



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

GOTS STANDARD SETTING PROCEDURE

VERSION 1.0

NOVEMBER 2021

Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH
Rotebühlstr. 102 · 70178 Stuttgart · Germany
www.global-standard.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	EXPLANATION OF TERMS / DEFINITIONS	4
3	STANDARD REVISION PROCEDURE	4

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Global Organic Textile Standard (“GOTS”) is a voluntary sustainability standard for the processing of certified organic fibres. Global Standard gGmbH (“Global Standard”) is the operating unit for GOTS.
- 1.2 Our vision is that organic textiles will become a significant part of everyday life, enhancing people’s lives and the environment.
- 1.3 Our mission is the development, implementation, verification, protection and promotion of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). This standard stipulates requirements throughout the supply chain for both ecology and labour conditions in textile and apparel manufacturing using organically produced raw materials. Organic production is based on a system of farming that maintains and replenishes soil fertility without the use of toxic, persistent pesticides and fertilizers. In addition, organic production relies on adequate animal husbandry and excludes genetic modification. We see ourselves as contributing to sustainable development and actively cooperate with all relevant stakeholders.
- 1.4 In developing GOTS we set strict – and binding – requirements regarding ecological and social parameters. In so doing, we take into consideration the need for a standard that is practicable for industrial production and appropriate to a wide range of products. Taking both aspects into account, we define organic textiles as being processed with the least possible impact and residual natural and synthetic chemical inputs.
- 1.5 GOTS and its corresponding Implementation Manual typically undergo a revision every 3 years and this activity is undertaken by the Standard Revision Committee (SRC) of GOTS.
- 1.6 GOTS implementation manual may be continuously updated between the Standard revisions.
- 1.7 Stakeholders operating internationally with expertise in the field of organic production, textile processing, textile chemistry and social criteria and representing the industry, NGOs including labour organisations and consumer interests in our program shall be invited to contribute to the revision procedure.
- 1.8 The GOTS Standard is to be revised following a standardised revision procedure.
- 1.9 This document lays down the Standard Setting Procedures to be followed for revision of GOTS and it’s corresponding Implementation Manual.
- 1.10 GOTS shall not show bias towards economic or geographic or national or governmental interests, shall not be a cause for restrictions in trade and shall not intentionally promote specific proprietary or patented technologies.
- 1.11 GOTS shall strive to retain its global character at all times. Localised interpretations may be permitted only where unavoidable, necessary and helpful. Such local interpretations shall not result in relaxation of Standard requirements where the purpose of GOTS may be compromised.
- 1.12 GOTS shall consider complementary and overlapping standard systems in further development of the Standard and a review shall be undertaken at start of revision process. (Actual complementary standards are listed in Annex A)
- 1.13 This document (SSP) is our Terms of Reference (ToR).

Scope: The Scope is defined in the respective Standard Version (1. Principles – 1.1 Aim, 1.2 Scope), the geographic application is in the name “Global Organic Textile Standard”.

Justification: *GOTS defines* requirements which ensure the organic status of textiles from harvesting of the raw materials through environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing all the way to labelling in order to provide credible assurance to the consumer.

GOTS is an instrument to contribute towards achieving each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which address the common sustainability issues of the world. GOTS helps to ensure compliance with each of the 17 goals.

GOTS was created through a harmonisation process of standards in different parts of the world, starting in 2002. Since 2006 until today, GOTS is the only comprehensive processing standard for organic textiles. The standard is recognised worldwide and endorsed by major institutions, such as USDA and IFOAM.

Sustainability Outcomes: GOTS seeks to achieve social, environmental and economic long-term outcomes such as better and safer living conditions for consumers and workers, reduced impact on environment, economic growth of supply chain actors and increased confidence among customers for GOTS goods.

2 EXPLANATION OF TERMS / DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Standard Setting Procedure:** The procedure for GOTS revision as laid down in a document of the same name.
- 2.2 **Standards Revision Committee (SRC):** A group of experts tasked to be the decisive committee for decisions on the revision of the GOTS Standard and the Implementation Manual. Composition, Functions and Terms of Reference for the SRC are set in the GOTS document “*Composition and Terms of Reference of the Standards Revision Committee*”.
- 2.3 **Advisory Council (AC):** The Advisory Council is the decisive committee for all relevant organisational, structural and political issues of the Global Organic Textile Standard. It is set up by the founding Organisations of GOTS jointly.
- 2.4 **GOTS Management:** The management team of the Global Standard gGmbH, currently consisting of two Managing Directors.
- 2.5 **Founding Organisations:** The four organisations that founded GOTS and Global Standard gGmbH, namely IVN, JOCA, OTA and Soil Association.
- 2.6 **Standards Committee (SC):** Committee formed by GOTS to guide and advise the GOTS Management and the Advisory Council on matters related to GOTS. Members of the SC shall be ex-officio members of the SRC.
- 2.7 **GOTS Standard and Implementation Manual:** The two decisive documents (in English language) which contain and explain the requirements of GOTS. GOTS is typically revised once every 3 years by the SRC along with the Implementation Manual. This primarily explanatory Manual may be revised by the GOTS Management under advise from the SC in the interim or if found necessary.
- 2.8 **Certifiers Council:** An advisory body formed by one member each from GOTS approved Certification Bodies.
- 2.9 **Convenor:** Person appointed by the SC to lead the Revision Process.

3 STANDARD REVISION PROCEDURE

The following steps shall be taken for Standard revisions:

- 3.1 The GOTS revision is announced on the GOTS website at an appropriate time, not less than 45 days before the revision process is due to commence. This shall include an invitation for persons to express interest to be part of the SRC.

- 3.2 The convenor of the SRC ensures that the SRC is formed with due process and reference to the “*Composition and Terms of Reference of the Standards Revision Committee*”, not less than 30 calendar days prior to commencement of the revision process.
- 3.3 A list of SRC members shall be made available publicly on the GOTS website (subject to their express approval).
- 3.4 Proposals for revision of Standard and Implementation Manual requirements may be submitted by any interested party to Global Standard prior to the commencement of the formal revision process.
- 3.5 Based on inputs from the SC, comments and suggestions over the implementation of the current version of the GOTS Standard, information on the impact of GOTS, new technological developments, changes in industry best practises, changes or new legislation etc. the SRC convenor shall create a draft version 0.0 of GOTS and Manual together with explanations on the intended changes.
- 3.6 The draft revision versions shall be prepared keeping in mind the progressive, innovative, stringent yet practical desired outcomes of GOTS.
- 3.7 The draft version 0.0 shall be made available to the SC Members for initial comments and inputs.
- 3.8 Based on the inputs received, an appropriate draft version 1.0 shall be published on the GOTS Revision blog for public comments and inputs from stakeholders. This 1st SRC input period shall not be less than 60 calendar days.
- 3.9 All collated inputs would be circulated to the members of the SRC by the convenor along with initial comments, opinions and explanations.
- 3.10 Each individual input shall be examined and discussed by the SRC over virtual meetings organised by the convenor and a view on each be recorded.
- 3.11 Should the SRC feel the need, external subject experts may be consulted on specific matters to arrive at a decision on changes to GOTS.
- 3.12 Based on decisions taken by the SRC, the convenor shall produce a revision draft version 2.0 of the GOTS Standard.
- 3.13 The revision draft version 2.0, collated inputs from contributors along with SRC comments and taken decisions shall be placed on the GOTS revision blog for public review.
- 3.14 A 2nd public stakeholder input period is then opened for a period of 30 calendar days. If there are unresolved issues or insufficient feedback, GOTS shall carry our additional rounds of public consultation.
- 3.15 The comments received from the public stakeholder consultation shall be compiled. A written synopsis of issues raised and addressed during the consultation shall be developed and shall be sent to all who submitted the comments. This shall be then made publicly available for all the concerned stakeholders.
- 3.16 New revision topics shall not be raised during the 2nd input period.
- 3.17 Based on submissions made during the 2nd stakeholder input period, the convenor shall schedule SRC discussions as for the 1st input period. The SRC shall, following these discussions, take decisions regarding the final revision draft of the GOTS Standard and Manual.
- 3.18 The final revision draft of the GOTS Standard shall be submitted to the GOTS AC for their opinion as to whether any fundamental departures from the GOTS mission and vision could arise from the new version. Should the AC decide that a particular revision detail could compromise GOTS’ position they shall request the SRC for a review / reconsideration of such

detail. A decision by the AC in this regard is final and shall be made public in connection with the publication of the revised Standard, according to 3.18.

- 3.19 After affirmation by the AC, the new version of GOTS documents shall be published on the GOTS website and sent by electronic means to immediately concerned stakeholders (such as GOTS Approved Certification Bodies and Accreditation Bodies).
- 3.20 GOTS shall set up a process to collect and record any inputs concerning the standard and the manual on a continuous basis. These inputs shall be considered in subsequent revision processes.
- 3.21 GOTS shall make available the contact details of the person responsible for undertaking the tasks related to such and inputs on the GOTS website
- 3.22 The SC can decide by a vote among its members if an urgent substantive revision of the standard needs to be considered in between two normally scheduled revisions. For such interim revisions, the previous SRC shall be recalled and the same process of revision shall be followed as for a routine revision. Such a revision may only include the Sections with the Standard that need change and The SRC may decide, by majority vote to restrict the public stakeholder input period to just one and for a shorter period but not less than 30 days. The reasons and conditions of the urgent revision shall be published on the GOTS website.
- 3.23 GOTS shall keep details of all standards development, revision procedures and records on file for a minimum of five years and make them available to stakeholders upon request. This includes the following:
 - Standard Setting Procedures,
 - List of SC & SRC Members,
 - Draft versions of the standards.
 - Public consultation feedback and summaries

ANNEX A

Standards that partly overlap or otherwise complement GOTS.

- Organic materials:

Organic Content Standard (OCS) from Textile Exchange - covers the Chain of Custody of the organic material without any processing criteria, Better Cotton Initiative(BCI) (Mass Balance Systems), Cotton Made in Africa (Mass Balance Systems)

- Processing (social and environmental) criteria or inputs:

IVN Best from Internationaler Verband der Naturtextilwirtschaft, - is the sister standard from one of the GOTS Founding Organisations with some stricter criteria (e.g., only allowing natural fibres). Nordic Swan and Blauer Engel - governmental standards that allow more non-organic fibre content. Made in Green from Hohenstein, dealing with much broader fibre content. Fairtrade Textile Standard, partly overlapping with respect to organic fibres. It was developed long after the development of GOTS, or for chemical approvals, Bluesign.

» » » » » » » »

Important:

The following verbal forms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions, or capabilities in this document:

- “shall” indicates a mandatory requirement
- “should” indicates a recommendation
- “may” indicates a permission
- “can” indicates a possibility or capability

Copyright: © 2021 by
Global Standard gGmbH