

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS





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## STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®

Since 1992, STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® has been a globally standardised, independent mark of quality for raw, semi-finished and finished textile products from all stages of production and for all accessory materials used in the process. This global certification system assures manufacturers, sourcers, brands, retailers, and consumers around the world that certified products meet the strict limit values for harmful substances of STANDARD 100 and that these substances are not present in critical concentrations. OEKO-TEX® originally tested for about 100 chemicals like pesticides, carcinogenic colourants and heavy metals but today STANDARD 100 covers a wide array of several

hundred harmful substances. This brochure will answer some of the most frequently asked STANDARD 100 questions but please contact any of our member institute offices for more information ([www.oeko-tex.com/institutes](http://www.oeko-tex.com/institutes)).



**Georg Dieners**

Secretary General | OEKO-TEX® Association

## BASICS

- 1 The STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® system
- 2 Advantages of the STANDARD 100 product certification
- 3 Test criteria
- 4 Test methodology
- 5 Parameters of the STANDARD 100 criteria catalogue
- 6 Meaning of the STANDARD 100 product classes
- 7 Overview of the four product classes

## CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

- 8 Costs of the STANDARD 100 product certification
- 9 Time required for certification
- 10 Application and application documents
- 11 Certification in five steps
- 12 Selection and packaging of the test samples
- 13 Testing in the OEKO-TEX® member institute
- 14 Test report
- 15 Declaration of conformity
- 16 STANDARD 100 certificate

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- 17 Operational quality assurance
- 18 Company audit by OEKO-TEX®
- 19 Assurance of product conformity
- 20 Withdrawal of existing certificates
- 21 STANDARD 100 supplements
- 22 STANDARD 100 and REACH

## LABEL USE

- 23 Labelling of ready-made products
- 24 Print templates for the STANDARD 100 label
- 25 Advertising use of the STANDARD 100 label
- 26 STANDARD 100 label vs certificate
- 27 Use of the label after expiry of the certificate
- 28 About OEKO-TEX®

①

## » What is STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®? «

STANDARD 100 is a worldwide, consistent, independent testing and certification system for raw, semi-finished, and finished textile products at all processing levels, as well as accessory materials used.

The aims of the product certification in accordance with STANDARD 100 are:

1. To provide the end consumer with a reliable, third-party, independent product label for non-hazardous products that are tested in accordance with the STANDARD 100 criteria catalogue and thereby contribute to effective consumer protection.
2. To support the companies in the textile chain on the basis of a scientific criteria catalogue and neutral laboratory tests in a targeted manner with the implementation of their intended product safety with regard to human ecology.

The tests for harmful substances in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® take into account important legal regulations, such as banned azo dyes, formaldehyde, pentachlorophenol, cadmium, nickel, etc., requirements from the US Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) regarding lead, numerous harmful chemicals, even if they are not yet legally regulated, and diverse parameters for healthcare.

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In its criteria catalogue, STANDARD 100 also considers numerous environmentally relevant substance classes.

The tests and laboratory tests are exclusively carried out by 16 member institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association, each with proven expertise.

The concept of the OEKO-TEX® tests for harmful substances is based on a modular system: certifications are possible at every stage of the textile value chain; certificates from preliminary stages are recognised. A successful test allows for the labelling of respective textiles or materials with the STANDARD 100 mark after the certificate was issued.



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## » What advantages does a certification in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® additionally offer for marketing? «

As a third-party independent label, STANDARD 100 is a helpful marketing tool enabling companies to transparently document their responsibility with respect to the product safety of their articles in terms of human ecology and for their customers along the textile chain, all the way through to brands, retailers and the consumer.

All companies that have their textiles or materials certified in accordance with STANDARD 100 have the opportunity to present their companies and product portfolio free of charge in our online directory (Buying Guide) under [www.oeko-tex.com/products](http://www.oeko-tex.com/products). With an average of roughly 5,000 website visits per day and visitors from more than 200 countries around the world, the OEKO-TEX® website is an ideal advertising platform that attracts international attention.

You can enter the data for your company presentation in our Buying Guide at any time in our Self-Service Portal at [www.oeko-tex.com/customers](http://www.oeko-tex.com/customers). Your assigned OEKO-TEX® institute will be pleased to send you the access details upon request.

## » According to which criteria does OEKO-TEX® test textiles and accessory materials for harmful substances? «

To contribute to a high and effective product safety for the textiles and materials from a consumer's point of view, the OEKO-TEX® Association works with an extensive criteria catalogue during its certification process.

The catalogue contains numerous test parameters and is binding for all authorised OEKO-TEX® testing institutes.

Our central focus is the development of test criteria, limit values and test methods using a scientific basis. Test criteria and limit values in many cases go far beyond applicable national and international standards. The inclusion of numerous additional potentially harmful substances has documented the pioneering role of STANDARD 100 for many years.

Additional parameters, such as the testing of colour fastness which serves as a precaution, are also part of the OEKO-TEX® laboratory tests.

## » Which test methodology is used as a basis for the OEKO-TEX® tests for harmful substances? «

The OEKO-TEX® test methodology is mainly based on the release of harmful substances from the materials to be tested. According to the opinion of the OEKO-TEX® Association, this is the most important concern for garments (possible contact with skin and risk of absorption through the skin). Strict methods are selected for the release of harmful substances.

Materials for babies and toddlers are additionally tested for colour fastness using a simulation of sucking /nibbling with a synthetic saliva and perspiration solution. Colourants must have a very high colour fastness level at this test.

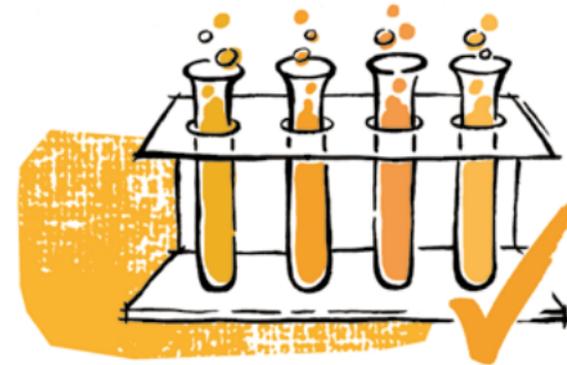
Large-scale materials, which are encountered in the area of furnishing materials, are tested additionally for the emission of specific harmful substances into the air.

Odours that are atypical for the materials automatically lead to the exclusion of a certification for all articles.

## » Which parameters are part of the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue? «

The full criteria catalogue with the current limit values for the tests for harmful substances in accordance with STANDARD 100 can be viewed at any time on the Internet at [www.oeko-tex.com/limitvalues](http://www.oeko-tex.com/limitvalues).

Testing takes place, for example, for banned azo dyes, carcinogenic and allergy-inducing colourants, pesticides for textiles made of natural fibres, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), tin organic compounds, chlorinated phenols, phthalates (softeners), PFOS, PFOA, surfactant wetting agent residues (APEOs) and many more.



## » What is the meaning of the four product classes of STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®? «

The tests for harmful substances in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® are fundamentally based on the respective purpose of the textiles and materials. That is why the following principle applies: the more intensive the skin contact of a textile (and the more sensitive the skin), the stricter the requirements that need to be fulfilled in terms of human ecology.

Babies require special protection. Accordingly, in OEKO-TEX® product class I, all baby articles are held to the strictest criteria, in line with sensitive baby skin. Finishes containing formaldehyde are excluded here. The requirement for saliva-resistance means that colours and prints should not bleed or stain when babies suck on them.

Many companies voluntarily subject their products to the particularly strict requirements of product classes I and II when having their articles tested for harmful substances in accordance with STANDARD 100.

## » Which product classes exist? «

**PRODUCT CLASS I:** TEXTILES AND MATERIALS FOR BABIES AND TODDLERS UP TO THREE YEARS OF AGE: UNDERWEAR, ROMPERS, BED LINEN, BEDDING, ETC.

**PRODUCT CLASS II:** TEXTILES AND MATERIALS, THE SURFACE OF WHICH MAINLY COME INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE SKIN: UNDERWEAR, BED LINEN, TERRY PRODUCTS, SHIRTS, BLOUSES, SOCKS, ETC.

**PRODUCT CLASS III:** TEXTILES AND MATERIALS, THE SURFACE OF WHICH DO NOT, OR ONLY TO A MINOR EXTENT, COME INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE SKIN: JACKETS, COATS, OUTDOOR TEXTILES, ETC.

**PRODUCT CLASS IV:** FURNISHING/DECORATION MATERIALS FOR DECORATION PURPOSES: TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, UPHOLSTERY FABRICS, ETC.

A list of all companies that have their products certified in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® can be found at [www.oeko-tex.com/products](http://www.oeko-tex.com/products).



## » Which costs are incurred for a certification? «

The financial cost for product certification in accordance with STANDARD 100 is comprised of the costs for the licence, the compulsory company audit and the laboratory and administrative tests.

The precise costs for harmful-substance testing are based on the testing expenses for the respective textile product or material and can be obtained within the context of a cost estimate with the appointed OEKO-TEX® institute.

Through the use of already certified source materials, the financial costs for the laboratory tests can be reduced significantly, so that duplicated tests are not necessary. At the individual stages of production, only new additions are tested.

Due to the modular system used in STANDARD 100 certification, the testing costs are distributed across the companies along the textile chain.

The OEKO-TEX® test criteria are applicable at every processing level. High testing density along the textile chain minimises the testing expenses for individual companies.

9

## » How much time is required for a certification? «

How long a certification takes from application until the certificate is issued depends on individual factors. You can influence these favourably through good preparation – with preferably gap-free information and documentation within the context of your application for certification, for example. The testing institute will then be pleased to discuss the concrete testing expenses with you and the resulting time requirement.

10

## » With whom do I submit my application? «

If you would like to have your products certified in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX®, you must submit a written application to one of the 16 authorised OEKO-TEX® testing institutes in Europe or Japan or one of its worldwide representative offices. You can find an overview of all OEKO-TEX® member institutes and offices at [www.oeko-tex.com/institutes](http://www.oeko-tex.com/institutes).



10

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## » Where do I obtain application documents? «

You can download the current application forms very conveniently from [www.oeko-tex.com/downloads](http://www.oeko-tex.com/downloads). Or contact one of the OEKO-TEX® institutes and representative offices listed under [www.oeko-tex.com/institutes](http://www.oeko-tex.com/institutes).

10

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## » Which components does the application contain? «

- › Description of the products to be tested
- › Description of the operational quality assurance
- › Details of the processing steps carried out for producing the textile
- › List of all colourants and auxiliary agents used
- › Safety data sheets for all chemicals used (colourants, auxiliary agents, etc.)
- › Names of the suppliers of all components of the product, from the fabric to inserts, right up to the accessories (manufacturer of ready-made clothes)
- › Certificate copies of already certified source materials
- › Free inclusion in the international OEKO-TEX® reference list/Buying Guide

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**» Which steps is the certification comprised of? «**

1. Application and provision of a test sample
2. Testing on the basis of the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue
3. Preparation of the test report
4. Submission of the conformity declaration
5. Issuance of the certificate upon successful testing

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**» What needs to be noted with the selection of the test samples? «**

The test samples must be selected such that they cover the entire article group to be certified in accordance with STANDARD 100. Such a representative selection forms the basis for the article description on the certificate. An incomplete sample selection may lead to a restriction of the certified article group.

12

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## » Are there specific requirements for packaging the test samples? «

The packaging of the test samples must fulfil specific quality requirements in order to protect the samples and guarantee correct, reproducible and relevant test results. This includes, for example, packaging the test samples individually in tear-resistant polyethylene films.

13

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## » What happens during the testing by the testing institute? «

The OEKO-TEX® member institute systematically records the product and production data. Then an individual test plan is prepared for the articles (article groups) to be tested.

Next, the representative articles provided from the running production are checked for relevant parameters of the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue. Using a 'worst-case' methodology, testing will normally take place on articles with the strongest coating application, the darkest dyeing or the highest quantity of finishing agents.

14

## » How and when are the test results received? «

After the completion of the laboratory tests, you will receive written test results in the form of an expert report. If the laboratory tests are successfully completed and the contractual documents are consistent, the preconditions for a certification are created. However, this result does not yet provide entitlement to labelling your products with the STANDARD 100 label.

15

## » How and when is the certificate received? «

The basis for issuing the STANDARD 100 certificate is a so-called declaration of conformity in accordance with ISO 17050-1. In this, you guarantee that the products that are manufactured/sold by you correspond to the tested samples during the complete term of the certificate, i.e. in terms of type, material composition and production.

With this submission of the declaration of conformity, you also consent that the OEKO-TEX® Association is entitled to conduct control tests and company audits during the term of the certificate.





## » What is the meaning of the OEKO-TEX® certificate? «

The OEKO-TEX® certificate documents that the articles listed have been successfully tested in accordance with STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® and comply with the requirements of a common product class. In this sense, it serves as a legally binding verification of a successful product certification in accordance with STANDARD 100 in all business processes.

The tested articles may only be advertised with the OEKO-TEX® label after receipt of the certificate and only in conjunction with a licence number and name of the testing institute. The expert report provides proof of the most recently conducted review.

Upon request, you can also obtain electronic templates of the label from your assigned OEKO-TEX® institute in various file formats and language versions with the certificate.



**16**

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### » How do I apply for a certificate extension? «

You may extend existing OEKO-TEX® certificates at any time upon application to the responsible testing institute. New articles are tested on the basis of representative samples, as usual. You will again receive a test report from the commissioned institute and confirm with a declaration of conformity that the quality of the additional products corresponds to that of the test samples. The original term of the certificate remains unchanged with the extension. The additional products are also listed in the article description of the certificate.

**16**

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### » How much does a certificate extension cost? «

For a certificate extension, an administration fee and new testing costs are incurred. These are based on the testing expenses for the newly added products.

## » What is an order certificate and when do I need one? «

For special order processing, the international OEKO-TEX® Association has additionally created a dedicated certificate version, the so-called excerpt certificate/order certificate.

It is based on the general original certificate of the company, but also describes the relevant order articles in a distinctive manner. The timely assurance of the OEKO-TEX® parameters is particularly significant for companies that only work together with their supplier pool on an order-related basis.

On the basis of the certificate number and the additional code on the order certificate, the retail sector is able to trace the validity of the certificate and the correspondence with the delivered articles on the Internet.



16

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## » For how long is the STANDARD 100 certificate valid? What happens after expiry of the validity? «

A STANDARD 100 certificate is valid for 12 months and can be renewed for a further year upon request after this period expires. This procedure is recommended to ensure continuous product safety and a smooth-running process along the entire textile chain.

16

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## » How much does a certificate renewal cost? «

As with the initial certification, the licence fee is incurred again for a certificate renewal as well as the laboratory testing costs (different depending on testing expenses). Your testing institute will be pleased to inform you about expected individual cost. As a rule, this is lower for a certificate renewal than for the initial testing.

17

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## » As an applicant, do I need a company quality assurance system? «

Yes. The precondition for product certification in accordance with STANDARD 100 is the establishment of an appropriate quality assurance system in the company to guarantee the product conformity. The QM system must be recognised by the commissioned OEKO-TEX® institute.

18

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## » Why is a company audit required for a product certification in accordance with STANDARD 100? «

The company audit, which is usually conducted shortly prior to or after issuing the STANDARD 100 certificate by the commissioned OEKO-TEX® institute at your premises, is an additional compulsory component of the certification process.

The aim of the company audit is to support your company quality assurance in a targeted manner with respect to compliance with the required STANDARD 100 criteria. For example, by means of our experts conducting the representative sample extraction from the current production processes with you, we can coordinate the article group descriptions on the certificate jointly with your quality assurance officer. After the initial audit, the operational monitoring takes place at least every three years.

## » How is the product conformity guaranteed after the STANDARD 100 certificate has been issued? «

On the one hand, the product conformity must be assured by the certificate holder. This takes place each day by means of the internal quality controls of the companies that are arranged in the declaration of conformity.

On the other hand, the OEKO-TEX® testing institutes conduct control tests each year with at least 25% of all issued certificates.

For this, products from preliminary stages are tested on the basis of samples from current certification processes. Furthermore, the institutes purchase OEKO-TEX®-certified products on a random sample basis from retailers and test these again in the laboratory. Last but not least, independent auditors, who are commissioned by OEKO-TEX®, additionally conduct unannounced site inspections in order to examine the quality assurance in the operations on site.

The prosecution of label misuse, right up to the withdrawal of an existing certificate, is also an important component of these safeguarding measures.



20

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## » What happens if a STANDARD 100 certificate is withdrawn by OEKO-TEX®? «

It is rare but should it occur that a STANDARD 100 certificate is withdrawn, we recommend to the affected companies that they immediately contact the assigned OEKO-TEX® institute in order to discuss any/all courses of action in detail. Depending on the respective reason for the withdrawal of the certificate, it may, for example, be necessary to conduct the laboratory test again, submit additional documents or conduct a new company audit.

21

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## » What are the STANDARD 100 supplements? Which ones exist and for what purpose? «

Supplements to STANDARD 100 are amendments that relate to very specific market segments and article groups which can be handled better with a unilateral approach.

At present, there are two supplements to STANDARD 100:

- 1) Supplement 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Materials for PPE (as well as for military garments and uniforms comparable to PPE)'
- 2) Supplement 'Special Articles'

Personal protective equipment includes protective clothing for firefighters, weatherproof clothing or chemical protection clothing, for example. Typical articles for the 'Special Articles' supplement are, for example, prams, suitcases, rucksacks, orthopaedic aids, sets of curtains, chairs and loungers etc. The basis of the required criteria for supplement articles is essentially formed by the STANDARD 100 catalogue of criteria; however, in the supplements, various exceptions and special features are defined for supplement articles.

Depending on which supplement is involved, the same label is allocated as with STANDARD 100 or a slightly modified label. Further information about the supplements can be retrieved from [www.oeko-tex.com](http://www.oeko-tex.com).



## » STANDARD 100 and REACH «

The OEKO-TEX® Association also keeps an eye on the developments of the European Chemicals Regulation REACH and the ECHA SVHC-Candidate list (Substances of Very High Concern). On the basis of its comprehensive and strict catalogue of measures, with several hundred regulated individual substances, STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® takes into account requirements of Annexes XVII and XIV as well as of the SVHC Candidate List insofar as they are assessed by expert groups of the OEKO-TEX® Association to be relevant for fabrics, textiles, garments or accessories. Discussions and developments that are considered to be relevant are taken into account as quickly and effectively as possible through updates to the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® requirements. However, each company itself is always obliged and responsible to assure that their produced articles, as well as used chemicals and auxiliaries, are in agreement with REACH.





23

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## » When are ready-made textile products permitted to be labelled with the STANDARD 100 label? «

The precondition is that all components meet the required test criteria without exception. For ready-made articles, a dedicated certificate must also exist, even if the individual components have already been certified in accordance with STANDARD 100.

24

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## » Where can print templates be obtained for the STANDARD 100 label? «

Digital print documents in various languages and file formats (for printing and online use) can be requested free of charge from your assigned OEKO-TEX® institute.

For certificate holders, label templates with an individual test number are also available to download at any time on our website in the OEKO-TEX® Self-Service Portal. The access details for this interactive customer area are also available from your commissioned institute. Additional information about using the STANDARD 100 labels can be found at [www.oeko-tex.com/labelling-std100](http://www.oeko-tex.com/labelling-std100).

## » What must be generally noted with the advertising use of the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® label? «

The STANDARD 100 label is a protected trademark. This means that all companies intending to use the label for their certified textile products must comply with the valid specifications for use of the label.

Forgery and misuse of the trademark will be prosecuted under criminal and civil law. If OEKO-TEX® becomes aware of this, it may furthermore lead to the withdrawal of the underlying STANDARD 100 certificate.

A STANDARD 100 label is only valid if an actually issued test number and responsible testing institute are shown on it. These details must correspond to the company's own certificate.

Detailed information about advertising use of the STANDARD 100 label can be found at the following locations:

- › In the 'General and Special Conditions for the Authorisation to use the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® Mark'
- › On our website at [www.oeko-tex.com/labelling-std100](http://www.oeko-tex.com/labelling-std100)

26

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## » What do retailers specifically need to note with the use of the STANDARD 100 label? «

A STANDARD 100 label applied to a product alone is not sufficient as proof of a successful test for harmful substances. Therefore, when purchasing your product range/components, always insist that your supplier presents the valid OEKO-TEX® certificate. The details on the STANDARD 100 test label (test number and test institute) must correspond to those of the supplied certificate. Products that are not listed on the certificate may not be labelled with the STANDARD 100 label.

27

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## » How long is a STANDARD 100 label permitted to be used for the product marking and other advertising purposes, if the certificate has expired? «

Basically, we recommend that all companies using the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® label for product marking and other advertising purposes extend the existing certificate in good time prior to expiration, so that no gaps occur.

According to the OEKO-TEX® statutes, inventories of STANDARD 100 labels for product marking (e.g. hang tags) and marketing materials in which the label is shown have to be removed from the market no later than two months after the expiry of the relevant certificate.

## About OEKO-TEX®

With 25 years of experience, OEKO-TEX® leads the world in empowering and enabling consumers and companies to protect our planet by making responsible decisions. OEKO-TEX® provides standardised solutions which optimise customers' manufacturing processes and help deliver high quality, more sustainable products. All of the products within the OEKO-TEX® portfolio are used to strengthen our customers' systems, processes or products and, ultimately, they help create more sustainable companies. To date, 10,000 manufacturers, brands, and retailers in almost 100 countries are working with OEKO-TEX® to ensure that their products are tested for potentially harmful substances and millions of consumers around the world look for OEKO-TEX® labels before making buying decisions. OEKO-TEX® certified products and suppliers can be located in the OEKO-TEX® Online Buying Guide at [www.oeko-tex.com/products](http://www.oeko-tex.com/products). Connect with OEKO-TEX® on [Facebook](#), on [LinkedIn](#), and on [Twitter](#).

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