

Q&A WITH

An Driessens, Weleda's Global Head of Marketing, on the Value of Certification



Despite being a UEBT member since 2011, it wasn't until 2018 that Weleda obtained the UEBT certification mark. What is the added value, both from a brand and consumer point of view, that the new UEBT label will bring to Weleda?

As a UEBT member, we have been applying their guidelines for the sourcing of natural raw materials since 2011. The main aim is to preserve biodiversity and to treat all partners along the supply chain equitably, paying fair prices. When UEBT recently introduced the "Sourcing with Respect" certification, we were the first European company to achieve certification for our ethical sourcing systems. We can now put a new logo on our products with the statement "Weleda contributes to a world in which people and biodiversity thrive."

We know that biodiversity is a key issue for consumers and the awareness and understanding of biodiversity is growing globally. There's a real desire to personally contribute, but most people don't know how. We also know that respecting people and biodiversity in purchasing behaviour is of growing concern for consumers, and buying products with natural ingredients that are sourced with respect makes them feel good. With the natural cosmetics market growing and becoming more mainstream, this new label will help guide consumers, and help differentiate us from the competition.

Our UEBT certification is confirmation that we are taking nature seriously. Weleda's vision is to see no further extinction of species; we need them all in order to survive both as humans and as a company using these precious natural resources.



Weleda is the first European beauty brand to obtain the new UEBT certification for sourcing with respect. Could you tell us more about the assessment that you had to undergo to obtain the certification? What are the key learnings you have taken from it?

To achieve this certification, we first had to conduct an assessment of all our suppliers based on a newly developed questionnaire. We then had to carry out a risk assessment of our suppliers, conduct supply chain audits across 1,200 supply chains and 650 raw materials. As you can imagine, this is a very time-consuming and resource-intensive process and we had to convince suppliers that these requirements should be taken very seriously and that they had genuine value.

Other key learnings we had are that any resources invested in have to be seen as an investment in the future for the long term and not as a quick win. Pursuing an ambitious standard like the UEBT certification enables positive impact, internally and externally, and communication is key.

The implementation of the management system, and moreover the requirements related to our certification, has strengthened our relationships with our suppliers, given our consumers even more trust in our brand, and given our employees clear confirmation that the company remains committed to its principles.

Do you think that having the UEBT logo on your packaging will have an impact on consumer perception of Weleda?

I'm convinced it will have a positive impact. Given there is so much greenwashing going on, consumers are becoming increasingly sceptical of brands. The move towards sustainability, greener ingredients and increased transparency is really a major market trend, as beauty products' ethical and sustainable sourcing credentials come under scrutiny.

Of course there is a certain amount of education that needs to be done on what UEBT stands for, but having the logo on pack provides a shortcut for consumers to know that Weleda is a brand they can trust. Thanks to the



label, consumers can be reassured of our deep commitment and respect for people and biodiversity.

The social and ethical commitment that we provide for consumers, demonstrated by the UEBT label, really differentiates us from competitors' sustainability activities.

What are Weleda's sustainability goals for the coming years and how will the partnership with UEBT help to achieve them?

Weleda has been a category pioneer since 1921 and we have a century-long commitment to sustainable, fair-trade, and biodynamic ingredients, with farming partnerships spanning the globe. Our sustainability goals are inspired by our vision "to create a world in which the health and beauty of mankind and nature constantly unfold," and are centred on seven spheres of activity. They are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and are all focused on being socially responsible, ecologically compatible and economically successful.

Going forward, we are putting even more focus on the improvement of ecological footprints, healthy soils and increasing our percentage of biodynamic raw materials. Our vision is one of healthy ecosystems, people earning a fair wage with fair working conditions, contributing to local development and protecting both local communities and landscapes.

The UEBT 'Sourcing with Respect' standard also reflects those principles and by continuing to work together, we will jointly contribute to a healthy planet in which people and biodiversity can thrive.