

## NEW STANDARDS FOR ORGANIC COTTON

The last few weeks have seen a lot of activity in the organic cotton domain. GOTS published the 7th version of their standards while a new standard for organic cotton was published by OEKO-TEX. CottonConnect looks to highlight the key takeaways from both in this insights paper.

### OEKO-TEX STANDARD - KEY ASPECTS AND SCOPE

OEKO-TEX Organic Cotton Standard is part of the testing, certification and licensing products offered by OEKO-TEX Service GmbH for textile products made from organic cotton or blends with organic cotton.

- The standard now has guidelines for the product **from farm till garment** but is implemented and audited from **ginning onwards** in the supply chain (till end product manufacturing).
- Apart from the existing OEKO-TEX standard guidelines for processing units, this standard emphasises usage of organic cotton (accredited by one of the IFOAM family of standards) as raw material, consisting solely of *organic cotton* or at least *70% organic cotton blended with other material*. Organic Cotton may not be combined with conventional or in-conversion cotton.
- There are three categories of Standards - **OEKO-TEX Organic Cotton** (for articles with 100% Organic Cotton), **OEKO-TEX Organic 100** (for articles containing <70% Organic Cotton material and for animal-based, other plant-based cellulosic and synthetic material) and **OEKO-TEX Organic Cotton Blended** (for articles with 70-100% Organic Cotton).
  - ◇ A farm level standard acceptable as per OEKO-TEX Organic is any standard accredited by IFOAM (From India it is NPOP). All other standards being implemented in India like NOP, EU etc. are also recognised.
- OEKO-TEX has introduced social needs as per international standards and a requirement to have a transaction certificate at every stage of the transaction.
- They claim that GM tests done by any OEKO-TEX accredited lab is **fool proof**, hence frauds cannot happen in their supply chain.
- The most common label in the OEKO-TEX family is the Standard 100 by OEKO-TEX®. This label means that all the components of an end product (including materials, threads, trims, zippers, linings, buttons, dyes, coatings etc.) have been rigorously tested for toxic chemicals and deemed safe.

Source: [OEKO-TEX Website](#)

- The **MADE IN GREEN by OEKO-TEX®** label takes it even further and certifies that the product was produced **ethically and sustainably** at every stage of the production process.



### SUPPLY CHAIN AND TRACEABILITY

- Transaction certificates shall be issued **at all stages** from the Gins to Garment manufacturing, as per the testing and traceability compliance as established in the standards.
- So far, there was no transaction certificate issued in an OEKO-TEX certified supply chain, neither were any social compliances required.

### TESTING CRITERIA

- OEKO-TEX Eco Passport *audits and certifies* chemical, polymer & dyeing units associated with the textile industry.
- A **quantitative GMO method** that differentiates between minor contamination and intentional mixing with conventional cotton has been included in the OEKO-TEX standards.
- Testing and certification according to OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON involves the following aspects and parameters:
  1. Supply chain traceability to the field (cultivation).
  2. No GMO, chemical pesticides and mixing with conventional cotton is allowed.
  3. Testing for harmful substances:
    - ◇ Legally prohibited and regulated substances
    - ◇ Chemicals whose harmful effects are known but not legally regulated
    - ◇ Substances for which a harmful effect is likely



## GOTS VERSION 7.0 - KEY ASPECTS AND SCOPE

The GOTS 6.0 version was very brief in defining the key environmental, social and governance requirements, while the GOTS 7.0 version, which has been recently released, is more elaborate.

- In addition to the existing conducts, the GOTS 7.0 details the **environmental, social and governance criteria**, reflecting sector-specific risks of textile supply chains and is designed to enable effective due diligence for GOTS-certified entities.
- GOTS has always required certified entities to implement a six-step due diligence process. In addition to these, now GOTS **defines criteria** for textile producers, manufacturers, B2B operators as well as textile chemical providers.
- There is also greater detailing with respect to the certification and operating parameters for **GOTS-certified gins** in GOTS 7.0 in comparison with the previous version, with greater emphasis on strengthening traceability.
- Cotton from regions with gross violation of ILO norms is not allowed.
- The use of fibres, which originate from production projects located in high human rights risks areas, may require additional mitigation measures (for example, on-site social audits) to ensure that these production projects comply with **GOTS Social Criteria** and **OECD guidelines**.
- With respect to due diligence, there is additional criteria mentioned in this new version which states that the certified entity shall engage in a responsible business conduct. **GOTS Chemical Input Criteria, GOTS Environmental Criteria, GOTS Human Rights and Social Criteria, and GOTS Governance Criteria** shall be implemented through the due diligence process. The certified entity shall follow the framework issued by **OECD Due Diligence Guidance for responsible business conduct and OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains** in the Garment and Footwear Sector.

## PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION AND TESTING

- GOTS maintains baby, skin contact and no skin contact requirements mainly based on pH, certain chemical usage and adherence to Global Harmonized System of classification (GHS).
- GOTS accepts third party lab reports for GMO and PR tests.

- Qualitative analysis is acceptable while quantitative test is not mandated. This is a major difference with respect to the OEKO-TEX Standard.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR YOUNG WORKERS

Certain new criteria are added as below:

- Health and safety for young workers, new and expecting mothers and persons with disabilities.
- Local fire safety regulations, including the provision of required fire safety equipment.
- Workers shall receive remuneration directly in their hand/bank account or in a manner convenient to workers. Wherever possible, efforts and priority must be given to digital payment as prescribed by law or agreements.
- Discrimination, Harassment and Violence – This section is further strengthened with new criteria.

## TRANSACTION CERTIFICATE AND TRACEABILITY

The TC topic has been discussed elaborately. Following are the key requirements:

- The consignee of any organic fibres and/or GOTS goods shall check the integrity of the packaging or container and verify the origin and nature of the certified products from the information contained in the product marking and corresponding documentation upon receipt of the certified products.
- A product whose GOTS-compliant status is in doubt may only be put into processing or packaging after the elimination of that doubt.
- Organic fibres and GOTS goods shall clearly be identified as such on all corresponding invoices.
- The certified entity shall have a concluded contract with each subcontractor stipulating the conditions of the relevant job work assigned and remains finally responsible for compliance with all criteria of GOTS.
- Certified entities shall collect, collate, and share non-commercial information related to impact measurement as required by GOTS.

Source: [GOTS Website](#)

### GET IN TOUCH

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