From Field to Fashion
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An Overview of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

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Purpose of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

Define requirements to ensure the organic status of textiles, from harvesting of the raw materials, through environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing up to labelling.
Start with organic fiber from plants or animals

- Complies with all National Organic Program (NOP) standards and requirements
- Certified by a USDA accredited certifying agent
Organic Textile Principles

☯ PROTECT ORGANIC INTEGRITY

By preventing contact by organic fibers with prohibited substances and avoiding commingling organic and nonorganic fibers of the same type.

☯ MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

By reducing discharge of pollutants, recycling waste and increasing biodegradability.

☯ NOT ABOUT PRODUCT QUALITY OR HEALTHFULNESS

Differ from environmental ecolabels or human ecology schemes such as Oekotex 100, which focus on criteria for residues in products and/or impact on environment.
GOTS Requirements Address:

- Post-Harvest Handling (ginning)
- Fabrication
- Wet Processing
- Environmental Management
- Finishing
- Assembly
- Product Composition & Accessories
- Substances Used in All of Above
- Labeling
- Record Keeping
- Social Aspects
International Working Group (IWG) Members

International Association Natural Textile Industry (IVN), Germany

Soil Association (SA), England

Organic Trade Association (OTA), USA

Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA), Japan
GOTS and OTA Fiber Standards History

- 2002 - International organic textile processing standards concept emerged during InterCot conference, and OTA agreed to join the GOTS International Working Group.
- 2004 - First draft of GOTS completed, AOFPS initial implementation.
- 2006 – GOTS version 1 is finalized.
- 2008 – GOTS logo is introduced and guidance announced.
- 2009 – GOTS version 2 released, certifier accreditation program launched.
- 2010 – GOTS web site & data base launched, promotional video produced, representatives recruited.
2011 Current Status

- GOTS version 3 released March 1st following a comprehensive stakeholder input process
- 14 accredited certifying bodies, including Oregon Tilth (OTCO), OneCert, Control Union, IMO, Ecocert & IOA in the US.
- In 2010 there were 1500 companies with a total of 2,754 facilities in 54 countries certified
- Staff includes Herbert Ladwig, IWG Coordinator and Marcus Bruegel, Technical Director
- Regional representatives based in central Europe, Scandinavia, United Kingdom, North America, Japan, and Australia
GOTS certified facilities 2006-2010
Certified facilities by country in 2010

2754 certified facilities in 54 countries
- Top 5 countries -

- India: 939 certified facilities
- Turkey: 469 certified facilities
- China: 217 certified facilities
- Pakistan: 163 certified facilities
- South Korea: 126 certified facilities
Who needs to be certified?

Each of the following must be certified by a GOTS-Approved Certifying Body in order to make any GOTS-related claims:

- **Processors, Manufacturers and other Handlers** (post-harvest, milling, dyeing, spinning, weaving, knitting, cut & sew, etc.)
  Except if exempt under the provision for ‘small-scale sub-contractors with a low risk potential’

- **Traders** (import, export, retail and wholesale entities) that:
  - Buy or sell any GOTS Goods with an annual turnover of at least 5000€ ($7100)
  - Package or re-pack any GOTS Goods
  - Label or re-label any GOTS Goods
Why get certified?

- Market place credibility – verification of green, sustainable claims
- Increased confidence in your supply chain
- Access to expanded markets
- Promote your track record to consumers seeking clean, green textiles
How to get certified

❖ Choose a GOTS accredited certifying agent
❖ Certification application (Organic System Plan)
❖ Initial review of application
❖ Annual on-site inspection, risk-assessment based residue testing
❖ Certification decision, annual renewal
❖ Fees depend on scale of operation & cost of inspection plus yearly GOTS license fee of 120 € per facility inspected
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textile Label Schemes Compared</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>🔄 Requires at least 70% certified organic fiber content (Made With Organic)</td>
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<td>🔄 Addresses all inputs used, product composition, environmental and social criteria</td>
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<td>🔄 Includes every step of the supply chain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Textile Exchange</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>🔄 Requires 100% certified organic fiber (OE 100) or a declaration of % composition (OE blended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>🔄 Certification addresses traceability to verify NOP compliant fiber content claim for every step of supply chain</td>
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<td>🔄 Does not address processing inputs, environmental or social criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oeko-Tex</strong></td>
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<td>🔄 Addresses only product quality testing (100) or facility environmental performance (1000)</td>
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<td>🔄 Combination (100 plus) includes environmental requirements for all facilities in supply chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product Composition</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least 95% organic</td>
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<td>70-95% organic</td>
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<td>Less than 70% organic</td>
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Examples of labels
Approval of Chemical Inputs

- Eight certifiers, including OneCert, IMO and Control Union are accredited to review chemical inputs
- Positive Lists of approved inputs are made available to all GOTS certifiers
- Lists of approved proprietary inputs have been prepared for 330 chemical suppliers, including 2694 dyestuffs and prints and 3933 auxiliary agents
- No certification is currently available for use of approved inputs only
- No label claims are permitted for use of GOTS approved inputs
GOTS Compared to USDA National Organic Program (NOP)

- GOTS addresses textile processing only, as a private voluntary standard
- GOTS requires NOP certification (for US market) for all organic raw fiber
- GOTS label grades are similar to NOP for “organic” (95%) and “made with” (70%) claims
- Few textile processing substances permitted under GOTS are consistent with the NOP National List
- GOTS includes environmental and social criteria, not covered by NOP
**Federal Trade Commission (FTC) & NOP Current Policies**

**FTC Requirements**

- Care & Content Label: “Organic” may be used to modify the type of fiber if the raw fiber is NOP certified.

- Re: Certification Seals: “…marketers should use clear and prominent language limiting the claim to particular attribute(s) for which they have substantiation.”

**NOP May 2011 Policy Memo**

- Allows use of the term “organic” in the labeling of third party certified textile products as long as all of the fibers identified as “organic” are NOP compliant.

- “Textile products that are produced in accordance with the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) may be sold as organic in the U.S. but may not refer to NOP certification or display the USDA organic seal.”

- “Organic” textile products must not use a combination of both organic and non-organic sources for a single fiber that is identified as “organic” in the final product.
Using the Data Base

You can easily find existing GOTS certified facilities and suppliers of GOTS certified textiles anywhere in the world.