Global Organic Textile Standard - GOTS

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD?

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) was developed in a common approach by leading standard setters with the aim to define and establish world-wide recognised requirements that ensure organic status of textiles.

WHO CAN JOIN?

Small-scale producers and producers groups, Small and medium-sized enterprises, Large-scale enterprises, Vulnerable and minority groups, Internal – suppliers/facilities, Community-based organizations

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE COVERED?

The GOTS standard applies to fiber products, yarns, fabrics, clothes and home textiles. In principle, any product that can be considered as a textile product is covered under the scope of GOTS. Leather products are not covered. A product can only be certified and labeled only as a whole (with a GOTS label indicating: ‘organic’ or made with organic’).

FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2012, 3016 textile facilities were certified in more than 50 countries (India, Turkey and China among others)
- 16 GOTS approved certifiers
- In 2008, Wal-Mart was the 1st committed large-scale enterprise to retail GOTS certified products

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Disclaimer: the graph was generated using the proportion of the sustainability initiative’s requirements matching the criteria used in Standards Map Database in consultation with standard organizations.

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For detailed information about this and other standards check out: Standardsmap.org
WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES?

- Companies participating in the GOTS certification scheme must comply with all of the standard’s principles and requirements.
- GOTS relies on a dual system to check compliance with the relevant criteria consisting of on-site auditing and residue testing.
- Certification requirements are derived from version 3.0 of the GOTS standard that was released 1st March 2011.
- GOTS has a practical public data base that enables its users to search for GOTS certified entities in the supply chain, their location, fields of operation and GOTS certified products according to individual parameters.
- The standard provides two labels or grades: A textile product carrying the GOTS label “organic” must contain “a minimum of 95% certified organic fibers whereas a product with the label ‘made with organic’ must contain a minimum of 70% certified organic fibers.
- Certification of fibers during a conversion period is possible if the applicable farming standard permits such certification.

AUDIT INFORMATION

- **1st, 2nd, 3rd party certification:** Third-party audit is required.
- **Frequency of audits:** Annual and surprise audits.
- **Review process:** 5.2.4.2 operators from post harvest handling through garment making, packing up to exporters inspected annually. Subcontractors (low risk) may be done less frequently.
- **Validity of audit certificate:** One year.

WHAT KIND OF CRITERIA ARE USED FOR THE ASSESSMENT?

- **Pass and fail:** The GOTS program follows a pass/fail approach. Assessment of compliance is done by the GOTS approved certifiers.
- **What happens if non-conformity is found?** If non-compliances are identified by the certifier, corrective actions are provided and need to be implemented before certification is granted. Depending on the kind of non-compliances identified, the implementation of the corrective actions may be verified by follow up documentation check or on-site inspection visit.

ARE THE PRODUCTS TRACEABLE ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN?

Review of records and accounts in order to verify flow of goods (input/output reconciliation and the tracing back) is part of the inspection protocol.

DOES THE INITIATIVE HARMONISE WITH OTHER STANDARDS?

The following standards became completely harmonised with GOTS:

- North American Fiber Standard - Organic Trade Association (USA);
- Guidelines Naturtextil IVN Zertifiziert - International Association Natural Textile Industry (Germany);
- Standards for Processing and Manufacture of Organic Textiles - Soil Association (England);
- Certification and Standards for Organic Cotton Products - Japan Organic Cotton Association (Japan);
- EKO Sustainable Textile Standard - Control Union Certifications (formerly Skal International, Netherlands);
- Standards for Organic Textiles - Ecocert (France);
- Organic Textile Standard - ICEA (Italy);
- Standards for Organic Textiles - ETKO (Turkey);
- Organic Fiber Standards - Oregon Tilth (USA);
- Standards for Processing of Organic Textile Products - OIA (Argentina).

USE OF LOGO ON THE FINAL PRODUCT?

- **Yes:**

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?

GOTS provides free of charge online support services including access to tools and information. Its “Manual for the Implementation of the Global Organic Textile Standard” provides interpretations and clarifications for specific criteria of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). This manual is intended to prevent any inconsistent, inappropriate or incorrect interpretation of the standard and also contains requirements and detailed specifications for the application of the GOTS and the implementation of the related quality assurance system for certifiers. Furthermore, an FAQ is made available on the site.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- **Membership fee:** GOTS is not a membership system for applicants of the certification process.
- **Certification costs:** 1000-3000 Euros per inspected facility and calendar year.
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Tunisia, Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong China, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Europe: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Central America: El Salvador, North America: Canada, Mexico, United States of America, South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay, Australia & Oceania: Australia

In principle the GOTS standard system is applicable to textile processors and manufacturers all over the world. Source: The GOTS certified entities, their processes and certified product groups are listed in the GOTS public data base at //www.global-standard.org/public-database/search.html

STEPS TO JOIN THE INITIATIVE:

1. Initial request and application for GOTS certification is to be addressed to a GOTS Approved Certification Body. They will be able to answer individual questions related to the inspection and certification procedures and will be able to provide individual cost estimation for the certification based on the operator’s location, size, fields of operation and other relevant factors.

2. Entities applying for GOTS certification must comply with minimum social criteria based on the key norms of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Further, operators must have a written environmental policy including procedures on monitoring and minimizing waste and discharges, use of chemicals, energy, water consumption and waste water treatment, including the disposal of sludge.

3. An on-site inspection is carried out by the certification body as part of the certification process. Tracing the organic fiber product flow, assessment of all inputs and accessories used, verification of the waste water treatment system and monitoring social minimum criteria are key elements of the inspection protocol.

4. Entities that receive a GOTS certificate of compliance are free to advertise their certified status to the market. They also become listed in the GOTS public data base of certified entities which is available on the GOTS website.
OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS*:

ENVIROMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Chemicals/Natural organic inputs
- Biodiversity
- Waste
- Water
- Energy

SOCIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Work and Labour Rights - Conditions of Work
- Work and Labour Rights - Conditions of Employment
- Work and Labour Rights - Empowerment of Workers

ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Administration and management: general principle

* based on criteria used in Standards Map. Access Standards Map’s Analysis Module to review specific details on up to 250 sustainability requirement for each of the standards.

EXPLANATION:

- Critical:
  A company that is participating in the GOTS certification scheme needs to work in immediate full compliance with all criteria of the standard. These are therefore presented in Standards Map as ‘critical requirements’.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Standards Map is a web-based interactive tool that centralises, organises and disseminates information on over 100 voluntary sustainability standards. Standards Map is part of the International Trade Centre’s web-based Market Analysis Tools.

More detailed information on the specific requirements of the sustainability initiative can be reviewed: standardsmap.org.