

Project: Victor Innovatex

Subject: Eco Intelligent® Polyester

(2001) Eco Intelligent® Polyester Fabric: The First Technical Nutrient

Victor Innovatex is a family owned and operated fabric producer based in Saint-Georges, Quebec. In 1999, the company began a partnership with the product and process design firm MBDC. The result of this collaboration was a series of initiatives according to the principles of Cradle to Cradle Design.

As part of this partnership, Victor Innovatex developed a new, commercial upholstery fabric called Eco Intelligent® Polyester. The fabric can be used commercially for seating or for panels, and it meets exacting criteria for human health and environmental compatibility. EPEA Internationale Umweltforschung GmbH recommended formulations that would satisfy the requirements for a Cradle to Cradle technical nutrient by using its extensive knowledge of the textile industry, raw materials, and chemical dyes. To be a Cradle to Cradle product, the fabric needed to be toxicologically safe for humans and the environment along each step in production, from raw materials procurement to manufacturing. For instance, polyester is often made using a toxic heavy metal, antimony, whereas Eco Intelligent® Polyester is produced without antimony at no loss of quality to the fabric. To perform as a technical nutrient, the fabric was formulated, so it could be recovered and recycled into new products repeatedly without any loss of quality. Because the fabric contains no hazardous chemicals to begin with, the recycling process has none of the typical hazardous by-products associated with recycling traditional polyester. In this way, the polyester fabric acts as a nutrient for industrial processes in the same way that nutrients, like phosphorous, are used and reused in the natural world.

Through their partnership with MBDC, Victor Innovatex has extended its environmental initiatives, as well. In 2003, 86% of the energy used in their production facilities came from renewable hydroelectric power. The company is currently the largest wool recycler in North America, and it has an exclusive arrangement to produce another Cradle to Cradle fabric, Climatex® LifeguardFR™, which was developed with a Swiss textile company, Rohner Textil AG.

MBDC has certified Eco Intelligent® Polyester as a Gold Cradle to Cradle product, and all Eco Intelligent® Polyesters have been ranked a Level 4 out of 5 on the MBDC Optimization Scale, which measures optimization of a product's material composition and production processes.

Victor Innovatex

<http://www.victor-innovatex.com>

MBDC

<http://www.mbdc.com>

EPEA Internationale Umweltforschung GmbH

<http://www.epea.com>