

Brief introduction to the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS, Version 6.0)

1. GOTS ...

... is a **private** standard, launched in 2005. The 6.0 Version is valid since 01 March 2020 and comes into effect on 01 March 2021.

... **replaces** numerous private organic textile standards, which had been on the market in the past.

... is **not required by government law**, but by more and more big players on the worldwide textile market.

2. Who and what can be certified pursuant to GOTS

- ✓ The complete chain of the organic fibre and textile industry, from **postharvest treatment to traders** of finished products **must** be certified. Retailers can be certified on voluntary basis. **Subcontractors** must be audited.
- ✓ Certifiable products include, but are not limited to, **fibre products, yarns, fabrics, garments, fashion textile accessories (carried or worn), textile toys, home textiles, mattresses and bedding products** as well as **textile personal care products**.

3. Origin of raw materials

- ✓ Organic **fibres** can be obtained from sources certified according to internationally recognised organic standards (as Regulation **EC 834/2007, EU 2018/848, NOP**, or any standard covered by the **IFOAM Base Standard**). The respective certifying agencies must be accredited either by IFOAM or according to ISO 17065.
- ✓ All kinds of organic certified fibres can be used, as e.g. **cotton, silk, wool, linen, hemp**, etc.
- ✓ Labelling options according to used fibres are possible:

GOTS	Organic	Made with Organic	Organic in conversion	Made with Organic in conversion
Natural fibres "Organic" (except wool of mulesed animals)	Min. 95%	Min. 70%	--	--
Natural fibres "In Conversion" (except wool of mulesed animals)	Max. 5%	Max. 30%	Min. 95%	Min. 70%
Natural fibres "Conventional" (except conventional cotton and conventional angora wool) Blending organic and conventional fibres of the same type in the same product is not permitted.			Max. 5%	Max. 30%
Lyocell or protein-based fibres derived from non-GMO sources and from certified organic raw materials or pre- or post-consumer waste or from raw materials certified according to a programme that verifies compliance with sustainable management principles				Max. 30%
Recycled synthetic (polymer) fibres from pre- or post-consumer waste: only Polyester, Polyamide, Polypropylene, Elastomultiester (elasterell-p) and Polyurethane (elastane)				Max. 30%
PLA (polylactic acid) fibre, produced from non-GMO bio-mass sources				

Regenerated fibres, like Lyocell, Viscose or Modal: raw materials used shall be non-GMO				
Virgin synthetic (polymer) fibres: Only Polyamide, Polypropylene, Elastomultiester (elasterell-p) and Polyurethane (elastane)		Max. 10%		Max. 10%
Stainless steel fibres and mineral fibres Asbestos, carbon and silver fibres are prohibited				

4. Separation in case of companies producing both organic and conventional

- ✓ The operator applying for GOTS certification must set up a **good system for separating GOTS products from non-GOTS products**. This applies to the reception of the raw material, as well as all steps of processing, storage rooms, etc., up to sale.
- ✓ The best separation, of course, is **in space**: separate warehouses and production lines for organic.
- ✓ However, this may often not be possible; in this case, you can separate in **time**: you process organic at different times on the same line as conventional. Relevant equipment needs to be cleaned before processing organic. Measures must be taken to **prevent contamination** during transport, storage and production.
- ✓ The only exceptions are **retailers (B2C)** who may not provide separate GOTS storage and transport, if their goods are clearly marked with GOTS.

5. Inputs, chemicals, dyes and agents, as well as accessories and packaging materials

- ✓ On all processing steps of the textile chain, only inputs, additives or accessories may be used which have been approved by an accredited certification body. Consequently, all these inputs and additives must be mentioned on the **GOTS List of Approved Inputs** and valid **Letters of Approval** must be available.
- ✓ The requirements for **accessories** are regulated in chapter **2.4.9** of the GOTS. As proof for their GOTS conformity usually an Oeko-Tex-Certificate is sufficient. Additionally, material compositions must be checked. Please note the requirements for fillings & stuffing, and support & frames.

6. Quality of finished products

- ✓ GOTS defines **detailed technical quality parameters** regarding rubbing, perspiration, light, saliva and washing fastness, as well as dimensional changes. Additionally, **limit values for residue parameters** are formulated. Regular residue tests of GOTS articles must be performed to prove GOTS conformity. Requirements are regulated in chapter **2.4.14 and 2.4.15**.
- ✓ If individual **residue limits** for a GOTS product (regardless of whether it is raw material, semifinished or final product) are exceeded, the product loses its GOTS status. Reasons for exceeding the limit must be determined and, if necessary, further residue tests must be conducted.
- ✓ Only final GOTS products shall meet required **technical quality parameters**. According to GOTS 6.0, final GOTS products also lose their GOTS status if technical quality requirements are not met.

7. Social criteria

- ✓ Employers must comply with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and national laws on **freely chosen employment, freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, safe and hygienic working conditions, child labour, working hours, discrimination, harsh or inhumane treatment and other** (GOTS chapter 3).

- ✓ **Wages** must allow employees to meet their **basic needs** or cover the **local minimum wage**. GOTS 6.0 also requires the individual calculation of a **local living wage** as well as a plan for long-term wage adjustment.
- ✓ Employers must not avoid labour or social security laws through short time contracts, subcontracting, etc.
- ✓ A **Social Compliance Declaration** and a **Code of Conduct regarding Ethical Business Behaviour** must be formulated and available, covering GOTS chapter 3 and 5.
- ✓ Certified entities shall nominate a **person responsible for social accountability**. A functional and **effective complaint mechanism** shall be established in certified entities.

8. Environmental management

- ✓ Conventional textile facilities tend to be among the most polluting industries. GOTS establishes clear guidelines for minimizing the environmental impact of factories processing organic clothes.
- ✓ Industries must have a written and detailed **Environmental Policy** in which measures and initiatives, as well as quantitative goals are formulated, and a competent responsible person is nominated. This document needs to be updated regularly. Wet processing units must keep complete records of the use of chemicals, energy, water consumption and wastewater treatment, including the disposal of sludge. For all other facilities, the documentation of energy consumption is sufficient.
- ✓ Certified entities are required to collect information on sources of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) within their own operations and identify means for reduction for each source.
- ✓ GOTS specified several (residue) parameters regarding to wastewater treatment, e.g. the chemical oxygen demand (**COD**) of wastewater must not exceed **20g per kg of textiles** output (GOTS chapter 2.4.11).

9. Documentation and labelling

- ✓ GOTS units need a **functioning and comprehensible system** for documenting and identifying GOTS goods.
- ✓ Wherever parallel production of organic and conventional products takes place, bags, containers, boxes with organic products must be **labelled** at all steps through your facility.
- ✓ The operator must keep **supplier certificates, way bills, reception notes, processing records, storage books, and invoices**; all these records must refer to the GOTS condition of the product.
- ✓ GOTS units need a good **book keeping** system, allowing for evaluation of quantities of purchased raw material, auxiliaries, and accessories vs. quantities of finished product sold.
- ✓ Except for open raw material arriving directly from the field, only **packed or sealed** and **labelled** products must be accepted for GOTS processing; unlabelled products should be returned to the supplier.
- ✓ Transport routes and transport means must be documented.
- ✓ As a minimum, **traceability** must be assured one step back and one step fourth at each stage of the supply chain.
- ✓ Records relevant to the inspection must be kept for at least five years.

10. Training of employees

- ✓ The operator shall **inform all employees** about the requirements and the main content of the standard. Respective **training records** will be kept. This applies to both production-related and social requirements.
- ✓ The operator shall appoint a **management representative** to be responsible for the compliance to the GOTS requirements.

11. Labelling

- ✓ The **GOTS logo** always must be accompanied by the applicable **label grade**, a **reference to the approved certifier** who has certified the marked goods (certifier's name/ short form) and the **licence number** of the certified entity (as provided by the Approved Certifier).

- ✓ If the last certified entity in the supply chain is a trader or retailer the licence number used in labelling may be the licence number of the last manufacturer or of the certified trader or retailer.
- ✓ If **final products** produced in compliance with GOTS are not marked with GOTS labelling in the **retail trade**, these products are no longer considered GOTS Goods. Accordingly, they must not be presented, advertised or sold with any GOTS certification references in the retail trade.
- ✓ Goods may only be advertised and sold as **GOTS goods** when all entities of the **complete supply chain** are certified according to GOTS.
- ✓ Possible labelling, depending on used fibres:

GOTS Label Grade 1: organic	GOTS Label Grade 2: made with organic
 <p>organic CERES-12345</p>	 <p>made with organic CERES-12345</p>

Please take into account the regulations formulated by the standard regarding the usage of the logo (see <https://global-standard.org/downloads> -> Licensing and Labelling)!

12. Transaction certificates (TCs)

- ✓ **Definition:** A document supplied by the certification body that verifies that the goods being shipped from one organization to the next conform to a given standard. Transaction certificates are issued each time **goods change ownership**.
- ✓ *Certified Entities* purchasing **organic fibres** as well as those who purchase **GOTS products** must receive and maintain **transaction certificates** (= TCs) for the whole quantity purchased (in accordance with the criteria of chapter 1.4). Those TCs are issued by the certifier which is responsible for the certification of the product supplier. Usually TCs are issued by the certification body responsible for the supplier of the product, based on copies of invoices, packing lists and transport papers. In exceptional cases, TCs for multiple shipments can be issued. The maximum period that a single TC can cover is 3 months.
- ✓ According to GOTS 6.0, no TCs may be issued for final products without GOTS labelling.

13. Procedure

Please note the respective document on our website.



Please be aware that this is only a selection of essential requirements of GOTS, meant as an introduction. The operator, of course, must learn about and meet all the requirements of the respective standard. All other standard-related important documents can be downloaded here: <http://global-standard.org> -> Downloads!