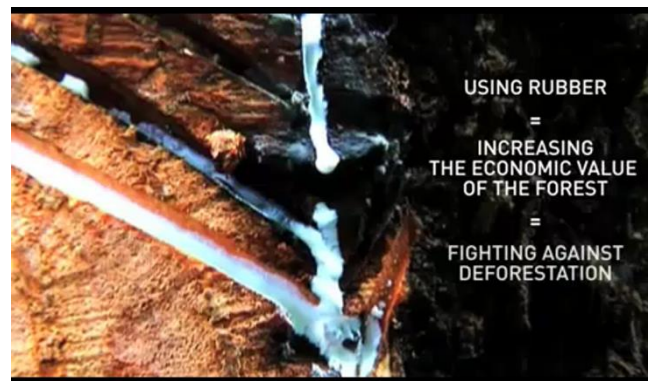


## Pod 4. Sustainable management in Tropical Rainforest ecosystems



**Ecological Materials** - The Veja trainers and accessories are made of organic cotton, wild rubber from the Amazon, vegetable-tanned leather and recycled plastic bottles.

**Organic Cotton** - Veja works in the North-East of Brazil with a co-operative of organic cotton farmers. Over 320 families have adopted the agro-ecology farming model with the technical support of the local NGO, ESPLAR. Cotton and food crops are cultivated without chemicals or pesticides. Veja buys organic cotton at around twice the market price.

**Wild Rubber from the Amazon** - The soles of Veja trainers are made from wild rubber from the Amazonian Rainforest. The Amazon is the only place on earth where rubber trees grow in the wild. Veja buys Amazonian rubber at a premium. This allows the rubber tappers to live decently from rubber tapping, reducing the financial appeal of land clearance. This is an economically sustainable way to fight against deforestation.

**Ecological Leather** - Since 2006 Veja has used vegetable-tanned leather. Vegetable-tanned leather is a chrome-free leather tanned with organic compounds only. Leather is usually tanned using heavy metals, like chrome, which generate high levels of pollution in the waters close to tanneries. Veja has replaced heavy metals with acacia extracts, a natural tannin.

**Recycled Plastic Bottles** - Veja uses waterproof bottle mesh on the soles of sneakers. It takes three recycled plastic bottles to make a pair of shoes. Bottles are collected from the streets of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and are later crushed and transformed into fibre.

### **Social Responsibility**

- **Manufacturing** - The factory where Veja trainers are made in South Brazil respects the standards of work established by the International Labour Organization. 80% of workers at the factory are unionized.
- **Logistics** - Veja footwear and accessories are transported by ship from Brazil to Le Havre in France, where they are then taken to Paris by boat.
- **Logistics** are managed by Ateliers Sans Frontières, a French social association which enables people who have been unemployed to return to the workforce through training

### **Why does the Amazon rainforest need to be managed in a sustainable way?**

- Deforestation is a big problem. Where once there was forest, there is now field upon field of cattle and the opposition between the forest protectors and cattle farmers here has been an ongoing issue for the last 40 years.
- Chico Mendes, the Brazilian environmentalist and trade union leader who was killed by a rancher in 1988

### **Wild Rubber**

- The rubbers tappers work inside the Amazon rainforest.
- They get extra money a premium for every kilo of rubber, which specifically goes towards protecting the forest.
- Younger rubber tappers have realised they can now make more money through their work with us than raising cattle

### **Rubber tapping**

- A typical day usually starts at 4am, when they head out on their forest trails to extract and collect rubber milk from the Hevea trees.
- Normally collects 10 litres of rubber milk a day, which we use for the soles of Veja sneakers.
- Through this process, we are able to support the working communities here and protect the forest from being cut down.
- The rubber tappers are the first to see the impact that climate change has on the Amazon rainforest; the rivers that are drying up; fires that didn't exist before.
- The rubber tappers can be the destroyers or the guardians of the forest: Veja try to push them towards being its guardians
- Hevea tree plantation he has created on previously deforested land that was used for cattle farming.

### **The factory**

- We work with a factory in southern Brazil to make our Veja trainers, and it has always been important to us that our workers have rights and good working conditions.
- At the beginning, they were surprised that we bought such expensive raw materials, such as organic cotton that often costs twice the market price of regular cotton.
- Today, they understand why we do this and they have become close partners in helping us to source these materials.

1. Why are Veja trainers sustainable?

2. How do the workers benefit?

3. How does the rainforest benefit?

4. How do the rubber tappers benefit from Veja trainers?