“Atos has reached a level of maturity which positions it amongst the leaders in new information and communication technologies.”

Interview / Pierre-François Thaler, Co-Founder of EcoVadis, talks about the evolution of evaluating the social and environment performance of suppliers.

Why did you set up EcoVadis?

Pierre-François Thaler: Six years ago, the purchasing departments of large organizations such as Atos told us about the difficulties they were having in terms of measuring the social and environmental performance of their hundreds, if not thousands, of suppliers throughout the world. We set up EcoVadis so as to make available a worldwide database on which purchasers and suppliers can link up and pool their efforts. This global platform enables enterprises to access evaluations of their principal suppliers based on 21 social and environmental responsibility indicators, including an analysis of how these results have evolved year on year. EcoVadis now has a staff of 100 and we provide support to more than 100 large multinationals for whom we evaluate around 10,000 new suppliers each year.

What are your ambitions for the company?

Pierre-François Thaler: In the medium term, it’s to create a global index which measures the sustainable development performance that impacts millions of companies, of all sizes, all over the planet.

What are the next challenges in the context of ever sustainable supplier/client relationships?

Pierre-François Thaler: To work in a different way, identify opportunities for innovation as much for the supplier as for the purchaser. These are all good practices which contribute to sustainable development while controlling costs and optimizing service. For example, Atos invites us every year, together with its other partners, to participate in the Global Stakeholder Meeting. This is a good way to establish a permanent dialogue between Atos’ stakeholders and to listen to their issues and concerns. It’s an innovative approach which very few other large companies have put in place.

You have been assessing the social and environmental performance of Atos’ suppliers for a number of years now. How would you describe the current partnership between Atos and EcoVadis?

Pierre-François Thaler: Atos placed its faith in EcoVadis when we were a small company of 12 people. Atos’ visionary approach allowed us to develop our platform and give us credibility in the IT and Telecoms sectors. We have now become the reference platform (E-TASC) used by the main telecoms operators around the world. The purchasing category “SSH” is the most active in our database. As far as our relationship with Atos is concerned, we have improved the integration of sustainable development valuations as part of the purchasing process over the past two years while Atos has continuously improved its scores.