



Mainz, August 2021

Cradle to Cradle Certified® Gold for Recyclable Stand-up Pouch!

Werner & Mertz and Mondi cooperate in global pioneering project to achieve a true circular economy

It is the crowning achievement to a five-year-plus pioneering project. The stand-up pouch, developed by the cleaning products manufacturer Werner & Mertz in cooperation with the global packaging and paper company Mondi is the first flexible packaging in the world to achieve Gold in all categories of the Cradle to Cradle Certified® Product Scorecard.

To integrate the product seamlessly in the recycling process and the circular economy, both companies involved all the stakeholders along the value chain from the start and sought advice from EPEA Switzerland. The organization, which is an accredited assessment body for Cradle to Cradle Certified®, developed an 18-point Cradle to Cradle™ Projects Reference Model for the fulfillment of the Cradle-to-Cradle® Principle, which the two companies followed step by step.

"No company can single-handedly develop a product for the circular economy. It takes an interdisciplinary network of experts. Thanks to the entire team's strict adherence to the Cradle-to-Cradle® Principle, Werner & Mertz and Mondi have achieved success with the stand-up pouch in a real 'lighthouse' project!" said Albin Kaelin, Chief Executive Officer of EPEA Switzerland.

Developed according to the Cradle to Cradle® Projects Reference Model

In the beginning, the **Purpose of the Product** had to be defined clearly. In the case of the pouch, the idea was to create high-quality, truly recyclable plastic packaging. The task seemed impossible at the time. After all, conventional pouches consisted of multiple layers of plastic and materials that could not be recycled and so were thermally recycled, that is, incinerated.

"Fifty-one percent of all packaging that lands in the Yellow Bag is plastic packaging. It holds enormous potential for recycling that has remained mostly untapped so far. We want to change that!" said Immo Sander, Head of Packaging Development at Werner & Mertz.

It quickly became clear that the pouch had to be made of a single material. Reducing the material to a single type of plastic, namely, polyethylene, was just one issue. Consideration had to be given to the collection and sorting process of the materials too (**Definition Areas of Innovation**). High-quality recycling is feasible only if the used packaging actually lands in the Yellow Bag and the sorting system recognizes it.

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In the ensuing years, the manufacturers of sorting systems and units were regularly consulted about the development of separate sorting and reprocessing facilities. At the same time Werner & Mertz used its Frosch Initiative to inform consumers of waste separation and recycling and make them aware of the Yellow Bag's importance in the recycling process (**Development Marketing Statement**).

Production and the supply chain also were involved (**Definition Closing the Loop Scenarios**). The developers realized early on in the process that both Mondi and Werner & Mertz would need to acquire new machines or refit old ones for the new pouch. Financial resources and time were demanded.

"Jointly with Werner & Mertz, we analyzed the entire process depth of today's StripPouch, from production to the sorting and recycling process in order to develop a 'Design 4 Recycling'. Our incentive was optimum use of the circular economy. We are very proud of the external recognition with the Cradle to Cradle Certified Scorecard Gold," said Jens Koesters, Manager R&D/Technical Service, Mondi Consumer Flexibles.

Still another criterion is the **ABC-X Categorisation of the Ingredients**. Every little detail matters here. For this point alone, for example, a completely new recyclable printing ink system for flexographic printing was developed, which has since received the Material Health Certificate in Gold. This certification confirms the safety of the solvent-based ink for biological cycles.

Criteria specification was followed by **Product Design** and **Implementation** of previously chosen processes, including **Investments**. The Cradle-to-Cradle® Process is not completed with the successful retail launch of the product. **After-Sales Service** has to be provided so that consumers have a chance to ask questions about the product. At Werner & Mertz that's guaranteed by the consumer advice team.

The development of the pouch shows that sustainable products cannot be rushed. They need time, investment, innovation and close cooperation among all partners along the entire value chain if they are to be truly recyclable in the end.

Photo caption: The stand-up pouch achieved Gold in all categories. All the materials used can be returned safely to the environment or put to high-quality use again.

Photo Copyright: Werner & Mertz

More information about the stand-up pouch from Werner & Mertz: werner-mertz.de/standbeutel

You'll find the 18-point Cradle to Cradle® Projects Reference Model [here](#).

EPEA Switzerland GmbH: EPEA Switzerland GmbH supports companies in different fields of activity with the development and implementation of the Cradle to Cradle® Design Concept. The experienced international and interdisciplinary management team implements Cradle to Cradle® projects in all industries around the world. EPEA Switzerland is an accredited assessment body for the Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Certificate Standard. The Projects Reference Model Cradle to Cradle™ is a trademark of EPEA Switzerland GmbH.

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Mondi: Mondi is a leading global packaging and paper company that contributes to a better world with innovative packaging and paper solutions. We are active along the entire supply chain – from forestry management and the production of pulp, paper and plastic sheeting to the development and manufacturing of efficient industrial and consumer goods packaging. Sustainability is the heart of our strategy and an essential element in our business. One of our exemplary services is our customer-centric EcoSolutions in which we pose the right questions in order to find the most sustainable solution. In 2020 Mondi reported revenue of 6.66 billion EUR and an adjusted EBITDA of 1.35 billion EUR. Mondi has a premium listing on the London Stock Exchange (MNDI) and a second listing on the Johannesburg stock exchange (MNP). Mondi is a FTSE 100 constituent, and has been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series since 2008 and the FTSE/JSE Responsible Investment Index Series since 2007.

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Werner & Mertz: For more than 150 years from its site in Mainz, Werner & Mertz GmbH has become established in the European market as an innovative company with its trusted brands Frosch, Erdal and Green Care Professional. Werner & Mertz adheres to sustainable, environmentally-friendly business principles and regards its pursuit of sustainability as an established company tradition. With the Frosch Initiative and select project partnerships, Werner & Mertz paves the way to groundbreaking sustainable solutions beyond its own industry. www.werner-mertz.de