICE**

- 1 > Employment is freely chosen
- 2 > Freedom of association and the right to collective negotiation
- 3 > There is no discrimination in employment
- 4 > No exploitation of child labour
- 5 > Payment of living wage
- 6 > Reasonable work hours
- 7 > Safe and healthy working conditions
- 8 > Legally binding employment relationship

**WHY ARE WE A MEMBER?**

While receiving the FWF stamp of approval does not guarantee any existing quality of labour standards, it demonstrates B&C’s commitment to working toward improved working conditions at its suppliers’ factories.

The FWF acts at various stages of our journey: it challenges and improves our purchasing practices, it monitors our production facilities and it pushes our compliance guidelines further.

In addition, the FWF defines Corrective Action Plans per factory, that are reviewed and followed-up on a regular basis with the FWF liaison team. The FWF is the challenging guide to our long-standing commitment to sustainability.



Member of amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade. For more information visit [www.amfori.org](http://www.amfori.org)

# amfori BSCI



In a context of complex supply chains, companies are expected to improve visibility over their production and to drive improvements across their supply chains wherever applicable.

The amfori Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) is an industry-driven movement enabling companies to improve social performance in their supply chains.

For this, amfori BSCI conducts audits to assess workplace standards across the global supply chain and ensure that all suppliers are treating workers ethically and legally.

**WHY ARE WE A MEMBER?**

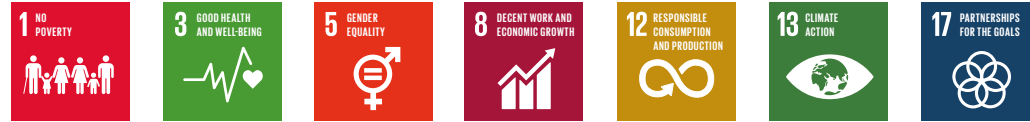
The amfori BSCI’s Code of Conduct, which B&C endorses by being a member, is based on 11 principles that add environmental and ethic criteria to the ones promoted by the FWF.

This code, in addition to the FWF Code of Labour Practices, raises the standard of minimum expectations we undertake to implement at our suppliers’.

Amfori BSCI also proposes auditing services that are continuously updated, quality checked and widely recognised. Amfori BSCI’s audit ranks audited factories from A (excellent) to E (poor). Alongside the audit, a corrective action plan is delivered and detailed to implement ad hoc remediation processes. This auditing service allows us to assess and monitor our suppliers, and ensure we are on the right path for improvement.

Being a member of amfori BSCI helps us partner with responsible suppliers and improve the sustainability of our supply chain.





# Better Cotton

Better Cotton aims to help cotton growers convert to more environmentally friendly, and socially and economically sustainable farming methods, but also to meet growing consumer demand for more sustainable cotton.

Fees paid by members also support the implementation of Better Cotton programs, offering field-level advice and training for farmers.

## WHY ARE WE A MEMBER?

As key players in apparel, we have a role to play in raising awareness and creating demand for more sustainable cotton.

By being members, we make progress on our sustainable materials journey and move towards sourcing more sustainable cotton. It also means investing in supporting farmers' building capacity and improving the livelihood of the farming community.



# Organic In Conversion Cotton

"Organic In Conversion Cotton" is grown on land which has started the conversion to organic methods. Although farmers follow organic farming guidelines, their soil can not yet be considered organic. This conversion period is very difficult for farmers, who experience economic and harvest consequences. Buying "Organic In Conversion Cotton" helps support farmers in transition.

## WHY DO WE SUPPORT IN CONVERSION "COTTON"?

We believe it is part of our duty to encourage farmers to transition to Organic Cotton, but also to support them during the process.



©bettercotton.org







# OCS Organic Cotton

The Organic Content Standard (OCS) is an international, voluntary standard from Textile Exchange that sets requirements for third-party certification of certified organic input and chain of custody. It applies to any non-food product containing 5-100 percent organic material. Further OCS tracks the flow of a raw material from its source to the final product.

## WHY ARE WE CERTIFIED?

The textile supply chain is long and complex, and the risk of blending various cotton qualities is high. Being OCS-certified verifies the organically grown content of our products and ensures the integrity and traceability of our Organic Cotton.

# RCS Recycled

The Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) is used as a chain of custody standard to track recycled raw materials through the supply chain. The goal of this standard is to increase the use of recycled materials in the textile industry.

## WHY ARE WE CERTIFIED?

We believe in recycling as natural resources on earth are limited. Now that textile waste recycling has been improved and recycled yarn developed, we have launched ranges that are partially made from recycled polyester. Being RCS certified ensures tracking and tracing of the recycled input materials. It also helps customers to make informed purchases by providing assurance that materials in the final product are processed more sustainably. Textile exchange has developed the RCS standard and chain of custody. Year-on-year, B&C is increasing its share of recycled materials.







OEKO-TEX

OEKO-TEX® certifies that raw materials, intermediate and end products at all stages of production contain no substance harmful to people or to the environment. The B&C Collection (blank products only) range of T-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts and shirts are certified STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®, etc.

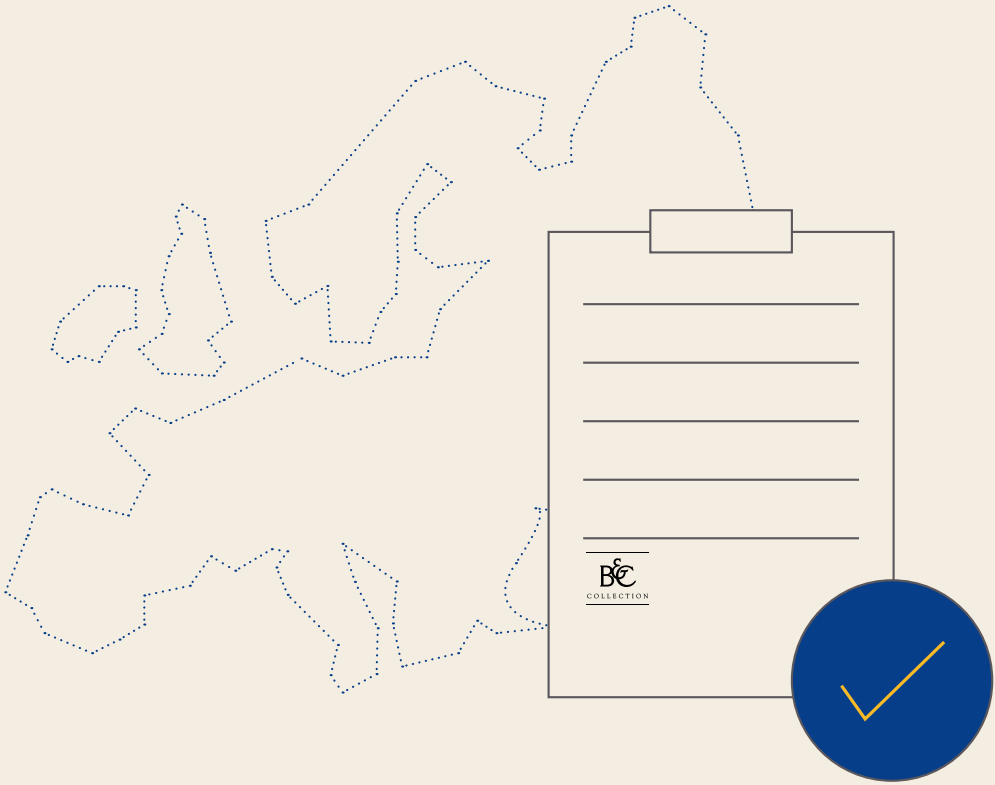
WHY ARE WE CERTIFIED?

In many operations, chemicals are used during the textile production process. Our industry is known for having used high quantities of toxic chemicals. OEKO-TEX® certifies that none of these toxic substances are used (or are present with a higher concentration than permitted) in our final products. This preserves the health of workers, reduces chemicals in the water waste, and prevents potential skin problems for end consumers.



REACH

REACH is a European legislation aimed at improving the protection of human health and the environment through the better and earlier identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances, through the four processes of REACH (registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals).







# The Shift

# SDGs Charter signatory via The Shift

The Shift is the Belgian sustainability community that brings together diverse members and partners in actively moving towards a more sustainable economy and society.

#### The Shift method:

**Connect.**  
**Commit.**  
**Change.**

We are member of The Shift, to support us in our commitments to the SDGs.

#### OTHER COMMITMENTS

- > B&C is one of the 60 brands to have signed the letter requesting that the Belgian government implements mandatory Due Diligence Legislation.
- > B&C is one of the 100 brands to have signed the letter sent by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre to the EU Parliament requesting the effective implementation of mandatory EU HREDD legislation.

Through its membership of The Shift, B&C is a signatory of the **UN SDGs Charter**.

The SDGs are a call to action to various bodies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take action that advances societal goals.

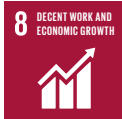
#### WHY ARE WE A SIGNATORY?

By being a signatory of the UN SDGs Charter, B&C Collection shows its strong commitment to supporting this Worldwide UN Initiative. As a company we work at our level to back this global commitment.



“The UN Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.”





# Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit organisation that works closely with their members to drive industry transformation in preferred fibres, integrity and standards, and responsible supply networks.

Textile Exchange identifies and shares best practices regarding farming, materials, processing, traceability and product end-of-life in order to reduce the textile industry's impact on the world's water, soil and air, and the human population.

## WHY ARE WE A MEMBER?

Textile Exchange's mission is to inspire and equip people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain. Textile Exchange focuses on minimising the harmful impacts of the global textile industry and maximising its positive effects.

B&C - The Cotton Group is an active member of Textile Exchange.



# People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Foundation is a UK-based charity dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals.

Being **vegan approved** means there are no animal products involved in any part of the creation of our products.

## WHY ARE WE CERTIFIED?

Some textile products can be harmful for animals. Although B&C does not use any of these materials, the PETA certificate reassures our customer base that there is no harmful treatment to animals across our supply chain.







## B&C - THE COTTON GROUP

drève Richelle 161 0, Box 5  
1410 Waterloo | Belgium

[CSR@bc-collection.eu](mailto:CSR@bc-collection.eu)  
[www.bc-collection.eu](http://www.bc-collection.eu)