



Annual Report

2023/2024



Dear readers,

In the past business year, the challenges faced by the textile and leather industries have intensified at an unprecedented pace. Legislative requirements, such as the US CERCLA ban on PFAS and the European Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, have compounded organisational demands and investment decisions. Concurrently, consumer uncertainty regarding greenwashing has grown, a concern addressed by the European Commission's proposed Directive on Green Claims and the Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive.

At OEKO-TEX®, we are convinced that the only way to quickly adapt to these changes is through collaboration and collective action. Therefore, in 2023/2024, we remained committed to our role as a partner to the industry and all our stakeholders. Through the continual development of our modular system, we have supported our existing and new partners.

Whether they relied on our annual updates to align their processes and products with the latest legal requirements and scientific findings, utilised our product labels for consumer information and education or embarked on their due diligence journey with OEKO-TEX® RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS, we provided steadfast support.

We have also greatly benefited from the unwavering effort and feedback of our partners, which enabled us to reach new heights in the number of certifications and product labels issued. We look forward to continuing our collaboration, realising our vision of a more sustainable industry together.



Our mission, vision and core values

Our mission remains clear: to empower consumers and the industry with reliable certifications that prioritize health and environmental stewardship.

In a world increasingly aware of the environmental and health impacts of the textile and leather industries, OEKO-TEX® stands for trust and innovation. Since our founding in 1992, the OEKO-TEX® Association, comprising 17 international testing institutes, has been dedicated to safeguarding consumers by rigorously testing and certifying textiles and leather for harmful substances. This commitment not only protects consumer health but also fosters greater transparency and accountability within the industry.

The journey of OEKO-TEX® has always been marked by collaboration and continuous improvement. Our association thrives on the synergy between industry stakeholders, ensuring that our standards evolve to meet the highest safety and sustainability benchmarks. By working together, we aim to transform the textile and leather sectors, driving them towards a more sustainable future.

Vision

Our vision

We are leading the way in traceability and transparency for maximising sustainable impact and promoting sustainable choices across the entire textile and leather value chain.

Mission

Our mission

OEKO-TEX® inspires trust in the textile and leather industry. Driven by sustainability, our work is grounded in proven science. Our expertise allows people to make responsible decisions and protect natural resources.



Sustainability

With our independent scientific methods, we inspire and shape a sustainable future. We are an active, solution-driven partner in innovative projects, with a positive mindset and progressive approach.



Safety

For 30 years, we have enabled companies and consumers to make confident decisions. We drive product and human safety through reliable solutions. From companies and their employees to consumers and their families, everyone can rely on our certified products and processes.

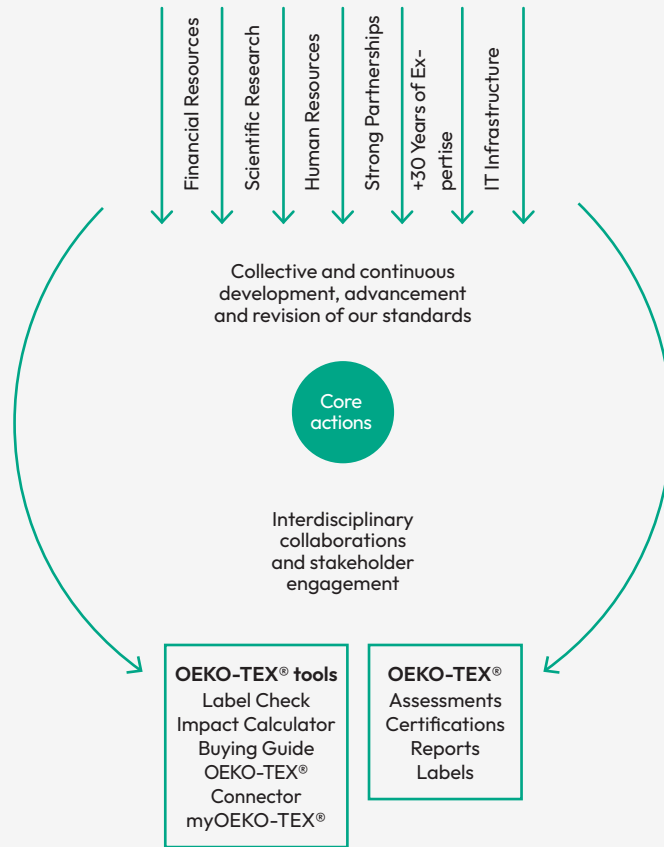


Trust

Trust is the foundation of our action. We trust in science. OEKO-TEX® is an international network of independent scientific experts. We test and certify by using clear, consistent criteria, which we communicate openly.

Theory of change

Input



Output



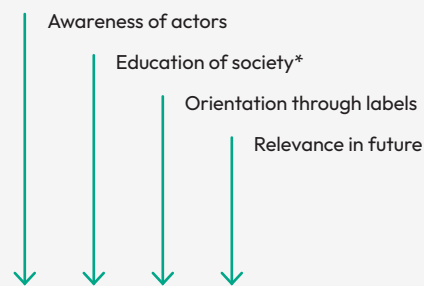
Theory of change

Outcome

Increased...



Leads to...



Impact

Resulting in...



Facts & numbers at a glance



STeP



BHive®

Starting in 2023, OEKO-TEX® STeP customers can utilize BHive® App, developed by GoBlu. Already more than

250

STeP certified facilities use the app for their digital chemical management.

+1,1 Million workers

benefit from working in STeP certified facilities



ECO PASSPORT



MADE IN GREEN



More to come:

PFAS:

In our commitment to sustainable practices and compliance, we have implemented a ban on intentional use of PFAS on all OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100, ORGANIC COTTON and LEATHER STANDARD certified articles, as well as ECO PASSPORT certified chemicals.

We are now utilizing a total fluorine limit value as our testing criteria. This approach aligns with current regulations in the USA and anticipated regulations in the EU. Furthermore, starting October 2024, we will enhance our PFAS testing methods to increase accuracy. The new method will enable to test for PFAS that are easily released but also for those that are bound to the matrix they have been applied to.



OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON:

- **First ready-made products :**
In January 2024, the first ready-made products certified as OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON have been launched in the market.
- **Sampling by auditors at ginning and spinning stages:**
Starting in April 2024, our auditors have been taking sample during the ginning and spinning stages. This initiative aims to prevent the receipt of exemplary „golden samples“, thereby securing the quality and reliability of our ORGANIC COTTON certification.
- **Reduction of the quantitative GMO limit value to 5%**
After a year of accumulating experience, we are confident that a 5% threshold is a more accurate limit for potential contamination of organic cotton (free from GMOs) by conventional cotton (containing GMOs) through fibre flight. Consequently, we have revised our limit to 5% GMO content.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Good health and well-being

Safety at workplace, good hygiene, medical requirements and social insurance are obligatory for the OEKO-TEX® STeP certification.

Extensive product tests for harmful substances such as pesticides, PFASs or azo colorants to ensure consumer safety for OEKO-TEX® labelled products.



Quality education

We inform and update our customers, end consumers and other stakeholders about relevant sustainability topics to enhance awareness and support informed decision making. Important element of our quality assurance system is the training of auditors. OEKO-TEX® STeP obliges facility in conducting trainings and education of management and employees on social and environmental topics.



Gender equality

Gender equality is an important part of our OEKO-TEX® values: Our Code of Conduct is related to the International Bill of Human Rights and the ILO labour standards to ensure an active engagement of all employees.



Clean water and sanitation

OEKO-TEX® STeP and OEKO-TEX® ECO PASSPORT support facilities to monitor and optimize their chemical management and their wastewater quality – for more agile responses to new demands and the prevention of hazardous chemicals and disposal of untreated wastewater.





Reduced inequalities

Fair wages, working hours and equal treatment of workers without any discrimination regarding race, origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity that's what we stand for.

Responsible consumption and production

OEKO-TEX® MADE IN GREEN guides consumers to responsible consumption by making supply chains transparent and traceable. The OEKO-TEX® STeP certification ensures the long term implementation of environmentally friendly production processes. OEKO-TEX® RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS supports companies to integrate and practice environmental and human rights due diligence in their management systems.



Climate action

OEKO-TEX® STeP provides a comprehensive analysis and assessment of all production processes with the aim to implement best practices, efficient processes and reduce the carbon footprint across the whole supply chain. OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON supports sustainability, soil health and regenerative farming as well as biodiversity.



Partnerships for the goals

Strong partnerships and trustworthy collaborations are key element of our business for achieving positive impact on responsible consumption and production. Therefore, we exchange with various international, multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the UN, OECD, ISEAL, ZDHC and the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles.





We are there for you worldwide

Our association consists of independent research and test institutes in Europe and Japan. Together we work to continuously develop test methods, define limit values and setting the highest standards for the textile and leather industry.

Our OEKO-TEX® testing institutes and their contact offices are present in over 70 countries.



Our Standard Setting Process

Our core ambition is to keep the high quality of our certification standards. To ensure that the standards remain at the highest technical level, they are revised every year. Various OEKO-TEX® committees track global regulations, scientific data and industry technologies and discuss about future updates of the OEKO-TEX® standards.

The committees are made up of internal and external experts from various disciplines and countries. Textile engineers, technicians, chemists, toxicologists, lawyers, social scientists, marketeers, etc. are represented so that as many perspectives as possible can be considered.

Through this broad expertise and the collaborative negotiation process, we create industry-leading standards that meet the high demands for transparency and credibility. The participation of stakeholders in the OEKO-TEX® standard-setting process is highly important.

The Public Stakeholder Consultation provides input on a regular base. The International Advisory Board gives recommendations based on the proposals to the Steering Committee.

Working Groups

Working Groups meet regularly for compilation and deepening of the proposals made in the Technical Committee meetings. Elaborations and discussions are presented in the Technical Committee meetings. Additionally, feedback from external stakeholders of the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation are discussed and considered for implementation. They work on document optimisation, product developments and implementation.

- 12 working groups
- 68 persons participating in our Working Groups
- 37 woman
- 31 men
- Based in 11 countries

International Advisory Board

The Independent Advisory Board (IAB) was established to provide a diverse range of stakeholder expertise and perspectives to the OEKO-TEX® Association. Its role is to advise the Steering Committee on priorities and strategies aligned with OEKO-TEX®'s goals: producing safer products and fostering more sustainable and socially responsible companies.

The IAB reviews and advises on proposals developed by OEKO-TEX® Working Groups and submitted by the Steering Committee. Through this process, it plays a crucial role in shaping the development of OEKO-TEX® standards and influencing the organisation's strategic and operational direction.

- 7 persons in total
- 1 woman
- 6 men

More information about our Standard-Setting Process can be found here: www.oeko-tex.com



Partnerships & Initiatives

International Trade Center (ITC)

OEKO-TEX® provides information to ITC's Standards Map, which is a market analysis tool available on their website. It presents comprehensive and comparable information on voluntary sustainability standards to strengthen the capacity of producers, exporters and buyers with more sustainable production and trade. We support ITC in giving users the opportunity to review and compare our standards across common themes and criteria.

ZERO DISCHARGE OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS (ZDHC)

ZDHC and OEKO-TEX® deepen their collaboration with the goal to enhance sustainable chemical management and cleaner chemistry principles. The partnership seeks to drive sustainability while meeting the needs of chemical formulators/manufacturers, suppliers, brands and retailers.

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles

OEKO-TEX® is engaged in various initiatives and strategy groups of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles to collectively improve social, ecological and economic conditions in global textile production. Members of the Partnership exchange experiences and jointly develop solutions, which in turn are adopted by the members.

Leather Traceability Cluster

OEKO-TEX® is part of the Leather Traceability Cluster together with COTANCE, Leather Working Group, Sustainable Leather Foundation, ICEC and other relevant actors. The initiative aims for the alignment on traceability schemes within the leather sector.

ISEAL

With our ISEAL Community Member OEKO-TEX® underlines its commitment to generate trust and transparency. By taking part in ISEAL's learning, collaboration and innovation activities, we are working to improve our standards and management system as well as creating greater impact. Technology solution providers

OEKO-TEX® collaborates with technology solution providers to enhance traceability and transparency by verifying certificate information and jointly preparing for current and future legislation.

Sustainable Leather Foundation

OEKO-TEX® cooperates with the Sustainable Leather Foundation to support improvement in standards and promotes ethical, fair, and open dialogue for the common good of the leather industry. The parties agreed to pursue a path of cooperation and program recognition to enhance the value of product safety, environmental, social and governance compliance certifications in the leather sectors.

Confidence & trust through audits.

The OEKO-TEX® testing institutes link our standards and customers. They significantly contribute by implementing and enforcing these standards. In over 70 countries, they showcase our global presence. This expansive reach, however, presents a unique challenge in maintaining consistent quality standards due to diverse cultural perspectives and ongoing expansion.

Some of the measures we take to ensure consistent quality are:

- ✓ **Laboratory testing** exclusively takes place at the institutes' headquarters.
- ✓ **Our OEKO-TEX® STeP auditors** receive comprehensive training from the OEKO-TEX® Association.
- ✓ **Through control testing**, we ensure the conformity of products in the market, while round robin tests ensure harmonized methodologies and synchronized laboratory operations.
- ✓ **Institute audits** play a pivotal role in aligning people and processes with our standards and principles. Thus, on a triennial basis, each testing institute of the OEKO-TEX® Association undergoes an audit conducted by OEKO-TEX®. This institute audit serves as a formal checkpoint, facilitating a third-party evaluation of their procedures and pinpointing areas where the support of the OEKO-TEX® Association can be extended.

All about audits:

28

new STeP auditors successfully completed the in-person STeP Auditor Training.

48

experienced STeP auditors were re-trained, using the training to share their experiences and deepen their knowledge.

157

professional STeP auditors working within the OEKO-TEX® Association.

9,437

On-Site Visits for STANDARD 100, LEATHER STANDARD and ORGANIC COTTON were carried out.

Round robin tests

Round robin testing provides an interlaboratory comparison between our testing institutes. They are an important part of our strategy to ensure the high quality of our measuring procedures and laboratories. Identical samples are tested with identical test methods at each institute. The results are compared for accuracy and consistency. These important quality measures allow us to make confident statements about the integrity of our certificates and our trusted member institutes. Participation in the annual round robin tests is mandatory for institutes that test for OEKO-TEX® and vital to guaranteeing the quality of our certifications.

20

Participating testing laboratories

31

Test parameters were checked

Product controls



The OEKO-TEX® quality assurance strategy includes control testing of STANDARD 100, LEATHER STANDARD and ECO PASSPORT certified and MADE IN GREEN labelled products.

2023/2024 product control testing in numbers:

+7,000
certificates and labels from more than 70 countries

+9,000
samples taken from retail stores, during on-site visits or certificate renewal

+48,000
tests and checks were performed on the samples

93%
of the random samples confirmed certification results

The certificate holders of failed control tests were informed. They are required to prove compliance with the standard and submit new samples to verify the successful implementation of the requirements. In rare cases of continued failures or refusal to cooperate, the certificate is revoked.

Trademark Protection

Considering the rebranding of OEKO-TEX®, we have registered our new trademarks in most of the jurisdictions around the world. All our trademark applications have been published and most new OEKO-TEX® trademarks have already been successfully registered. Our new trademarks are registered as certification marks instead of individual marks.

In our ongoing efforts to uphold and promote quality standards, we have applied for a certification mark. This mark serves to distinguish goods and services certified by us, the proprietor, based on various criteria such as material quality, manufacturing methods, service performance, and other key characteristics. By defining the persons authorized to use the mark and specifying the certified characteristics, we ensure rigorous testing and oversight by our certifying body. This system provides us with greater control over how our trademarks are utilized by third parties, ensuring they adhere to our standards.

This initiative is particularly relevant in light of the new EU legislations stemming from the Green New Deal. Our certification mark will help ensure that all claims made towards consumers are compliant with the legislative requirements, including the Green Claims Directive. To enforce these standards, we are not only engaging in civil litigation but also pursuing criminal proceedings in cases where parties fail to adhere to our guidelines after unsuccessful bilateral negotiations.



MADE IN GREEN



STANDARD 100



ORGANIC COTTON



LEATHER STANDARD



STeP



ECO PASSPORT



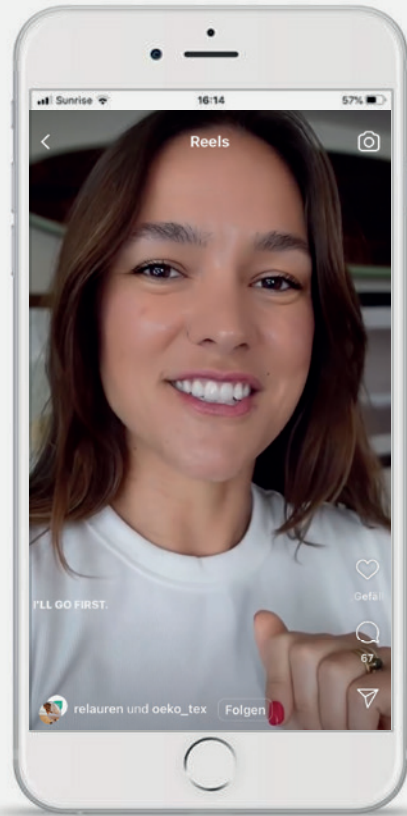
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Marketing Collaboration & Social Media

Ambassador Program Overview

Starting in January, our Ambassador Program in the United States has been a cornerstone of our efforts to enhance brand awareness, foster trust and cultivate enduring, organic relationships with our brand ambassadors. This initiative strategically engaged key influencers who align with our values, ensuring authentic and impactful communication with our target audience.

Through personalized partnerships and consistent collaboration, we successfully established a network of brand advocates who not only promote our products but also embody the essence of our brand, driving sustained loyalty and meaningful connections with consumers.



Key facts
 Ambassador Posts **12**
 Reach **+170k**
 Engagement **+10K**

Social Media Traffic

OEKO-TEX® has increased efforts to engage target audiences using a focused social media strategy and achieved healthy KPI growth.

To further increase our social media presence in focus markets it is important to create engaging, educational and emotional content.

 **Instagram +35%**
7,514 → 10,114 Follower

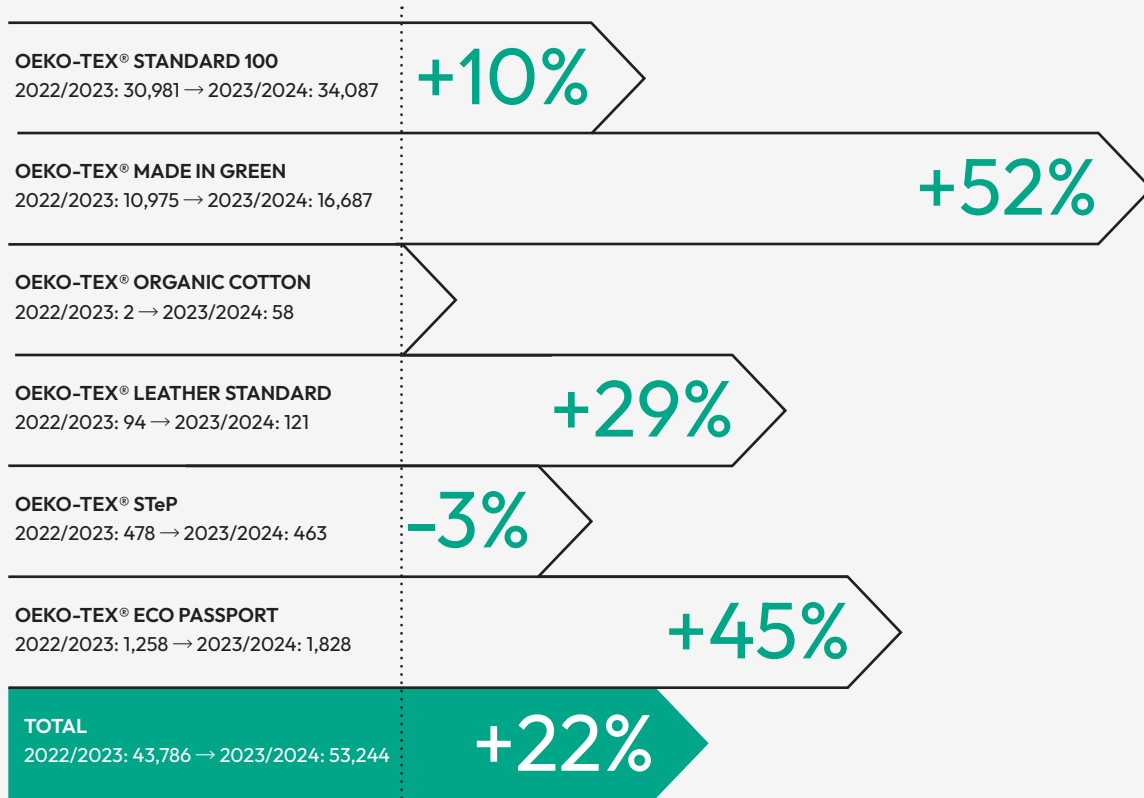
 **Facebook +8%**
7,452 → 8,076 Follower

 **Wechat +32%**
25,312 → 33,293 Follower

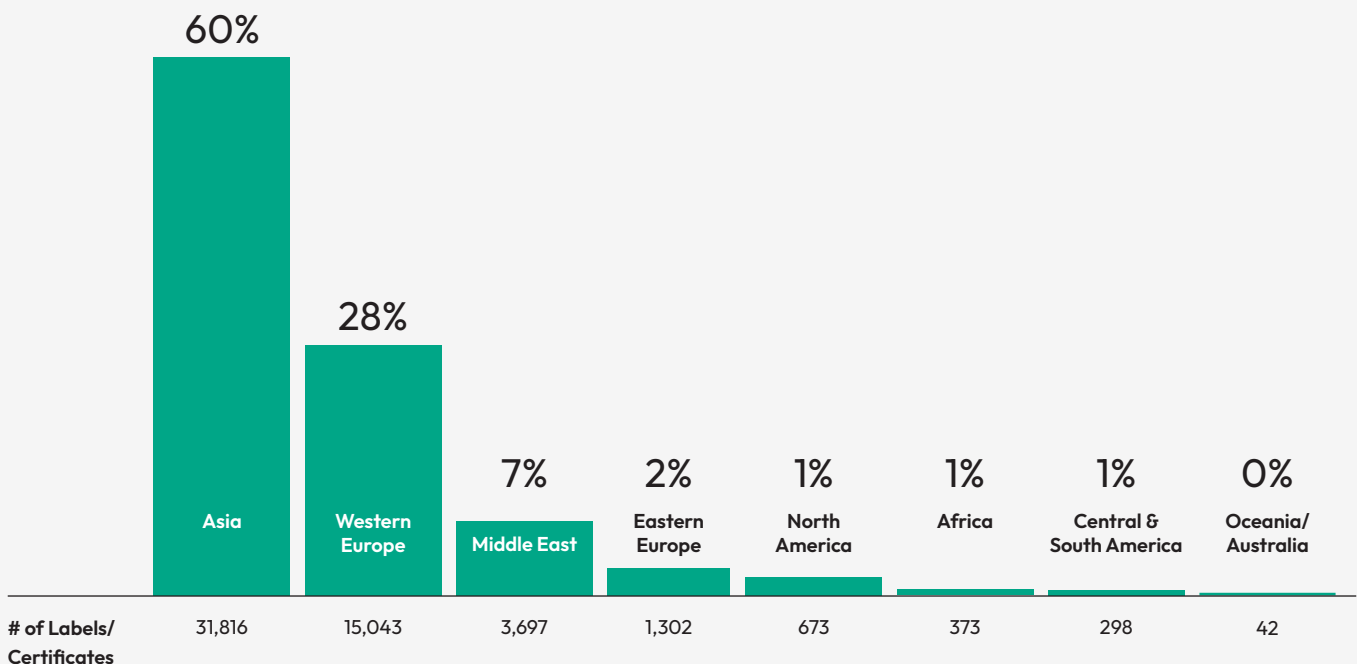
 **LinkedIn +23%**
35,328 → 43,303 Follower



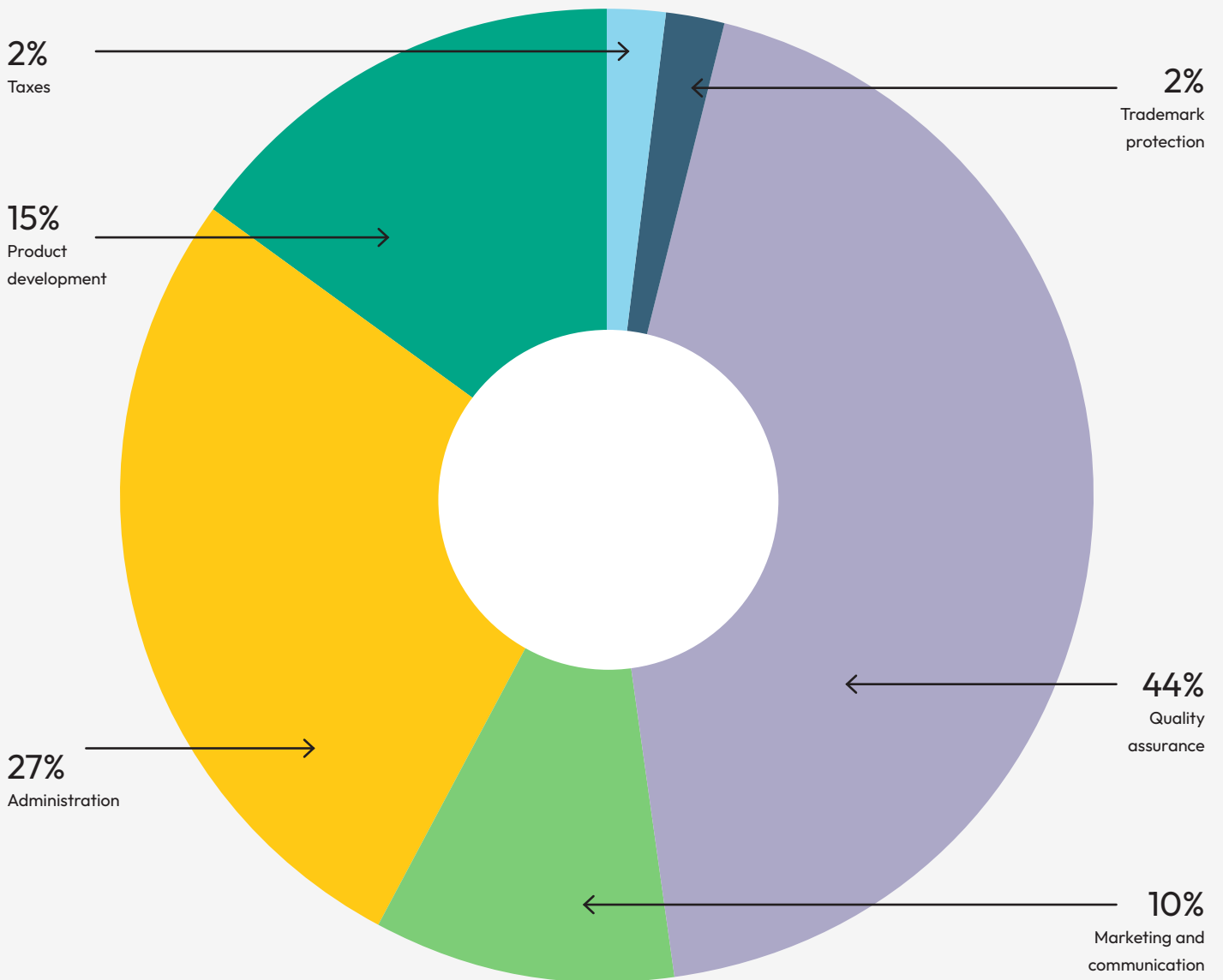
Number of certificates and labels



Worldwide distribution of certificates and labels



Overview of expenses with clear focus on quality.





OEKO
TEX®



Ensuring sustainability and trust in textiles and leather.

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Commercial Register Office of the Canton of Zurich