

Caring for the environment from Mühlbach to the Yangtze

The Georg Fischer Corporation is consistently green

What do Herzogenburg surrounded by terraced vineyards and Zhangjiagang in the Yangtze delta have in common? Both are mentioned in Georg Fischer's new environmental report. Georg Fischer does not accept any compromises as far as the protection of the environment is concerned: the same high standards should apply everywhere in the world. Ideally from the bottom of their hearts, but to be on the safe side, binding norms also apply.



A famous Chinese proverb says: "Above there is heaven, on earth we have Hangzhou and Suzhou". Suzhou includes Zhangjiagang City where Georg Fischer has an aluminium foundry. And the beauty of the surroundings is an added incentive to do everything possible to protect the environment.

Five times less consumption of fresh water

Hot castings must be cooled at the end of the manufacturing process. Previously, a continuous-flow cooling system was used in Zhangjiagang. For Manfred Leyrer, Head of Environmental Management at Georg Fischer Corporation, this is completely untenable: "If water is wasted, people go thirsty." The result was the installation of a cooling tower for process water – all in blue, just like a building element in a Chinese garden.

Fresh water consumption cut by 80% in one blow: the kind of success that ecologists fondly call "harvesting the low-hanging fruit". At the same time, "high-hanging fruit" is also targeted. For example, the same foundry has already managed to replace lubricants containing mineral oil, which release volatile components into the atmosphere, with an innovative solution containing wax pressings. This has made a noticeable contribution to improving air and workplace quality.

A hiker's heart and ISO norms

Although not mentioned in the Chinese proverb, another piece of heaven on earth can be found in Herzogenburg in Lower Austria. Here, employees of Georg Fischer converted one of the factory's fire engines into an environmental protection vehicle as part of a comprehensive contingency plan to protect the Mühlbach and other water systems. "You can really see that the local people, who also hike here, love their area and of course want to protect it," says Manfred Leyrer.

As not everybody is a hiker, Georg Fischer, while happy about the initiatives of the local people, also puts its trust in globally binding commitments. According to the guidelines, "all production and logistics companies of the Corporation must have an environmental management system certified to ISO 14001. Newly established companies, acquired companies and associated companies in which Georg Fischer holds more than 50% of the shares must obtain an ISO 14001 certificate within three years." With more than 95% of the companies holding a certificate, the Corporation is on the home straight – but efforts to help create a 100% "heaven on earth" will not stop here.

An encouraging word

“Green thumbs” at the top, too

In many companies, the environmental management teams have a rather lonely life. But not at Georg Fischer. “Here, environmental management has not only been officially placed on the Executive Board’s agenda, but also, the influence exerted by top managers with ‘green thumbs’ is very strong.”

Rouven Kraft, Environmental Engineer in charge of the Environmental Report 2003/2004 of the Georg Fischer Corporation.

Wide recognition

From the WWF fund to the Grammy for water conservation

Special recognition from committed investors

Even though Environmental Management has higher goals, recognition from financial circles is very pleasing. Thanks to good environmental ratings the shares of Georg Fischer have been included in special ecological funds: from the environmental funds of the Swiss Cantonal Banks and the WWF to the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI).

Low premiums and happy insurance companies

Ecological reliability is also a positive factor as far as risk management is concerned. Insurance companies reward companies with lower premiums providing they meet the Highly Protected Risk Standard (HPR) or the complementary Highly Managed Prevention Standard (HMP), which Georg Fischer helped develop.

Honour and motivation to continue

The Corporation’s numerous environmental awards were supplemented in 2004 by the 2003 Water Award “Category Business and Water Pollution Control” for Lower Austria – according to insiders, “as difficult to obtain and as desirable as the music sector’s Grammy”.

Firm roots

In individual towns as well as in the universe

Success stories in six environmental fields

The GF Environmental Report 2003/2004 relates success stories in six different fields: water utilization (including waterless urinals) – heat recovery/energy conservation – green power (share of green power already exceeds the country targets by 100%) – compressed air – waste – operating agents (e.g. innovation regarding hydraulic fluid: oil change required every four years only instead of annually).

All good, sustainable things come in threes

In 2005, environmental aspects will be only one of three parts of a comprehensive sustainability report:
Economic efficiency – environmental responsibility – social solidarity

“Adding Quality to People’s Lives”

All Corporate Groups pay extra attention to the environment ...

GF Automotive – consumption cut by 200%

In addition to carefully husbanding resources during the production process, GF Automotive is also finding end-product solutions that are more environmentally friendly: saving up to 20% in weight by using thin-walled structures and integrated add-on parts, for example, make it possible to build lighter and therefore more economical vehicles.

GF Machine Tools – twice as economical in moulds

GF Machine Tools too are tirelessly reducing their own consumption as well as that caused by end products: the better machine tool and mould construction machines function, the better and more economic with regards to materials are the final products.

GF Piping Systems – twice as careful with flow

In addition to constantly optimizing energy flow “in its own household,” GF Piping Systems also improves the flow of water in all households in the world – with light-weight and leakage-proof plastic piping systems that are long-lived and largely recyclable.