

Press Release

ZDHC Foundation Welcomes Broad Chemical Industry Engagement

Amsterdam, June 18, 2019 - **The ZDHC Foundation** manages the Roadmap to Zero Programme with the aim of phasing out hazardous chemicals in the textile, apparel, footwear and leather value chain by promoting safer chemistry and driving innovation.

With more than 130 active Contributors, the multi-stakeholder ZDHC Programme headquartered in Amsterdam and with offices in Milan, Mumbai, Shanghai and Portland/US, ZDHC co-ordinates the collaborative implementation of a holistic toolset on a global level.

The **Global Chemical Industry Round Table (GCIRT)***, sent an open letter to ZDHC in May 2018 and is a group of the leading chemical solution providers in the textile and leather industry with the collective aim of driving the industry further to become more sustainable. GCIRT's signatory's engagement into the ZDHC Programme will support a faster transformation of the industry by taking complexity out of the supply chain and to find appropriate solutions for the industries' requirements.

In an intense dialogue and a series of meetings during the past year between the ZDHC Board of Directors and the GCIRT, an alignment was gained on ZDHC organisational commitments and a mutual understanding of the role of chemical suppliers within the ZDHC Programme. This opens the doors for broader, more active distribution of chemistry expertise and implementation support of textile dye and leather chemical manufacturing industry in the ZDHC Programme. As a consequence of the alignment the GCIRT signatory companies will each be joining the ZDHC Foundation as Contributors and uploading their products in the Chemical Module of the ZDHC Gateway via bluesign's bluefinder tool.

In this, the fourth year of implementing the ZDHC Programme, the ZDHC Foundation exclusive focus is to accelerate the phase out of hazardous chemistry in the textile and leather value chains based on the use of ZDHC tools and standards. Furthermore, over time ZDHC will evolve the ZDHC Programme from a brand driven to a multi-stakeholder initiative with balanced roles and responsibilities within the ZDHC Programme.

GCIRT Speaker: "This is a critical milestone towards addressing the demand for a cleaner and transparent supply chain. The engagement of leading chemical suppliers *makes the ZDHC Programme implementation efforts more robust* to mitigate societal and environmental risk for all textile and leather value chain

stakeholders. It is only by working together that we will be able to shift the needle in the way we tackle urgent sustainability challenges in the textile and leather industry.”

Frank Michel, Executive Director, ZDHC Foundation: “To further accelerate the transformation of our industry we need to engage with all relevant participants of the value chain to shape the ZDHC Programme from a finite ‘roadmap to 2020’ mission to an infinite ZDHC Programme with broad multi-stakeholder support.”

Charles Dickinson, Chair of the ZDHC Board of Directors: “We are all in agreement, that the current situation of proliferation of detox approaches and their supporting testing schemes is ineffective and costly. Therefore, we acknowledge that we share a common objective in the alignment of resources that drive better chemistry and innovations that reduce the chemical and environmental footprint of the textile and leather industries”

The alignment with the chemical suppliers focuses on a harmonised industry approach to implementation that reduces duplicative efforts and complexity in the value chain whilst clarifying and strengthening the role of the chemical industry as a whole in the ZDHC Programme:

The ZDHC MRSL & MRSL update

Further development of this standard will ensure adequate participation of the engaged textile and leather chemical manufacturers within the ZDHC MRSL Focus Areas, Advisory Groups and Councils to ensure that future updates represent current best chemical manufacturing techniques and can be reliably met by the industry.

ZDHC MRSL Level 0 Conformity

The ZDHC MRSL Level 0 conformance (self-declaration) was initially necessary to gain broad engagement of the chemical suppliers in our value chain. To move to the next level of ZDHC MRSL conformance for sustainable chemistry, Level 0 will be phased out in 2020. This prevents a stagnation of low ZDHC MRSL conformance and gains higher confidence in chemical formulations and their suppliers that are listed in the Chemical Module of the ZDHC Gateway.

Chemical Supplier Leader Programme

The chemical suppliers will support the Foundation in establishing a Chemical Supplier Leader Programme that reflects and rewards the ambition for continuous improvement in textile and leather chemical manufacturing. The spirit of this new programme will be jointly developed in the coming months and implemented in 2020.

ZDHC Conformity Pyramid Approach

During the intense dialogue, all parties agreed that, the acceptance of the ZDHC MRSL and the related conformity system (Level 3 includes Level 2 and 1, Level 2 includes Level 1) by all stakeholders is fundamental to the success of the ZDHC Programme.

Commenting on the alignment Frank Michel, *Executive Director, ZDHC Foundation* says: *“The organisation and the ZDHC Programme is dedicated to continuous*

improvement. We hope the progress made in the past months and years has built a solid foundation for a clear path forward for the individual engagement of chemical suppliers in the ZDHC Programme.”

ZDHC Board and Management thanks all active Contributors in the ZDHC Programme and the signatories of the GCIRT for their openness and willingness to collaborate, moving the ZDHC Programme to the next level in terms of global outreach and active stakeholder engagement in the ZDHC Foundation activities.