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Brief introduction to the Global Recycled Standard (GRS, Version 4.0)

1. GRS ...

- ... is a **private** standard, launched in 2008 by Control Union Certifications (CU) and the ownership was passed to *Textile/Organic Exchange* 1st January, 2011. The 4.0 Version is valid since **July 1st, 2017**.
- ... uses the chain of custody requirements of the **Content Claim Standard** (CCS).
- ... applies to any verified Recycled Material and may apply to any supply chain.
- ... establishes **criteria for social and environmental principles** in processing GRS certified products.

2. Who and what can be certified pursuant to GRS

- ✓ All entities involved in recycling and working with recycled materials, from **recycling stage to traders** of finished products, **need** to be certified. Retailers can be certified on a voluntary basis.
- ✓ For entities involved in material collection and/or material concentration¹ random audits and self-declaration are required.
- ✓ Certifiable products must contain **at least 20% of recycled material** and only products with at least **50% Recycled Content qualify for product-specific GRS labelling**.
- ✓ The GRS uses the ISO 14021 definition of Recycled Content, with interpretations based on the US Federal Trade Commission Green Guides².

3. Origin of recycled materials and labelling

- ✓ **Pre-Consumer Material** -> Material diverted from the waste stream during manufacturing processes, excluding the reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

Post-Consumer Material -> Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product that can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of materials from the distribution chain.
- ✓ Recycled material shall be obtained from sources who have a legal authorization to operate for the relevant function. All kinds of materials can be used, as e.g. **recycled cotton, recycled polyester, recycled wool, recycled polyamide**, etc.
- ✓ **Blending** allowed, mixing with the conventional material of the same type allowed.


¹ **Material Collection** refers to the point in the recycling lifecycle when a reclaimed material is collected after its original use has ended. Entities involved in material collection e.g. municipalities who offer curbside recycling.

Material Concentration refers to the point in the recycling lifecycle when a waste material receives primary handling. Material is still unprocessed at this stage, meaning it has not been physically or chemically altered beyond basic handling (e.g. sorting, screening, basic contaminant removal or balling).

² **Reclaimed Material**: Material that would have otherwise been disposed of as waste or used for energy recovery, but has instead been collected and reclaimed as a material input, in lieu of new primary material, for a recycling process.

Recycled Material: Material that has been reprocessed from Reclaimed Material by means of a manufacturing process and made into a final product or into a component for incorporation into a product.

- ✓ Labelling options according to fibres used:

GRS	Minimum 20% Recycled Material	At least 50% Recycled Material
Recycled Material Percentage	Min. 20%	50-100%
Label Grade	n/a	GRS
Logo to be used	n/a	 Made with X% Recycled Material CERES-1245

- ✓ When the GRS logo is used, a **reference to the certification body** that has certified the goods (e.g. certification body's name and/or logo) and a reference to the **certified company** (e.g. company's name and/or certification number) must be used.
- ✓ **Brands and retailers** may only have logos applied to goods that have been certified to the end of the supply chain (incl. last step of ownership).
- ✓ **Individual components of a product** may be identified as certified to the GRS only in a manner that makes it completely clear that it is only the identified component that contains recycled material, and not the whole product. For example, only the upper of a shoe is made with 100% recycled material.

Please consider the regulations formulated by the standard regarding the usage of the logo (see <http://textileexchange.org/integrity/>)!

4. Separation in case of companies which produce both recycled and virgin material


- ✓ The operator applying for GRS certification must set up a **good system for separating recycled products from virgin ones**. This applies to the reception of the recycling 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 recycled materials.
- ✓ However, this may often not be possible; in this case, separation in **time** is allowed: GRS goods will be processed at the same machines as virgin once, but at different times. It then must be assured that relevant equipment is cleaned systematically before processing GRS goods. The company additionally must take adequate measures to **prevent contamination** during transport, storage and production.

5. Identification

- ✓ GRS products must be **clearly identified** and **tracked** as they move through production.
- ✓ Labels and signs must be **visible** and **understandable** by all workers operating in the area.

6. Traceability

- ✓ As a minimum, **traceability** must be assured one step back and one step fourth at each stage of the supply chain.

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7. Training of Staff

- ✓ Workers need to be trained regarding the requirements of the standard (incl. documentation of the training).
- ✓ The operator shall appoint a **responsible person** for the certification.

8. Documentation

- ✓ GRS units need a **functioning and comprehensible system** for documenting and identifying GRS goods.
- ✓ **Written procedures and working instructions** must be in place to ensure integrity and identity of GRS products. Wherever parallel production of recycled and virgin products takes place, bags, containers, boxes with recycled products must be **labelled** at all steps through the facility. This includes the full production at each step.
- ✓ The operator must keep full documentation of quantity, origin and flow of goods. For example: **Reclaimed Material Declaration Form** from entities involved in Material Collection and Material Concentration, **Legal Authorization to operate** (->for all sources of reclaimed material), **supplier certificates, way bills, reception notes, processing records, storage books, and invoices** must be kept. All these records must refer to the GRS condition of the product. All records need to be retained for a minimum of 5 years.
- ✓ GRS units need a good **bookkeeping** system, allowing for evaluation of quantities of purchased reclaimed material vs. quantities of finished product sold to conduct **mass balance calculations**. All calculations are done based on the **weight of the materials** and must also consider stock levels and rejected goods. GRS units need to **provide the formula for quantity balance calculations** for each product. *
- ✓ Amounts of **pre-consumer** and **post-consumer waste** must be **recorded separately** at all steps of production.
- ✓ Transport routes and transport means must be **documented**.

Please hand in examples for quantity balance calculation (for three products) including the formula already before the inspection!

9. Procedure


Please note the respective document "Certification Process" on our website.

10. Transaction certificates (= TC)

- ✓ **Definition:** A Transaction Certificate confirms conformity goods with a given standard, when they are sold from entity to another.
- ✓ Certified Entities purchasing **recycled material**, as well as such which purchase **GRS goods** must receive and maintain **transaction certificates** for the whole **quantity purchased** (in accordance with GRS criteria). This also applies to wholesalers (excluded are retailers).
- ✓ TCs are issued by the certification body, which is in charge of the supplier's product, based on copies of invoices, packing lists and shipping documents, as well as TCs from previous suppliers. In special cases, TCs can cover several deliveries. The maximum amount of time a single TC may cover is 3 months.

11. Social criteria

- ✓ Employers must comply with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and national laws on **forced, bonded, indentured and prison labour, child labour, freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, discrimination, harassment and abuse, health and safety, wages, benefits and terms of employment, working hours** (see section B3 in the Global Recycled Standard)

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12. Environmental Management

- ✓ Certified Organizations shall have an **environmental management system and a chemical management system.**
- ✓ Including an **annual plan to target** and reach meaningful environmental improvements across all indicators.
- ✓ Sufficient **trainings** for relevant staff in the environmental management and chemical management.
- ✓ Certified Organizations shall **monitor their energy use, water use, wastewater/effluent, emissions to air and waste management.**



Please be aware:

This is only a selection of essential requirements of GRS, meant as an introduction. The operator, of course, must learn about and meet all the requirements of the respective standard. All other important standard-related important documents can be downloaded here: <http://textileexchange.org/integrity/>!