

REWE GROUP / TOOM BAUMARKT

# GUIDELINE

FOR NATURAL STONE PRODUCTS

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## I OBJECTIVES AND AREA OF APPLICATION

REWE Group primarily offers natural stone products via its sales line toom Baumarkt. The majority of these products are either intended for application in outdoor areas, such as gardens, or for interior fittings for bathrooms and kitchens. Typical natural stone products include floor and wall panels, kerbstones, paving stones, steps, stone palisades, tiles, windowsills, kitchen worktops and decorative accessories made of granite, lime and sandstone.

In its “Guideline for Sustainable Business Practices”<sup>1)</sup>, REWE Group acknowledges its social and environmental corporate responsibility. REWE Group thereby aims to actively participate in solving social and ecological problems arising from the production and processing of natural stone products. To this end, REWE Group requires its suppliers throughout the supply chain – from wholesale to stone processing through to the quarries – to comply with the minimum standards summarised in this guideline. This guideline, which was drawn up in cooperation with external experts and NGOs, includes comprehensive supplier requirements regarding social responsibility, occupational safety and environmental protection, specifications for product traceability and for independent controls. Furthermore, REWE Group is dedicated to making suppliers, employees and customers aware of the significance of a more sustainable natural stone production and offering them guidance and recommendations for action in the form of this guideline.

REWE Group recognises the fact that particularly in non-OECD countries such as India and China, socially and ecologically reprehensible practices are applied in the quarrying and processing of natural stone. In many cases, occupational safety standards are not adequately complied with, which results in preventable accidents among the workers.

The area of application of this guideline includes quarries and stoneworking businesses in non-OECD countries, as these are the major suppliers of the natural stone products procured by REWE Group and the need for action is most urgent there. In addition, it includes wholesale and toom Baumarkt.

<sup>1)</sup> <http://www.rewe-group.com/en/sustainability/publications/guidelines-for-sustainable-business-practices/>

## II FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

Natural stones such as marble, granite or sandstone are primarily quarried as large ingots in surface mines. This involves the use of stone cutting saws and scrapers, and sometimes also explosives. Quarrying still requires a great deal of manual work. Processing spans several production steps and can be allocated to different plants which may be in close vicinity to the quarries, but also in more distant locations.<sup>2)</sup> Important processing steps include the sawing of the ingots to smaller pieces or panels, cutting, lapping and polishing. Several DIN and EN standards specify standard dimensions and quality requirements for natural stone products.

China and India are the two main producers of natural stones, each with 21 million tonnes per year in 2008 which corresponds to around 20 per cent of global production.<sup>3)</sup> China not only produces natural stone in its own quarries, but also imports ingots on a large scale for further processing. The three regions of Fujian in the East, Shandong in the North and Chongqing in Central China account for the largest proportion of China's natural stone industry.<sup>4)</sup>

With 65 per cent of the national natural stone production, the leading region in India is the federal state of Rajasthan.<sup>5)</sup> Quarrying and processing of natural stones represents the second largest industry after agriculture there.<sup>6)</sup>



<sup>2)</sup> Küppers, Barbara (2009)

<sup>3)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4)</sup> Hütz-Adams, Friedel (2008)

<sup>5)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6)</sup> Küppers, Barbara (2009)

### III PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING OF NATURAL STONE PRODUCTS

Several studies examined the ecological and, most importantly, the social implications of natural stone production in India and China.<sup>7)</sup> Various media reports also addressed this issue, often focussing on child labour, which is widespread in India.

Social problems arising from natural stone production in non-OECD countries such as India and China include child labour and poor social protection of the workers. Deficits in working conditions and in occupational safety<sup>8)</sup> are also of importance, leading to a high rate of work-related accidents and chronic diseases such as silicosis (pneumoconiosis), as well as eye and hearing impairments.

Environmental impacts of natural stone production include landscape depletion, considerable dust loads, environmentally damaging disposal of inadequately cleaned waste water via local bodies of water or compound, as well as improper waste disposal.<sup>9)</sup> Local water supplies may be affected so that drinking water must be carried for miles, as the groundwater in close proximity to the quarries has become undrinkable.<sup>10)</sup>



<sup>7)</sup> Von Hauff, Michael (2008), Hütz-Adams, Friedel (2007) and Küppers, Barbara (2009)

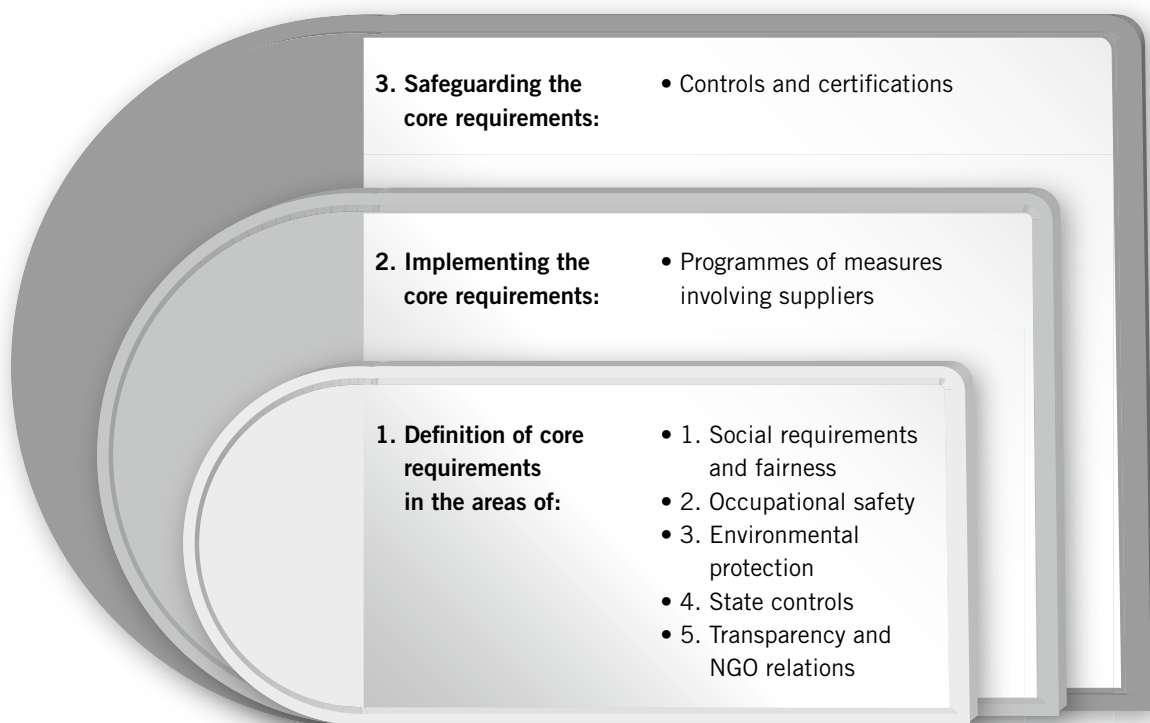
<sup>8)</sup> Stohrer, Saskia (2010)

<sup>9)</sup> Hütz-Adams, Friedel (2007) und Küppers, Barbara (2009)

<sup>10)</sup> Hütz-Adams, Friedel (2008)

## IV DEMANDS AND REQUIREMENTS

The REWE Group Guideline for Natural Stone Products defines core requirements for suppliers and processors of natural stones in five areas: social requirements and fairness, occupational safety, environmental protection, state controls, as well as transparency and NGO relations.



Structure of the guideline for natural stone products of REWE Group

The implementation of core requirements is coordinated with the relevant suppliers through a set of measures and is ensured through a control and certification programme.

With the aid of detailed guidelines, REWE Group defines the necessary goals, measures, inspection requirements, deadlines for implementation, as well as accompanying studies for the individual areas of requirements, origins and supply chains. In some subareas, individual requirements are only substantiated after the status has been evaluated. The core requirements outlined below are to be implemented by suppliers to the extent that they are not explicitly prohibited through statutory regulations in the country of the supplier.

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#### 4.1 Human rights, social requirements and fairness

- No exploitative child labour may occur in quarries and processing plants. The minimum age set out under national law or ILO (International Labour Organisation) conventions must be complied with. As a rule, this age limit is 15 years for general work and 18 years for potentially hazardous work.
- Forced labour, human trafficking and bounded labour of any kind, as well as the use of physical violence against the workers must be excluded.
- Freedom of association and the right to collective negotiations must be granted to the employees.
- Companies in the supply chain should be able to prove compliance with social standards by way of providing certifications, audits etc. Trade companies must become a member of the BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative), if possible within six months after entry into force of this guideline. Stoneworking companies and quarry owners should be audited within the first year after entry into force of this guideline, if possible. Alternatively, a certification according to an equivalent or higher social standard such as SA 8000 is also accepted.
- The workers must be paid living wages, however at least minimum wages in accordance with applicable national standards.
- Weekly working hours must not exceed 48 hours on a regular basis and up to twelve hours of overtime. Statutory specifications regarding working hours beyond these requirements must be complied with. Workers must take one day off at least every six workdays.
- Discrimination of any kind is to be prevented. To this end, suppliers must develop and implement non-discrimination policies.

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## 4.2 Requirements regarding occupational safety

- Buildings, machinery, equipment and facilities at the workplaces must be safe and workers must be able to use them safely.
- Employees at potentially hazardous workplaces must be provided with adequate safety equipment, and safe application of the equipment must be ensured.
- The workers should be trained in occupational safety and first aid.
- First aid equipment must be available. In case of work-related accidents and diseases, employees should be granted access to free medical care.
- Shady and dry resting places, drinking water and sanitary facilities must be available to the workers.

## 4.3 Requirements Regarding Environmental Protection

- Any environmental damage must be documented continuously.
- The dust load is to be minimised to the greatest extent possible.
- Waste and waste water must be cleaned and disposed of in an adequate manner as provided by statutory regulations.
- Settlements, bodies of water, natural habitats and agricultural areas under cultivation in the local surroundings must be protected from serious impairments or damages caused by dust, waste or waste water resulting from the production and processing of natural stones.



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#### 4.4 Requirements regarding lawfulness and state control

- Production and processing plants must be licensed or approved by the competent authorities and thus be operated legally.
- Equipment should be subject to supervision by public authorities and supervisory bodies.

#### 4.5 Requirements regarding transparency, product traceability and stakeholder involvement

- Addresses and GPS positions of processing plants and quarries, as well as the names of responsible contacts in the companies must be disclosed to REWE Group.
- Suppliers must implement the system for product traceability chosen by REWE Group and the independent certifier and commit themselves to intended application.
- In case of serious local land use conflicts, severe accidents in production or processing, or should competent authorities or courts determine serious violations of the law committed by the suppliers, REWE Group must be informed unsolicited by the suppliers.
- Suppliers should promote an open exchange with non-governmental organisations and neighbourhood initiatives and take their interests into account when making decisions.

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## V IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The implementation of the REWE Group Guideline for Natural Stone Products may take several years, depending on supply chain and supplier. The individual plans for implementation and time lines will be specified in the individual accompanying documents and coordinated with the suppliers.

REWE Group aims to continually extend its offer of certified and labelled natural stone products from sustainable production.

Compliance with the requirements of this guideline should be ensured throughout the supply chain – from the quarry to stone processing plants through to retail sales:

- A system for the traceability of natural stone products back to the quarry will be established in cooperation with an independent audit or certification institution.
- The independent audit or certification institution will be commissioned to verify that compliance with the requirements is provided, as well as the reliability of product traceability.
- Suppliers must agree to announced and unannounced inspections by these institutions.
- Successfully certified suppliers are entitled to labelling the certified products.

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Discussing the issue of natural stone products is important to us.  
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