



Friday, 28th April | İzmir, Turkey

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

WELCOME FROM TEXTILE EXCHANGE AND İZFAŞ



Liesl Truscott, European and Materials Strategy Director at Textile Exchange (left) and Mrs. Z Gül Şener, Executive Board Member of Fuarİzmir (below left) welcomed over 120 stakeholders from Turkey and the wider region to İzmir for the inaugural Regional Organic Cotton Round Table (R-OCRT).



Alongside producers, manufacturers and retailers from the region, representatives from international brands were also in attendance, interested in the region's strong potential for producing organic textiles.

Thanks to TE's close collaboration with İZFAŞ, and each of the event sponsors (see page 14 the overview of sponsor commitment), the first R-OCRT launched during the EKOLOJİ İZMİR Organic Products Fair in Izmir, Turkey, on 28th April 2017.



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 **CONTROL UNION**

AN INSPIRING START

Heinrich Schultz, Managing Director at OrganiMark, got the day started with an inspiring story of the tremendous achievements of the Sustainable Cotton Cluster in South Africa.



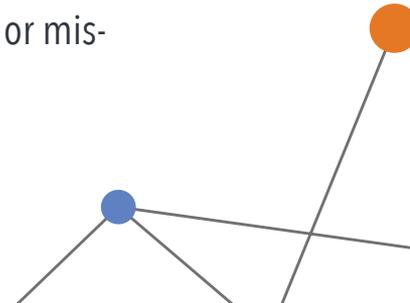
About the SA Cluster:

To fight the declining profitability of cotton production in the country, the Sustainable Cotton Cluster was established. By bringing together the industry, resources are pooled and, with joined efforts, the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the cotton industry in SA is improving.

Hear Heinrich's interview [here](#).

This was followed by the launch of the [Market Opportunity Scoping Project \(MOSP\)](#) that was carried out earlier this year for Textile Exchange by sustainability consultants at Change Agency.

The MOSP covered Turkey, Egypt, Central Asia and the wider European region. It involved 32 structured interviews with companies and organizations representing each section of the value chain in the region, with the aim of identifying market opportunities but also possible blockages or mis-perceptions.



MARKET OPPORTUNITY SCOPING PROJECT

The outcomes of the MOSP were presented by Simon Cooper and Donna Rispoli of Change Agency and formed the basis of the themed break-out discussions:

- Governments and NGOs
- Sustainable Ecological Cotton Regions
- Value Chain Opportunities
- The Role of The Market

[Download the MOSP Research & Discussion Report here.](#)



Four of the MOSP interviewees participated in a panel discussion to share their knowledge of the regional market and thoughts on the MOSP findings with attendees. The panel included Ülfet Erdal from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Husbandry; Dina Mehta, Global Apparel Materials Manager at Timberland; Tobias Meier, President of the Swiss Fair Trade; and Aydin Unsal, Chairman of the Board at Egedeniz.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY SCOPING PROJECT



Claire Bergkamp, Head of Sustainability and Ethical Trade at Stella McCartney, joined us from London via live video link to express her thoughts on the importance and potential of organic textile production in this region. The luxury brand is known for their commitment to sustainability and regional sourcing strategies.

With a number of influential figures talking very openly and honestly from their personal experiences in the morning, we witnessed lively and fruitful discussions and gained valuable insights into the regional situation. This provided the ideal foundation from which to break out into four discussion groups in the afternoon.



BREAK-OUT DISCUSSIONS

1. Building The Right Context: What Can Governments & NGOs Do?
- Hosted By Simon Cooper
2. Integrated Sustainable Non-GMO Organic Cotton Region: How Can It Be Developed?
- Hosted By Atila Ertem
3. Integrity, Geography & Transparency: What Can The Value Chain Do?
- Hosted By Donna Rispoli
4. Pricing For Success: What Can The Market Do?
- Hosted By Liesl Truscott



1. BUILDING THE RIGHT CONTEXT: WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS & NGOS DO?

Governments and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are vital partners in a strategic organic cotton strategy. This discussion group identified three areas of action where government representatives and NGOs can lead. Overall, “integration” was seen as key to any action. Other highlights of the discussion included:

An Integrated Policy For Food and Fiber

- Policy that supports an integrated approach to organic food and fiber and also captures the range of more sustainable cotton initiatives (Organic, Fair Trade, BCI).
- Protect the non-GMO status in Turkey and lobby for non-GMO status for the whole region or possibly in zones (in Central Asia, Egypt).
- Create a Policy Task Force.
- Support a database of suppliers including impact data – to be convened by Textile Exchange.

Incentivization Scheme

- The Policy Task Force remit should include a review of the subsidy system and explore innovative ways to reward sustainable practices (such as carbon sequestration).

Support for Training and Education

- Tailored training and education programs
- Integration into existing structures/services.
- Bottom-up, community driven approach.

2. ECOLOGICAL ZONES: HOW CAN THEY BE DEVELOPED?

In the MOSP study, it was found that a number of interviewees wanted to see the creation of organic – agro-ecological zones, building on the existing projects in the GAP Region of SE Anatolia, Turkey. The UNDP, Control Union, and GOTS led a lively discussion on how these regions could be developed. Key take-aways included:

Government as key-driver

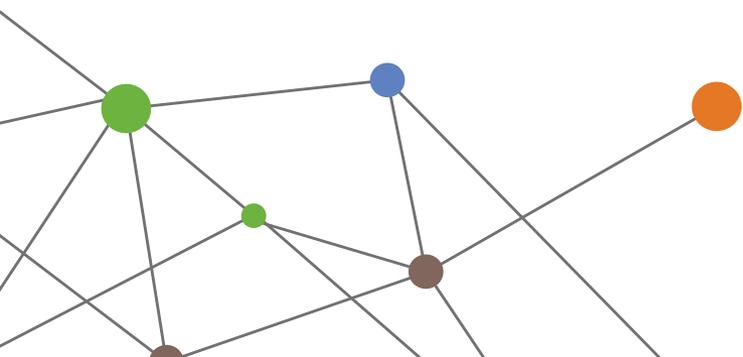
- Ambitious to take the industry forward
- High valued encouragement
- People trust in the recommendations of the government
- Providing incentives to go organic
- Creating subsidies

South-East Anatolia Regional Hub, Turkey

- Convenient location for a center.
- Ideal conditions for cotton farming (organic, BCI).
- Many textile mills in the region
- Alongside cotton, the region grows other organic products such as corn and soy beans

Establishing a Research Center

- Close collaboration between academics and farmers.
- Build on the progress made by the UNDP and the Regional Development Agency, continuing support and learning from achievements in the GAP Region.



3. INTEGRITY, GEOGRAPHY & TRANSPARENCY: WHAT CAN THE VALUE CHAIN DO?

We all know the huge benefits of this region's proximity to Europe, superior textile manufacturing abilities, high quality cotton and Turkey's NGO free status. Yet the question remains on how to best unlock these benefits for growth. This group identified three key actions for reputational building:

Replicating Innovative Models

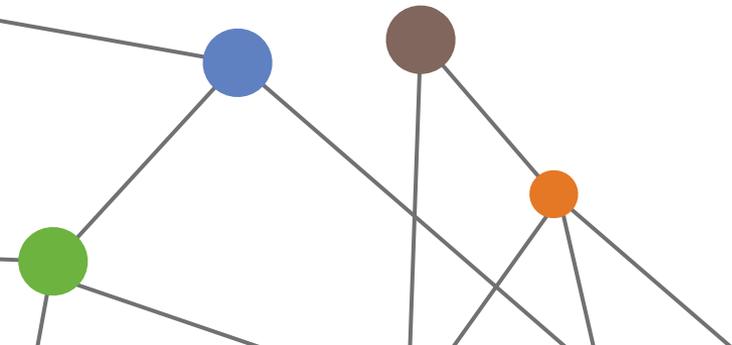
- Build long term commitments to increase stability, price security, trust and transparency – Can we replicate the OrganiMark Cluster program in SA?
- Smaller companies to look at joining forces to create a buying alliance – learn from ChetCo.

Building A Regional Identity

- Consider a regional tracking system from farm to final product.
- Build reputation and identity.
- Standard owners could support the development of a regional tracking system.
- Exploring digital tracking and blockchain innovations.

Traceability for Efficiency

- Exploring the complexity of digital tracking
- Consolidate smaller orders for efficiency and price (yarn, fabrics).



4. PRICING FOR SUCCESS: WHAT CAN THE MARKET DO?

Where can brands and retailers work pre-competitively to accelerate a baseline of responsible practices that will help grow the region? This group collectively agreed that it is time to find common ground and, in that search, they identified three key objectives:

Future-Proofing

- Take learnings and innovations from new designers, start-ups, and innovative collections built on style and sustainability.
- Embrace entrepreneurship! This is the future – and bigger brands can also benefit from the work of their nimble younger sisters.
- Contractual longer-term commitment to farmers. Improves a company's authenticity and strengthens business relations.
- Support the in-conversion to organic phase: market the story!

Regional Identity

- Promote and build a regional identity: e.g. high quality cotton, non-GMO status, great conditions for organic food and fiber, concentration of GOTS certified factories in Izmir, etc.

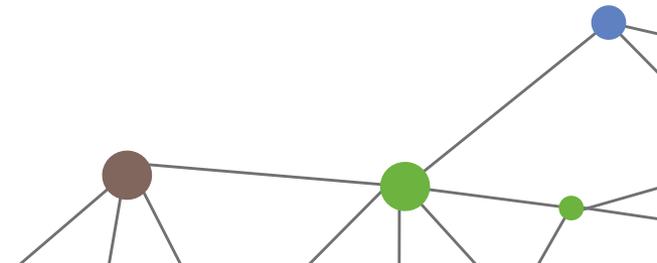
Circularity and Service Orientated

- Talk to the consumer – tell the story and build an “aware” consumer. The millennial wants a meaningful experience – not just another product.
- Closing the loop on cotton – organic through to recycled content.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the MOSP findings, breakout discussions and re-grouping of the R-OCRT coordinators post Izmir, the following steps are proposed:

- Establish Task Forces to take forward actions identified in each breakout and move along to the next level of development.
- Facilitate a full day meeting with a smaller focus group to develop a pilot project – incorporating many of the bigger-picture strategy ideas into a tangible project.
- Propose a delegation from the region to join the Textile Exchange Global Organic Cotton Round Table in Washington D.C. on 12th October to further develop strategy and present to the wider audience.



LOOKING BACK ON A SUCCESSFUL DAY

We asked the participants what they thought and how we could improve. Feedback included:

- “ Good progress was made towards developing a regional strategy: Good opportunity for stakeholders to meet and discuss opportunities!
- “ Maybe participants could come fully prepared beforehand to make the best of the one-day event. Presentations could be in a webinar format; and the day could be all about participation and interaction.
- “ The event seems to have a lot of thought and effort put into it, manufacturer participation was good as well, I hope it would improve throughout the coming years and inspire other areas in the world for organic cotton and other preferred fibers.



TextileExchange Organic Cotton Round Table

Platform for Collective Action & Incubator for Great Ideas

Join Us For The 2017 Global OCRT!

Registration is now open for the 2017 Global Organic Cotton Round Table (OCRT), to be held in Washington D.C. on Thursday 12th October following TE's 2017 [Textile Sustainability Conference](#).

Visit the [OCRT webpage](#) for more details.



October 9-13, 2017, Washington D.C.

Innovation Lab 2017 Now Open!



The Innovation Lab aims to seek out groups or individuals with innovative solutions to break through barriers to growth and discover new ways for the organic cotton community to flourish – from producer to consumer.

We are now taking applications for the 2017 Innovation Award – visit the [Innovation Lab](#) webpage for more details on how to apply!

What is the OCRT?

- ✓ A global movement that supports and brings together the organic cotton community and beyond to be inspired, mobilized, and equipped to act.
- ✓ A platform for collective action and incubator for great ideas.
- ✓ An annual, in-person meeting plus regional meetings focused on progressing regional organic cotton strategies.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL PARTNERS AND SPONSORS OF THE MOSP AND R-OCRT 2017

R-OCRT and MOSP Key Collaborator

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Special thanks to Egedeniz
for supplying the delegate
bags for this event.