

## Alchemist Fashion BV

alchemist   
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[www.alchemist-fashion.com](http://www.alchemist-fashion.com)

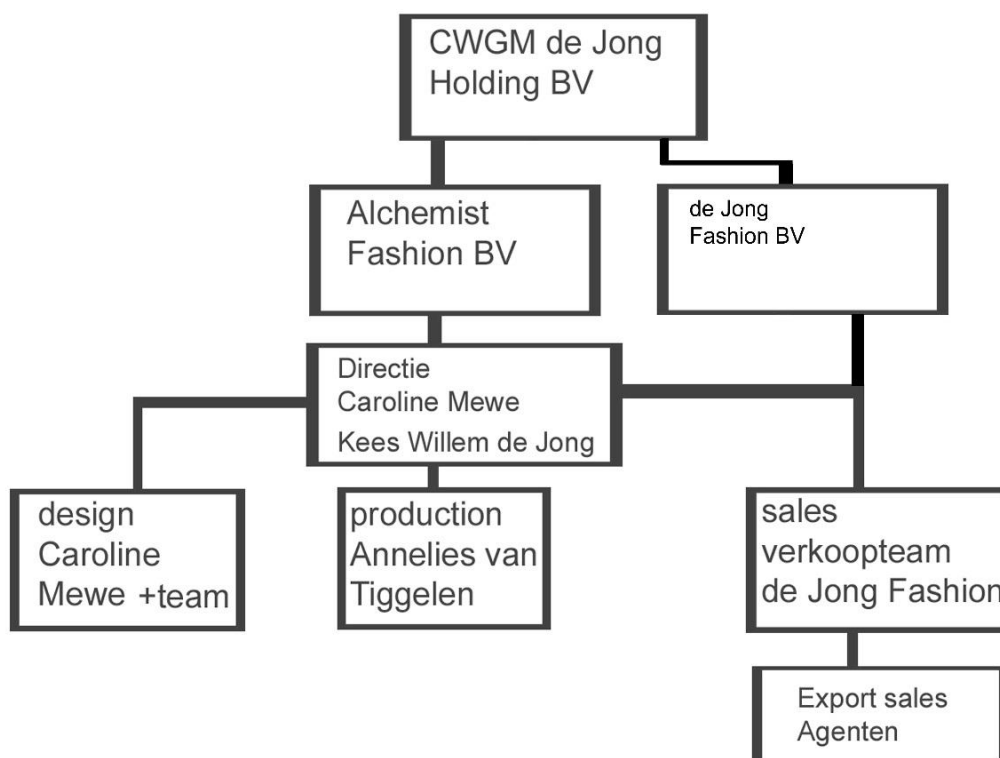
Start date membership

March 2013

Reporting period (financial year)

January 2014 – December 2014

### Organisational chart



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## Summary: goals & achievements 2014

Our work program for 2014 was to further implement our brand mission ; “to produce ladies fashion with respect for people and planet.” As well inside as outside the company. We find that more and more customers are interested in the sustainable sources and stories of our products. That means that staff even got deeper involved into the various aspects of environmental friendly fabrics and production methods. And also into the social responsibility of our production. We think it is very important to reach the end consumer. Raising awareness is one of our goals.

Last year we visited the factories in Portugal two times and the factory in Turkey one time. The agents paid us return visits and of course we have contact with all our suppliers and manufacturers almost everyday. At every meeting we start with the Fair Wear brochure. Most companies have it now ready for us, laying on the conference table, together with our Alchemist Magazines. It has become one with the brand.

For our newly sourced supplier in India we asked in advance audit reports that were already done for their factory. FW has some additional questions related to these audits that we will put to the factory when we visit them in 2015.

We work closely with a PR company. We asked them to find ways to reach more Dutch media to spread our brand mission and raise consumer awareness. That worked out well. We got more publicity in glossy magazines, not only for the products but also and most importantly for our story behind the products. In depth interviews are being prepared.

We made a new design for our website, with more background info, stories and links to the sustainable and social aspects of Alchemist.



## 1. Sourcing strategy

### ***1.1. Sourcing strategy & pricing***

90% of our production is done in Portugal. Our agent is well aware of our demands when she introduces new factories. When meeting new manufacturers or agents in other countries our first question is if they have been audited. We still find it very difficult to find audited factories. This takes a lot of time and energy. We would gratefully work from an audited database to avoid unnecessary costs. In 2014 we travelled to Morocco to visit 3 factories. They work at the high end of the fashion market but none were audited. They work for famous fashion designers, mainly from France. The factories were clean, well organised and well equipped with the latest highly innovative machinery. Our contact person and the people in charge were mainly well educated women. We were positively impressed and hope to return.

### ***1.2. Organisation of the sourcing department***

See organisation chart

### ***1.3. Production cycle***

In 2014 we started with the introduction of 2 main collections, summer and winter and 2 smaller in season 'drops', that are being produced in the factories low season period.

### ***1.4. Supplier relations***

We have a long and steady relation with most of our suppliers for many years. We are a family based organisation and we find that our best results and contacts are with similar companies. We speak each others language. Unfortunately we had to stop working with 2 of our newly found manufacturers. Mainly because they could not reach our quality and transparency standards.

### ***1.5. Integration monitoring activities and sourcing decisions***

See our sourcing strategy



## 2. Coherent system for monitoring and remediation

See our sourcing strategy.

**90%** of our production is done in Portugal where wages are bargained collectively, we can be sure the wages are paid according to Portuguese law. Portugal is classified by FWF as a low risk country given that local institutions can guarantee the compliance with basic standards. We visit all Portuguese factories 2 times per year. The agent came over to us also this last year. At every meeting we discuss Fair Wear and our ethical mission to combine high end fashion with sustainable responsibility. In Portugal all factories are more than aware of our mission. They are open and willing to share information. They are proud to show us their new innovative techniques and fabrics, that are all a step closer to more sustainable fashion.

We agreed with the different Portuguese factories that they will combine shipments of samples and production to be more economic in transport. (Transport that is done by road and not by air.) Our agent directs the organisation of this operation. Goods from different factories are even packed together in one box. For factories to work together like this is quit unique and shows their willingness to work and improve sustainability with and for us.

The quantities we produce in India are (still) so small that our runs have to be done in the better sample factories. This means not in the huge country side factories. We visited both sort of factories over 25 years and can tell the difference in labour conditions from our own experience. In 2014 we started sourcing for a new Indian production partner. We are very happy to have found a promising new agency. At our first meeting they themselves raised the subject of our Fair Wear membership. They even send us the audits they had already had for two of their factories. It would be really a huge step forward if we find out that we are interesting partners for each other. Here we can have more transparency. Small as we are we do have some influence and leverage.

If we continue to work with Turkey remains to be seen. Due to the inflexible and high quantity demands. We visit the Turkey factory 1 time each year. And the agent visits us also 1 time per year. The collaboration is positively willing from both sides but we encounter difficulties in the inflexible Turkish production possibilities. As in India, our production quantities are small and also our fabrics are delicate. That means that our production has to be done in the better factories where well trained seamstresses know how to handle silk and voile. We discuss these subjects with our agent, because she works for high end Scandinavian brands, and because we consistently emphasize our sustainable mission, she is familiar with and well aware of our demands.

As a test we made a minimal production run in Bulgaria. It was not to our mutual satisfaction. The factory was introduced by a Dutch partner, well aware of our sustainable and social mission. The factory makes high end costumes and jackets. Unfortunately we could not reach each others demands.

We work hands on and are in constant contact with all our suppliers and agents. We believe that by creating a positive and motivating atmosphere and by sharing our thoughts and beliefs one and one can be three.

### ***2.1. External production***

Not applicable

## **3. Complaints handling**

In the last year we did not encounter complaints. We left the FWF hand out in all the factories. We visited new factories in Portugal and Morocco and made a tour around the production departments. These factories work very strict and are well organised. All corridors between the machines and working places are well indicated and left empty. It is very clean, protective working gear when necessary is used. There is fresh air, enough light and all security measures are applied. Working hours and breaks are strictly regulated.

## **4. Training and capacity building**

### ***4.1. Activities to inform staff members***

We are glad to find that awareness for sustainable fashion is growing. Although too slow to our opinion. But we do find that more and more customers and retailers are interested in the story behind our brand. That implicates that staff members also get new questions. We welcome these questions. We have to find answers and or solutions that will only improve our mission. Answers we find at Fair Wear or through our suppliers and manufacturers. A fashion fair is always a good place to learn about new developments. And since our agents, mills and manufacturers know what we are looking for they prepare the most updated info for us.

### ***4.2. Activities to inform agents***

See our sourcing strategy.

### ***4.3. Activities to inform manufacturers and workers***

See our sourcing and monitoring strategy

## **5. Information management**

See our sourcing strategy and supplier relations



## 6. Transparency & communication

In all our external communication, our own Magazine, PR, our website etc. we emphasize our brand mission. We added hangtags to garments made from fabrics with GOTS certificates or made from recycled fabrics. For this group we would like to add a Fair Wear logo to give the consumer the correct info while making their buying decision. We believe that this will strongly raise consumer awareness and willingness to make a change.

## 7. Stakeholder Engagement

See our sourcing and monitoring strategy. Again; it would be very useful if we could have the help of an audited factories database.

## 8. Corporate Social Responsibility

Our brand mission consists of two parts; 1 the social responsibility and 2 the environmental responsibility. These 2 meet each other when certain production techniques involve hazardous substances or working conditions.

Our goal is to use sustainable and environmental friendly fabrics and to have production done in FW audited factories.

