

File  
**Environment**





## Formerly Ecosafer, since January 2006 Vincotte Environment

### Your one-stop shop for all your environmental needs

Vincotte Environment was set up in 2000 by the Vincotte group under the name Ecosafer, with the objective of pooling all the available knowledge about the environment in one independently operating company. Since then, this company with 60 employees has grown to become an established figure in the environmental sector, firmly established in all three regions of Belgium. Manager Philippe De Crom comments on the organisation behind the new name.

**Philippe De Crom:** "The first thing I should say is that we as a multidisciplinary team of environment specialists have a history that dates back much further than 2000. I might even go so far as to say that we were one of the first environmental offices and consultancies in Belgium. The only difference was that our services were initially spread around and offered by different departments at Vincotte. That's why we took the step at the end of the 1990s of pooling all our environmental services in one separate unit. To explicitly stress this independence, we then decided on a company name that did not mention the 'whole organisation'. Tactically this was a sound decision, but strategically it was an expensive operation because you then have to build up name recognition."

#### Professionalism, confidence and people

**Philippe De Crom:** "Our new name is not just a cosmetic move or a convenience solution. It goes far beyond that. There are actually two lines of thought behind it. First, despite our 'other name', we were still a Vincotte company, with employees who continued to see themselves as 'Vincotters'. In our new name we've again clearly acknowledged that feeling. The other line is that

clients have often said to us, 'you used to be a part of Vincotte, didn't you?'. So there was some misunderstanding, and it was also rather tiresome for us to have to explain the situation over and over again. Practical experience also teaches us that the Vincotte 'brand' is a particularly strong one that just about everyone associates with a market leader in quality, safety and environmental services. This force is now also present in our new name, where I'd like to emphasise again

**"Vincotte Environment strives to be a professional and dynamic environmental office and consultancy with both international ambitions and the will to contribute to sustainable development."**

that 'Environment' is more than just a reference to our activities. Maybe I can put it like this: at Vincotte Environment, the focus is on individual people, in all their facets, and linking them in with the environment. Mutual trust, together with our professionalism in methods and procedures, forms the basis for our environmental services."

#### The integrated approach

**Philippe De Crom:** "It'll also be clear that our working methods are identical to the other Vincotte services. This too is given extra emphasis by our new name. This synergy – which has indeed always been there – enables Vincotte Environment to offer a comprehensive service today in the fields of environmental safety and energy studies that you won't find anywhere else. That's why our relations with a large number of our clients have

spontaneously developed into partnerships, in which, using our role as a knowledge partner, we can just as well conduct an EIA study as provide specialised environmental advice,

for example. So I see it as my ambition to ensure that Vincotte Environment can keep making the difference for the clients – in particular the authorities and the business community – by providing high-quality advice and empirical studies, and where the main focus is on the real impact on people and the environment."

# EnviroWrap®

## "The plastic sheeting with the most certificates in the world"

Tony Allsop, Managing Director of EnviroWrap® Limited and every inch the English gentleman, is in an unequalled position to know how to conduct his business: with the right papers in his pocket. In his case, that means the right quality, safety and environmental certificates, so that his customers can work in compliance with the strictest safety and environment directives.

Everyone active in the construction industry these days knows that you do not start building without certificates. The question you have to ask is not "how far do we have to go in this regard", but instead "how far do we 'want' to go in this regard". Julie Nenquin, Contract Manager Risk & Environment at Vincotte Environment, knows exactly what that involves: making sure that you are always one step ahead of your customers.

#### Yesterday still building the business, today market leader

**Tony Allsop:** "Since the mid-1980s, we have been active in the commercial and industrial construction industry as a scaffolding contractor. In addition, we are involved in complex construction projects in areas such as bridge construction and refurbishment, power stations, petrochemical tank sites, shipyards, and drilling platforms. In a relatively short time, we have developed into one of the major players in Europe, having a skilled work force engaged with projects in Western and Eastern Europe along with agents in the Middle East and Australia. Naturally, such a broad scope requires me, as a businessman, to keep a good eye on the market."

**Julie Nenquin:** "In that regard, it is good to keep in mind that the world of international contractors and subcontractors has made enormous progress during the last decade in the area of environmental and safety regulations. This means that keeping pace is a must. I daresay that a modern construction site, regardless of whether it is in a city or on a petrochemical site, bears no resemblance to a construction site of say 15 years ago. Every one of the process components complies with the highest quality standards with regard to personnel, equipment and the environment. Certification must also be regarded as a guarantee for the people working on the site, the people present in the building, and of course the people on the street. Product certification

for the environment and safety is also becoming increasingly important."

**Tony Allsop:** "Absolutely, because you have to take a whole set of factors into account, including things such as all the relevant insurance aspects. Just to make things quite clear, this is not the only reason why we are constantly working more safely. As a scaffolding contractor, we know from personal experience that a more well-conceived approach was necessary to deal with dust, smoke emissions, gases and chemical pollutants. Wherever people are busy painting, sandblasting or grinding, environmentally harmful materials will always be released. This is why we started looking for a system in the early 1990s to screen our scaffolds against storms, dust and water. We initially used conventional tarps, and in 1996 we started experimenting with agricultural plastic sheeting. That was no doubt a step in the right direction, but that sort of plastic proved to be too thin and it tore too often. That was certainly not compatible with the safety conditions with which we had to comply. In 1999, I came up with the idea of using polyethylene sheeting – in retrospect, the ideal solution – and I am not just saying that because we are now the market leader in that area with EnviroWrap®."

**Julie Nenquin:** "Practical experience and tests conducted by Vincotte irrefutably demonstrate the strong points of EnviroWrap® heat-shrink sheeting. Besides its fire-resistant properties, the material offers other advantages such as strength, UV resistance and weather resistance. As of 2006, EnviroWrap® is an especially effective system, based on a technology that is still evolving in terms of mechanical strength and material properties."

#### Safety means quality

**Tony Allsop:** "I am certainly pleased that you refer to it as a system, because that is exactly what it is – a system

that fully reflects our view that safety is synonymous with quality. We have given shape to that view by means of an overarching management system that specifies everything related to quality, safety and the environment. If you open an EnviroWrap® brochure, you will encounter six or seven certificates right away. Our working method is specified in the ISO 9001:2000 standard, our specially trained installers are certified, our safety management system is VCA<sup>1</sup> certified, the safety of EnviroWrap® heat-shrink sheeting is guaranteed by manufacturer traceability, and its quality is guaranteed by the VGS trademark<sup>1</sup>. In addition, we have had EnviroWrap® sheeting tested against various fire safety standards, in particular the LSP 1207 (fire hazard in an indoor environment) and LSP 1215 (fire hazard in an outdoor environment) tests of the Loss Prevention Certification Board (UKAS) plus DIN4102-B1 and the German general construction approvals certificate (Allgemeines bauaufsichtliches Prüfzeugnis)."

**Julie Nenquin:** "The VGS testing programme we used at Vincotte for EnviroWrap® heat-shrink sheeting is based on this DIN standard. Insiders will know the reason for this right away: it is a standard that is often used in Europe for measuring fire safety aspects. We performed the two tests stipulated by this standard: first for the burning rate, and second for flammability as measured using the flame pit test."

**Julie Nenquin:** "Perhaps it is not immediately obvious why a screening system for scaffolds, platforms and materials also has to be fire-resistant. However, there are a multitude of reasons that justify extensive demonstration of the fire resistance of the sheeting material with respect to standards. It is also partly something that is customer-driven. There are many conceivable situations where customers would like to have a sheeting material that meets the appropriate fire resistance standards – for one, any environment with a potential fire hazard.

<sup>1</sup> This mark guarantees that the sheeting conforms to the B1 classification according to the DIN 4102 B1 standard of the Deutsches Institut für Normung.



**Tony Allsop**  
Managing Director EnviroWrap® Limited

For maintenance work in an oil refinery, that is obviously priority number one. And I would not even like to think about the consequences of a fire breaking out in an area frequented by the public."

**Tony Allsop:** "EnviroWrap® has an outstanding reputation with regard to fire safety. For instance, our heat-shrink sheeting is among other things used as temporary screening for welding work. Any welding sparks that hit the sheeting will not ignite it. In that sense, I can justifiably say that our system provides a safe working environment. However, for the sake of completeness, I note that EnviroWrap® is available in a standard version and a fire-resistant version. Its typical applications include protecting people and the environment during painting work, sandblasting and asbestos removal, protecting against frost, weather and seasonal influences (such as during a shutdown), protecting goods and machinery during transport, completely enclosing everything from a small production plant to an entire drilling platform, tent structures, and even temporary advertising columns that act as screens for laser projectors. There is a nice story: two years ago we 'wrapped' a drilling platform structure, and it still remains wrapped exactly the same way even now. That can count as quite a reference."

### VGS: your continuous guarantee of safety

**Julie Nenquin:** "Such references may be good for your image, but as a company you will always be better off with a reference such as the VGS guarantee. Here, I would like to add that nowadays you cannot even put together a references portfolio without certification – certificates are a basic necessity. That is also why EnviroWrap® is now the first in the market with a VGS trademark."

**Tony Allsop:** "Naturally, there are a great many good reasons for that. Fire-resistant products are by definition subject to strict regulations, and so it



**Julie Nenquin**  
Contract Manager Risk & Environment,  
Vinçotte Environment

is just better to have the best possible safeguards. However, what is more important is that VGS is internationally recognised and respected, and an even more important consideration is that it is a product certificate with continuous production auditing. That makes it a continuous guarantee of the quality and safety of our product."

**Julie Nenquin:** "That very specifically means that as a certification agency, we keep a very close eye on the products. Most certificates are awarded as a 'one-time event', but VGS is 'awarded' every three months, in a manner of speaking – which means tested. Every three months, we take samples that we obtain from the manufacturer of the sheeting or simply collect from one of the building sites. These are the so-called 'verification samples', and a test programme is completed for each one. Those test results are reviewed by the certification committee."

**Tony Allsop:** "With the combination of this rational VGS approach and a production process with tracking & tracing verification at our manufacturer, with the result that we always know the proper composition of every batch, I can today say that in EnviroWrap® we have developed a screening system that is far ahead of its time."

**Julie Nenquin:** "On top of that, it is a screening system that is from now on very recognisable. From April 2006 onwards, all new rolls of heat-shrink sheeting will be printed with the Vinçotte VGS logo, with around six logos per square metre. We do not think that we could possibly put the 'Vinçotte was here' message across more clearly!"



### Maintaining quality and safety over time:

VGS (VeiligheidsGarantie, Garantie de Sécurité, Guaranteed Safety) is a conformity mark that was created 20 years ago. What makes VGS unique is that it is a product certification programme with continuous production auditing. In other words, it is a continuous guarantee of the safety of the product. People are sometimes inclined to forget that no certificate is worth anything if the delivered product does not match the certified product. The VGS system provides a simple solution to that problem: if the product no longer conforms to the stipulated requirements, the conformity mark is withdrawn.

### The VGS conformity mark is based on five basic principles:

- There must be objective technical criteria for the product in question. For VGS, these criteria are specified in test programmes based on national and international standards.
- The manufacturer enters into a binding relationship with the certification agency and is thus granted permission to use the conformity mark.
- The product has successfully passed the initial acceptance tests specified in the VGS test programmes. These tests are audited by the certification agency.
- Tests are made on samples taken from the manufacturer or from the market. These samples are suitable for verifying maintenance of conformity.
- The certification committee reviews these activities and takes suitable measures as necessary. In case of doubt, the committee can call on the assistance of independent experts.



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