KAYA&KATO and IBM to develop a textile transparent supply chain documentation platform with the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Cologne, October 2020: "For me, sustainability in the textile industry means: seamstresses in Bangladesh are not allowed to sew our clothes for a pittance of less than 50 cents an hour. And no toxic chemicals may be used and no untreated waste water may be released into the environment. This is the goal of a sustainable textile supply chain, which we are awarding with the Green Button." says Federal Development Minister Dr. Gerd Müller. He and his team are committed to implementing humane working and living conditions and the protection and sustainable use of the environment worldwide. In the textile sector this is not an easy task, as the industry is highly interwoven internationally, and the supply chains are complex.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has long been calling for more transparency in global supply chains and supports the cooperation project between KAYA&KATO and IBM to develop a blockchain based solution for transparent documentation of the textile supply chain. For companies and consumers alike, the complete transparency and traceability of the fabric that make up the finished garment is thus possible.

With the help of the IBM Blockchain solution, customers and partners can identify the origin and processing of the fabrics at every production and distribution step. The aim is to create transparency from the fibre to the finished product, and to develop a forgery-proof protocol for the traceability of ecological materials. The data of a transaction, which can be viewed by all the relevant parties involved, are recorded in blocks and stored in the form of an unchangeable, chronological chain. If an asset changes ownership, this is also automatically visible within the blockchain.

Over approximately the next 10 weeks, KAYA&KATO and IBM will develop a minimum viable product prototype that will cover the basic functionalities of the planned solution as a first step. A further objective of the project is to identify and ensure the developmental benefit of this blockchain solution and to develop the basis for a possible industry-wide solution.

In line with the methodology IBM has developed for its blockchain solutions, they will be looking to redefine the most important business relationships in the ecosystem on the basis of trust, transparency, and create a more intensive form of cooperation with partners, customers and suppliers. This allows IBM Blockchain solutions to offer consistent, secure and controlled data transparency, creating new value that can also serve as documentation for industry regulators.

"We are looking forward to this exciting and innovative project with KAYA&KATO, which is intensively supported by politics", says Christian Schultze-Wolters, Director of Blockchain Solutions DACH at IBM. "We want to set an example especially within this industry and offer other companies from the textile industry the opportunity to join us in further development and help creating the solution".

"The sensible combination of sustainability and digitization is a forward-looking approach for us. The project combines both aspects in an excellent way and promotes supply chain transparency. For KAYA&KATO, this is the decisive reason to initiate the development of a block chain. We are looking forward to the implementation and eagerly await the first approaches to solutions in cooperation with IBM," says Dr. Stefan Rennicke, co-founder and managing director of KAYA&KATO GmbH.

KAYA&KATO is one of the first 27 companies to be certified with the "Green Button" by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Green Button is the seal introduced by the BMZ for textiles produced in a socially and ecologically sustainable manner. The Green Button is the first state seal to combine requirements for textiles and for the entire company. The Green Button can only be awarded if the product and the company comply with all requirements. This is what is special about the state textile seal: the entire company is tested. Individual flagship products alone are not enough. A total of 46 demanding social and environmental criteria must be met: 20 company criteria and 26 social and ecological product criteria. The Green Button is awarded also to textiles that have been produced according to particularly demanding social and environmental standards.

About KAYA&KATO
Since 2015, the company has been manufacturing workwear from innovative fabrics, combining chic design with high quality and consistent sustainability. The products are made from organic cotton or a polyester-cotton blend using recycled plastic waste from the sea. KAYA&KATO offers a transparent insight into the complex supply chain of the textile industry, with ready-to-wear clothing being made exclusively in Europe. In order to manufacture high-quality products and guarantee fair working conditions, the company knows all suppliers personally. Currently, the label offers chef's jackets, chef's shirts, aprons, T-shirts, service clothing and complementary textile products for the catering, hotel, food and retail industries. In addition to ecology and fairness, the focus is on durable quality and special style, so that workwear can be worn proudly. The aim of the label is to change the labour market for workwear in the long term.

More information is available at www.kaya-kato.de or follow us on Facebook and Instagram at @kayaandkato

About IBM blockchain
IBM is one of the leader in open-source blockchain solutions built for the enterprise. Since 2016, IBM has worked with hundreds of clients across financial services, supply chain, government, retail, digital rights management and healthcare to implement blockchain applications, and operates a number of networks running live and in production. IBM is an early member of Hyperledger, an open source collaborative effort created to advance cross-industry blockchain technologies. For more information about IBM Blockchain, visit https://www.ibm.com/blockchain/ or follow us on Twitter at @ibmblockchain.

Press contact:

KAYA&KATO GmbH
Hannah Wolf
hannah.wolf@kaya-kato.de

IBM Deutschland GmbH
Beate Werlin
Beate.werlin@de.ibm.com