

PRESS RELEASE

STABILO International GmbH, ACCO Brands and Hamelin first companies with SOFEA rating Sustainability of office products visible through SOFEA

Venlo, 20 February 2019 - Sustainability is high on the agenda of customers, whether they are companies, governments or buyers. They are looking at ways to make their policies and companies more sustainable. Now they can take a big step forward, since the first ratings of SOFEA, the Sustainable Office European Association, are published. STABILO, ACCO Brands and Hamelin OXFORD and ELBA Brands are the first supplier companies to evaluate products using the SOFEA rating system.

Customers can now judge the environmental and social impact of office products very easily with help of the SOFEA product logos. In a blink of the eye, it is clear if a product has an 'excellent level' A/B, plus level C/D or a 'standard level' E product score. The rating system provides customers with information to make the right decision. It also gives the members of SOFEA access to a mass of valuable information and a roadmap for more sustainable materials, production environment and thus to produce more sustainable products in the future. 'We see a change in legislation all over the world. Demands for sustainable products are rising. With many governmental bodies as frontrunners', explains Matthias Schumacher, Director International Sales at Tesa Tape and President of SOFEA.

Milestone in the industry

STABILO was the first company to communicate the SOFEA product ratings on their website. 'This truly is a milestone. Not only for our company, but for the office supply industry as a whole', acclaims Dr. Alexander Doll, Head of R&D of STABILO and Vice-President of SOFEA. The company decided not only to put the product ratings of writing instruments on their website, but also the complete product report from SOFEA. 'We are looking at ways to communicate in a more transparent manner about our products. And the SOFEA rating is a wonderful approach to apply. It gives end-users a tool to compare products in a blink of an eye.'

For ACCO Brands, joining SOFEA offers clear benefits. 'The SOFEA rating covers many areas, from social responsibility to the environmental impact of products. It covers the product itself, the manufacturing processes used and even takes the company behind the product into consideration', says Jacqueline Wellhaeusser, Sustainability Manager at ACCO Brands. 'It helps us to critically assess our products and helps consumers to make an informed decision about which products they choose.'

For Hamelin Group, SOFEA rating system is the system of the future. "SOFEA is a fantastic tool to clarify the benefits between all ecolabels available on the market throughout the

whole life cycle of the product. Now, it's time to go further than just the Sustainable Management Forest and to prove seriously that the industry has a high level of requirement in terms of hazardous substances use, waste disposal or end of life disposal." Says Virginie ORI Sustainability Director at Hamelin Group.

Demand on the rise

'Demand for greener products is on the rise, especially in governments', says Anita Gunther-Singh, Managing Director of SOFEA, has high expectations now the first ratings are communicated. 'We have been working hard to get this system going. I expect we will see a rise in demand for these kinds of solutions and expect more companies to join us. We are ready for the next step.'

In the coming months other pilot groups will take off and more ratings will be visible in the market. Members of SOFEA are 3M, ALKOR, ACCO BRANDS, ADVEO, ANTALIS, CEP, COLOP, FELLOWES, GROUP HAMELIN, LAMA, MAPED, OFFICE DEPOT, PENTEL, PILOT, STABILO, STAPLES, TESA, TRODAT, VICTOR STATIONERY.

NOTE TO THE EDITORS

Anita Gunther-Singh, Alexander Doll and Matthias Schumacher are all available for interviews. You can contact them via PR and Communication Manager Yvonne Keijzers. E-mail yvonne.keijzers@sofea.eu, or 00-31621896986.