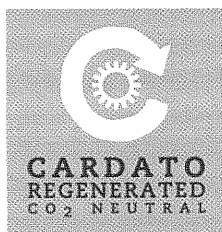


# Trading places

The Prato Chamber of Commerce is now offering local textile producers the opportunity to sign up to a scheme that combines recycled textiles with an emissions trading scheme.

The Prato Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with several industry bodies has developed a new brand concept aimed at boosting the use of recycled materials in this historic and well respected Italian textile region.



Any fabrics certified under the new label, Cardato Regenerated CO<sub>2</sub> Neutral, will be able to guarantee the use of balanced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the textile production process, while at the same time assuring buyers of the use of regenerated raw materials.

According to the Prato Chamber of Commerce, over the last few years, the region has become increasingly attentive to environmental issues and concerns. It utilises the most up-to-date technology to recover water (one of Europe's largest industrial aqueducts is in Prato) and has boosted its use of alternative energies in order to develop "zero impact" textile products.

The development of the Cardato Regenerated CO<sub>2</sub> Neutral brand therefore seems a natural progression and working with the Consortium for the Development and Tutelage of Cardato Textiles and consultancy firm Prima Q, only those fabric producers who adhere to the strict environmental criteria will be able to use the label.

"We presented the CO<sub>2</sub> neutral regenerated fibre at Pitti Filati last January and many expressed their interest - from textile producers to journalists," explained president of the Prato Chamber of Commerce, Carlo Longo. "Businesses in the area have also asked us to guarantee the presence of regenerated materials in textiles in order to respond to the demands of clients who have become much more attentive to environ-

mental issues. This is how the brand was born. Businesses can now demonstrate the dual nature of their production processes, both CO<sub>2</sub> neutral and regenerated, through the involvement of a third party, the Prato Chamber of Commerce."

The role of the Consortium for the Development and Tutelage of Cardato Textiles was to select the firms that were the most suitable to produce the initial fabrics, which will be unveiled at the next edition of *Premiere Vision*. Those selected included Prato textile firms Lanificio Fratelli Balli, Lanificio Nello Gori and Lanificio Mario Fiaschi.

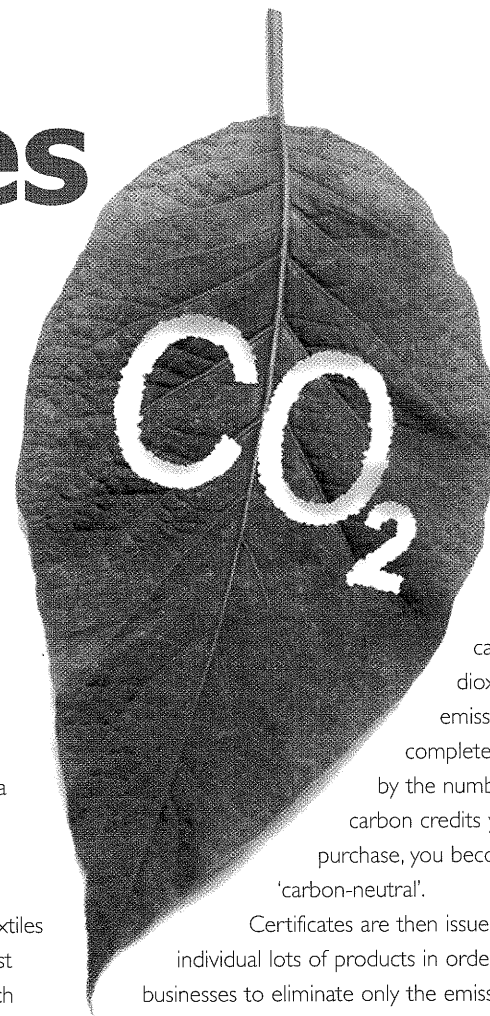
The validation of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions produced in the manufacturing process was then entrusted to TUV Italia, the authoritative certification and inspection division of the German firm, TUV Sud.

### Label criteria

To use the "Cardato Regenerated CO<sub>2</sub> Neutral" brand, textiles must be produced in Prato, with at least 70% of recycled material (old clothing or textile off-cuts), and have accounted for their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and have purchased emission credits from the Chamber of Commerce.

Under the terms of the scheme, the amount of credits purchased must correspond to business' production volume. If a factory produces carbon dioxide, that factory must buy the same (or more) quantity of credits in order to offset and compensate for its carbon dioxide emissions.

These credits (which are sold by those who provide carbon credits – a bone fide "ecobroker") are used to cover the costs of tree and forest replantation (trees absorb carbon dioxide) and the costs of other eco-friendly programs. Buying carbon credits is said to be easy and incredibly efficient. When the quantity of your



carbon dioxide emissions is completely offset by the number of carbon credits you purchase, you become 'carbon-neutral'.

Certificates are then issued to individual lots of products in order to allow businesses to eliminate only the emissions of the textiles that they eventually sell.

### Textile production

Cardato production is characterised by the use of short and heterogeneous pieces of yarn that are mixed together to create various textile combinations. Initially, the yarn is produced with virgin fibres, obtained from recycled textiles or from new or used off-cuts. The used clothing or cuttings of new fabrics used by the garment industry are sorted according to quality and colour. The next process is Carbonising, a process that eliminates any vegetable impurities from the wool. Rags and cuttings are dry cleaned with hydrochloric acid, while new wool fibre is soaked in sulphuric acid. The treated fabrics or staples are then processed to eliminate the carbonised particles.

In the tearing process, the rags become fibre again by being mechanically torn and washed: the two operations are carried out in tanks where the rags are forced by the current of the water through two pairs of cylinders with steel teeth that tear them. The fibre is then dried.

A section dedicated to the Cardato brand is now available on Prato Chamber of Commerce website ([www.po.camcom.it](http://www.po.camcom.it)) where visitors can view a list of businesses that can use the new brand and a list of items that have been certified.