

Sustainability

Rieter is convinced that acting sustainably is a crucial factor for long-term business success. In this context environmentally compatible products and processes as well as the safety of employees and the local population are priority concerns. Both divisions also strive to ensure that the environmental impact of their products throughout their life cycle is as small as possible. The choice of base materials, the optimization of material and energy consumption and the integration of safety and environmental aspects in research and development activities play a major role in this.

All ecologically relevant data are collected and analyzed in the SEED (Social, Economic and Environmental Data) electronic database in both divisions. The results are published on the www.rieter.com website under the heading of "Environmental Report".

The environment

Rieter products already make a major contribution toward sustainable development. Here are some representative examples specific to the divisions:

Rieter Automotive Systems

Automobile manufacturers impose high ecological standards on their component suppliers and verify compliance with them. Rieter responds with continuous innovation.

Requirement: lower fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions

Response: reduced vehicle weight

Rieter Ultra Silent (RUS) is a fiber-based technology for lightweight underbody modules and engine undershields. A weight saving of 2.7 kg (45%) per vehicle can be achieved for an underbody module. The PACE (Premier Automotive Suppliers Contribution to Excellence) Award jury nominated RUS as a finalist for this acclaimed international innovation award for 2010.

Rieter Ultra Light (RUL) is a technology for manufacturing lightweight acoustic products. Acoustic packages 14 kg lighter result in a 0.5% reduction in fuel consumption and lower CO₂ emissions. Since its market launch RUL has prevented 6.6 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Requirement: manufacture of resource-conserving products

Response: use of recyclable material

Rieter Ultra Silent consists of glass-free PET and is 100% recyclable.

Rieter Ultra Light consists to 80% raw materials without mineral oil and is also readily recyclable.

Requirement: keep the environmental impact of products low throughout their life cycle

Response: Life Cycle Assessment

"Life Cycle Assessments" (LCAs) enable Rieter to analyze the different stages of a product's life and develop improvements. Raw material, production and service during the product's lifetime and its disposal are analyzed. LCAs were conducted on biomaterials and recyclable materials and on RUS in the year under review. The analysis of biomaterials was concerned with their use for automobile carpets, for example. The eco-balance was favorable in the case of RUS: in comparison with the predecessor material it enables 35% weight savings and up to 14% higher energy efficiency to be achieved. CO₂ emissions can also be reduced by 25% and NOx emissions by 15%.

Rieter Textile Systems

Rieter reduces the energy consumption of textile machinery and existing in-house production lines by optimizing products and processes. The energy-efficient drive systems of Rieter products enable customers to achieve higher production performance with the same energy input.

Requirement: reduced energy consumption

Response: more energy-efficient spinning machinery

In 2009 Rieter added the RSB-D 22 double-head autoleveler drawframe to its machinery offering. This machine features two completely independent drafting and autoleveling systems. However, many components are utilized jointly in the interests of energy and cost optimization. For example, energy consumption can be reduced by some 10% per kg of sliver by using a common extraction system.

Requirement: reduced waste/hazardous waste; recycling

Response: reduced environmental impact when manufacturing technology components; recycling of processing waste.

Rieter has invested in a new, environmentally friendly surface treatment process which no longer produces hazardous waste during the manufacture of technology components in Winterthur.

Slurry produced during the grinding process at the Winterthur site, which previously had to be disposed of as hazardous waste, is delivered to Swiss foundries as recyclable material. Rieter delivered some 20 tonnes of grinding swarf in 2009.

Social aspects

Industrial safety

Rieter attaches great importance to a safe and healthy working environment. In 2009 Automotive Systems launched a new campaign to call attention to 14 important rules of conduct in the fields of environment, safety and health. Management has undertaken to bring up these rules of conduct at meetings and conduct training for personnel.

Rieter expanded its existing audit system in the year under review. In addition to fire safety, the risk of damage caused by natural hazards and business interruptions, the topics of the environment and industrial safety were analyzed in greater depth. The department responsible regularly conducts the relevant audits in both divisions together with an external partner and initiates any necessary action.

Jobs and personnel

Rieter had to continue adjusting capacity in the year under review due to the weak market environment and the steep decline in sales since 2008. Various measures were pursued further in cooperation with local personnel representatives and the European Works Council in order to alleviate the consequences of the inevitable reduction in the workforce. The emphasis in 2009 was again on utilizing personnel turnover, transfers and early retirement so that Rieter could keep the number of redundancies on operational grounds as low as possible.

Training

Rieter has continued to invest in personnel training and development despite the difficult business situation. The facilities offered to personnel included in-house training and development courses.

This year a group of Winterthur trainees again honed their entrepreneurial skills in their final year by managing their own company. In the "Creative Solutions" apprenticeship project, trainees in different occupations can independently design, produce and market metal household and garden products. In this way Rieter encourages young employees to act responsibly and think creatively.

Rieter offers Indian apprentices a third and fourth year of training in the context of the VET (Vocational Education and Training) initiative launched two years ago by the Swiss-Indian Chamber of Commerce. A kind of twin-track system of vocational training already exists in India. This is now being developed further with appropriate elements taken from Swiss everyday work routines.