



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Certification and Operating Parameters for GOTS Certified Gins

Version 2.1

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1 Terminology

1.1 How to Read This Document:

The following terms 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

- 1.2 **GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard):** The worldwide leading voluntary sustainability standard for the post-harvest textile value chain for certified organic fibres, covering environmental criteria, human rights, social criteria and business conduct.
- 1.3 **Certification Body (CB):** A Certification Body that is accredited by a recognized Accreditation Body and approved by Global Standard to perform inspections and audits to verify compliance with certification requirements to GOTS in the relevant scope.
- 1.4 **Certified Entity (CE):** Processor, manufacturer, trader or retailer of GOTS Goods certified by an Approved Certifying Body.
- 1.5 **Gin(s) / Ginning / Ginner(s):** A Gin is a facility or machine that separates cotton fibres (lint) from seeds, hulls, and other impurities. This process, Ginning, is required for converting Raw Cotton into Lint Cotton, so that it can be further processed into yarn and textiles. The entity that performs this process is known as a Ginner.
- 1.6 **Farm Group:** A Farm Group is a formal, organized community of small-scale farmers who voluntarily come together to participate in a certification or assurance scheme under a single group entity. The entity holds the Organic Scope Certificate (SC) and takes responsibility for implementing internal control systems (ICS) to ensure collective compliance with the standard. In addition to the ICS, Farm Groups undergo external audits as a collective unit.
- 1.7 **Scope Certificate (SC):** A document issued to a Certified Entity by an Approved Certification Body which verifies the entity is in conformity with the requirements of the Standard and includes a summary of the processes and products that are permitted under the certification. It also lists the various facilities that are covered under this certification.
- 1.8 **Transaction Certificate (TC):** A document issued by a GOTS-approved Certification Body for GOTS-certified products, verifying their compliance with the Standard. It provides traceability by listing product details, shipment information and confirming integrity through volume reconciliation process.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The recent surge in demand for organic cotton, coupled with the limited availability of certified raw materials and the detection of fraud with transactions of raw fibres at the farm level, has made it increasingly difficult for processors and manufacturers to effectively balance supply with demand.
- 2.2 Global Standard believes that there is a significant risk of fraud due to the demand-supply gap and consequent commercial benefits of the organic cotton trade. Over the past years, Global Standard has worked on ensuring that fraud is eliminated/minimised and continues to create new requirements that take this cautious approach forward.
- 2.3 The first processing stage for GOTS certification in the organic cotton value chain is Ginning. It is essential for GOTS that the material entering the supply chain is authentic and can be traced back to its source (i.e. organic Farm / Farm Group). Therefore, to mitigate the risk of fraud at the most crucial stage of the supply chain, GOTS has introduced additional requirements for the certification and operating parameters of Ginners and the acceptance of organic raw cotton.

3 Certification of Ginners

- 3.1 Ginning is the first processing stage for Organic Cotton in the GOTS value chain.
- 3.2 Ginners shall be independently certified to GOTS, also when they are listed as sub-contractors in the SC of another CE.
- 3.3 A CE may have multiple independently certified sub-contracted Ginners under its scope; however, the CE and all its sub-contracted Ginners shall be certified by the same CB¹.
- 3.4 CBs shall review and scrutinise all issued TCs (recent or past 6+ months depending on the situation) if a Ginner or contracting CE requests voluntary and/or premature (before the SC expiry date) withdrawal from certification.
- 3.5 Ginners shall be permitted to migrate to another CB only after three years of continuous certification. Exemptions may be granted in cases where a CB is suspended, there are legitimized problems between the CB and Ginner, or the Ginner is in the process of migrating CBs to comply with requirements to have a common CB.
- 3.6 In the event of Ginners voluntarily choosing to migrate to another CB, both concerned CBs shall cooperate and proactively verify details about closing stock before the hand-over and re-certification takes place.
- 3.7 In the case of CB migration, a CE's former CB shall provide a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the new CB within 4 weeks. On the eve of any crises on the former CB (e.g. suspension), withdrawal of accreditation, or capacity issue, the former CB shall declare the queuing time and set a timeline to provide the NOC to the new CBs.

¹ To meet this requirement, CEs and their sub-contracted Ginner(s) must complete their migration to a selected Certification Body by 30th September 2026.

- 3.8 Unannounced audits of Ginners shall be conducted by CBs where there is a high perception of risk. GOTS shall retain the right to accompany the CB as observers for such unannounced audits.

4 Procurement of Raw Cotton

- 4.1 Ginners shall only accept raw cotton from organic Farms / Farm Groups that are fully registered in the Global Fibre Registry (GFR)². Ginners shall not accept raw cotton through intermediaries (e.g. raw cotton trader).
- 4.2 A Ginner that also manages an organic Farm / Farm Group shall proactively declare their own Farm / Farm Group details to their respective CB, in addition to registering on GFR.
- 4.3 If the CE holding the GOTS SC as Ginner also holds an Organic agriculture SC, the Ginner may procure Raw Cotton from their own Farm / Farm Group. Nevertheless, the Organic Farm / Farm Group shall be registered in GFR and the transaction authenticated through relevant documents as listed in §11.1.
- 4.4 If the Ginner and the Organic Farm / Farm Group are separate entities owned by the same parent company, financial documents shall be checked as usual.
- 4.5 A GOTS CE with Ginning as a sub-contracted process may directly procure Organic Raw Cotton from an Organic Farm / Farm Group in GFR; in such cases the SC and associated ID# of the subcontracted Ginner shall be used as the recipient in GFR, and the CE shall be listed as the owner of the resulting GOTS Lint Cotton. Proof of ownership by the CE and the subcontracted Ginning process shall be authenticated through financial and transportation documents (e.g. raw cotton TC, payment proof, transport traceability, and raw cotton yield justification).
- 4.6 Raw Cotton shall not be transported more than 500 km from Organic Farm / Farm Group to Ginner. Local and National regulations shall take precedence if stricter. In exceptional cases, exemptions may be granted by Global Standard, provided there is sufficient rational and a formal request by the CB of the Ginner.
- 4.7 GOTS CBs shall be aware of National and Local regulations regarding intra-state / inter-region transport of Organic Raw Cotton and apply this knowledge to the Ginners they certify. CBs shall verify that the regulations have been adhered to prior to issuance of TCs for GOTS Lint Cotton.
- 4.8 TCs for Raw Cotton shall be valid for only 1 year from date of harvest. Material that is being presented to the GOTS system with a TC older than one year since issuance shall not be accepted.
- 4.9 Ginner CBs shall ensure that Transaction Certificates for Raw Cotton are received in their original pdf form and provided by the Farm / Farm Group SC holder. Scanned copies of the original documents are not verifiable and shall not be accepted.

² www.GOFIBRE.org links to the Global Fibre Registry, formerly known as the Farm-Gin Registry.

4.10 CBs shall verify and maintain records of commercial documents and records of official transaction receipts and transport documents for the incoming raw cotton. In cases where there is high risk, financial transactions authenticated by Chartered Accountant or nationally recognised certified accounting authority (where cash transactions are unavoidable) should also be verified. Financial transactions should be authenticated through legal and banking channels to the furthest extent possible.

4.11 Ginner CBs shall verify the authenticity of the organic agriculture claims of Raw Cotton entering GOTS Goods by reviewing SCs, TCs and supporting documents, utilising official authentication channels with farm CBs, and ensuring alignment with Global Fibre Registry (GFR) data and requirements.

For example, in India, APEDA NPOP TCs shall be verified using QR Codes on the TCs, ensuring that the official APEDA TraceNet webpage is used:
<https://traceability.apeda.gov.in/organic/TraceNet/ACCESSTRACENET/LoGin.aspx>

4.12 For Raw Cotton traceability, Ginner CBs shall verify the authenticity of transactions by reviewing the relevant documents listed in the Annex §11.1 Example Raw Cotton Transactions and verifying the transaction on the Global Fibre Registry.

4.13 For Raw Cotton procured from Farm Groups, CBs may use the square root method: $y=\sqrt{x}$ (where 'x' is the number of payment receipts or weighing slips & 'y' is the sampled payment receipts or weighing slips to be verified by the CB).

5 Traceability of Lint Cotton

5.1 CBs shall assess the throughput capacity of the Gins that are being certified to GOTS and verify their processing capacity for Raw Cotton and output capacity for Lint Cotton at the time of annual audits and for issuance of Cotton Lint TCs.

For example, machine capacity and loss percentage shall be part of the review of TC applications from the Gin and verified during annual/unannounced audits. CBs shall record production capacities (along with the tolerance e.g. $\pm 5\%$), number of machines, possible wastage percentages, and working hours of Ginners in their audit report.

5.2 Transportation and sales documentation of GOTS Cotton Lint shall be verified by the GOTS CBs. Since documentation differs from country to country and even within regions, the following is a suggestive list of documents to be considered for verification of sales:

- Tax Invoice / E-invoice
- Purchase Order
- Lint Fibre Quality Report
- Packing List
- Transport Documents (e.g. E-way Bill, Lorry Receipt, Consignment Note, Bill of Lading, Shipping Bill)
- Bank Statement extract (per the risk assessment of the CB)

5.3 CBs shall verify the Bill of Lading and Shipping Bills of Lint Cotton by visiting the respective Shipper/Forwarder's official website. CBs shall keep records of the respective

documents in their original form for quality assurance support (such documents may be removed from the Shippers/Forwarder's website after a certain period).

- 5.4 The shelf life of Lint Cotton shall be no more than 3 years from the date of Ginning. Lint Cotton that is older than 3 years from the date of production, as captured in the Gin's production register, shall lose its status as a GOTS Good. In exceptional cases, exemptions may be granted by Global Standard, provided there is sufficient rational and a formal request by the CB of the Ginner.

6 Farm / Farm Group Requirements

- 6.1 All Farms / Farm Groups whose certified organic raw material is to be accepted into the GOTS system shall pre-register on the Global Fibre Registry (GFR) by uploading the required documents necessary to guarantee the organic claims.
- 6.2 Farms / Farm Groups may supply raw cotton to multiple GOTS Gins.
- 6.3 If Farms / Farm Groups are certified to multiple organic agriculture standards by the same or different CBs, all SCs shall be uploaded to GFR and made available to the GOTS CB of the Gin.

For example, in India, if a Farm / Farm Group has been certified to both APEDA NPOP and USDA NOP standards, both organic Scope Certificates shall be uploaded to GFR and provided to the Ginner's CB.

- 6.4 The Ginner's CB shall verify that the farm data (e.g. acreage, yield estimates, compliance records) on the organic SCs of Raw Cotton are reasonable and aligned (default to lower value if multi-certified SC data differs). If projected and/or declared yields exceed 10% of the average yield for the respective country/region, the GOTS CB shall confirm accuracy with the Farm / Farm Group CB and document legitimations (for fraud prevention or best practices).
- 6.5 The following public websites may be referred to for yield data:

icac.org
cotcorp.org.in
faostat.fao.org
textileexchange.org

fas.usda.gov
indiastat.com
caionline.in
agmarknet.gov.in

7 Testing and Test Reports

- 7.1 Sampling of Raw Cotton for GMO testing, and Raw Cotton and Lint Cotton for GMO and Pesticide Residue testing shall be the responsibility of the CB of the Ginner.
- 7.2 Sampling shall follow the methods specified in the latest version of the document "Advisory to CBs - sampling protocol for GMO testing".

- 7.3 The first batch of the harvest season of Raw Cotton received by the Ginner shall be sampled for testing by the CB or an independent sample collector appointed by the CB. Subsequent samples may be collected by the Ginner in accordance with the Terms of Engagement between the CB and the CE.
- 7.4 Raw Cotton shall be tested for GMO contamination prior to acceptance into GOTS value chains.
- 7.5 GMO test reports shall mention bail and lot numbers of tested raw cotton, farm TC numbers (where applicable), and the SC numbers of the Farm(s) / Farm Group.
- 7.6 Lint Cotton shall be tested for pesticide residues to ensure compliance with GOTS Residue Limits. Only compliance Lint Cotton qualifies as GOTS Goods.
- 7.7 CBs shall keep Raw Cotton and Lint Cotton samples for a minimum of 3 years in case they are needed for quality assurance purposes.
- 7.8 GOTS personnel and CB/auditor or representative shall be allowed to pick random samples of raw and/or lint cotton from the Ginner's premise, irrespective of the approval status of the facility.
- 7.9 For Raw Cotton, GMO testing should be done for at least every 1,200,000 kg (1200 MT) received at the Ginner's premise.
- 7.10 For Lint Cotton, pesticide residue testing, samples should be collected from every 420,000 kg (420 MT) or 2500 bales (approx. 168 kg/bale), whichever is lower.
- 7.11 GMO testing shall be done by suitably qualified, third-party laboratories³. Laboratories shall be accredited to ISO 17025 and should have passed the *Global ISO IWA 32:2019 proficiency test initiative 2023*⁴ or the most recent iteration.
- 7.12 Test reports shall specify sample pickup details, including but not limited to: the sample collector's name, lab ID and/or authorized sampler code; location of sampling (name and address of Ginner); lot numbers; quantity (in kilograms for Raw Cotton and number of bales for Lint Cotton); and bale number, Press Running Number (PRN) or other unique sequential identification number convention being utilized in the region.

8 Additional Risk-Based Requirements

- 8.1 This Section is related to additional, risk-based requirements that may need to be taken up by GOTS CBs.
- 8.2 In cases where Raw Cotton is being transported across national or state borders, CBs shall conduct additional due diligence in document verification and proof of transport.

³ Global Standard does not approve testing laboratories but requires them to be ISO 17025 accredited for the test(s) being performed. In addition, Global Standard, with Organic Cotton Accelerator and Textile Exchange, promotes and organises a proficiency testing programme for the GMO testing of cotton. Laboratories that successfully pass this programme are listed on the GOTS website.

⁴ Global ISO IWA 32:2019 proficiency test initiative 2023 - <https://global-standard.org/?view=article&id=803>

Authentication proofs for transport should be reviewed for verification (e.g. e-way bills in India).

- 8.3 Additional GMO and pesticide residue testing may be required by the CB for cross verification of existing reports.
- 8.4 Physical, on-site checks Raw Cotton and Lint Cotton (e.g. volume, segregation, storage conditions, labelling/tagging) may be conducted at both source (e.g. Ginner) and recipient (e.g. Spinner, Weaver) if deemed necessary by the responsible CBs.
- 8.5 If a Ginner needs to operate during the Off Season⁵, the CE shall request prior permission from their CB, and additional evidence shall be required for CB review for quality assurance. Supporting evidence may include mandatory permission from government bodies (as applicable in the respective country/region, e.g. Turkey), videos of the ginning process with date and time stamps, lot and bale numbers, wage slips, electricity bills for the specific period.
- 8.6 CBs shall conduct additional physical inspections of Off-Season Ginning based on the CB's risk assessments.
- 8.7 For Spot Deliveries⁶ of Lint Cotton, the seller's CB shall ensure that all applicable financial and transportation documents (also from the buying CE, e.g. Goods Receipt Note) are available and verified prior to issuance of a TC.

9 Implementation Timeline

- 9.1 Version 2.0 shall be implemented from the crop year 2025-26. This applies to harvests commencing from September 2025 or earlier depending on the regional harvest calendars for cotton.

10 Contact

For questions or clarifications about this document, please contact qa@global-standard.org.

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⁵ Refer to the Annex §11.4 Off-Season for Ginning Operations

⁶ Spot Delivery is defined as the purchase and procurement of material directly from the Seller's premise; the material may be transported to the Buyer's own or sub-contracted warehouse via the Buyer's own vehicle and/or a third-party subcontractor of the Buyer. The required Transport Traceability document codes are 1 & 2, and the required Financial Traceability documents are 10, 11 & 13, as specified in the Annex §11.1 Documentation for Raw Cotton Transactions and Annex §11.2 Documentation for Lint Cotton Transactions.

11 Annex

11.1 Documentation for Raw Cotton Transactions

Documentation that may be relevant for the CB to authenticate compliance with organic claims:

1	E-way Bill [compliant with Indian law]	11	Chartered Accountant (CA) Authentication Certificate [where applicable]
2	Lorry Receipt (LR) [for local transport]	12	Bank Statement of Buyer [excerpt]
3	Consignment Note	13	Bank Transfer from Buyer to Seller [where applicable]
4	Bill of Lading (BL) [for export]	14	Farm Scope Certificate
5	Shipping Bill [for export]	15	Business ID Number [PAN in India]
6	Regular Invoice [if available]	16	Farm Group ICS Manual
7	Tax Invoice/E-Invoice [if available]	17	Approved Farmer List (AFL)
8	Purchase Order (PO)	18	Farm Transaction Certificate [if available]
9	Weight Slip [at Ginner]	19	GMO Test Report
10	Cash Payment Receipts	20	Pesticide Residue Test Report

11.2 Documentation for Lint Cotton Transactions

Documentation that may be relevant for the CB to authenticate compliance with GOTS claims:

1	E-way Bill [compliant with Indian law]	11	Chartered Accountant (CA) Authentication Certificate
2	Lorry Receipt (LR) [for local transport]	12	Bank Statement of Buyer [excerpt]
3	Consignment Note	13	Bank Transfer from Buyer to Seller [where applicable]
4	Bill of Lading (BL) [for export]	14	<i>Farm Scope Certificate</i>
5	Shipping Bill [for export]	15	<i>Business ID Number [PAN in India]</i>
6	Regular Invoice	16	<i>Farm Group ICS Manual</i>
7	Tax Invoice/E-Invoice	17	<i>Approved Farmer List (AFL)</i>
8	Purchase Order (PO)	18	Farm Transaction Certificate [if available]
9	Weight Slip [during transport]	19	GMO Test Report
10	Cash Payment Receipts	20	Pesticide Residue Test Report
		21	GOTS Residue Limits Test Report

11.3 Example Raw Cotton Transactions

The table “Example Raw Cotton Transactions” outlines different trade models under which raw cotton (seed cotton) enters the GOTS value chain, specifically from an organic fibre producer (Farm / Farm Group) to GOTS Ginner. It clarifies roles and responsibilities of each actor, as well as how traceability and integrity are to be ensured. The following terms used in the table are defined here for clarity.

- **Raw Cotton Producer:** The origin of the raw cotton (seed cotton), certified organic either as an independent Farm or as a Farm Group with Members and an Internal Control System (ICS).
- **Raw Cotton Recipient / GOTS Processor:** The Ginner who receives the fibre for processing, operating independantly as a CE or as a subcontractor to another CE.
- **CE Subcontractor:** Ginners, though independantly certified to GOTS, may operate as a subcontractor under another CE’s Scope. Both the CE receiving the TC and the actual Ginner of the raw cotton shall be clearly declared on the Raw Cotton and Lint Cotton Transaction Certificates and related documents.
- **Lint Cotton Owner:** The entitiy with legal ownership of the processed lint cotton, regardless of which CE ginned the cotton (e.g. Farmer, Farm Group, Ginner, CE).
- **Traceability (Transport & Finance):** Documents that are required for traceability checks (transport documents, financial records).
- **Organic Integrity:** Documents that are required to safeguard organic integrity (volumes, processing, and certification validations).

Example Raw Cotton Transactions

Trade Model	Raw Cotton Producer	Raw Cotton Recipient / GOTS First-Processor	CE Sub-contractor	Lint Cotton Owner	Transport Traceability	Finance Traceability	Organic Integrity
A	Farm (Independently Certified)	Ginner * independently certified	N/A	Ginner	1, 2, 9	6, 8, 10, 11, 12	14, 15, 18, 19, 20
B	Farm (Independently Certified)	Certified Entity (+Ginning) * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope	Ginner	Certified Entity	1, 2, 3, 9	6, 8, 10, 11, 12	14, 15, 18, 19, 20
C	Farm Group (with ICS)	Ginner * independently certified	N/A	Ginner	1, 2, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
D	Farm Group (with ICS)	Certified Entity (+Ginning) * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope	Ginner	Certified Entity	1, 2, 3, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
E	Farm (Independently Certified)	Certified Entity (+Ginning) * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope * with organic SC for raw fibre production	Ginner	Certified Entity	1, 2, 3, 9	6, 8, 10, 11, 12	14, 15, 18, 19, 20
F	Farm Group (with ICS)	Certified Entity (+Ginning) * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope * with Organic SC for raw fibre production (Farm Group Manager)	Ginner	Certified Entity	1, 2, 3, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
G	Farm (Independently Certified)	Ginner * independently certified * with organic SC for raw fibre production (Farm Group Manager)	N/A	Ginner	1, 2, 3, 9	6, 8, 10, 11, 12	14, 15, 18, 19, 20
H	Farm Group (with ICS)	Ginner * independently certified * with Organic SC for raw fibre production (Farm Group Manager)	N/A	Ginner	1, 2, 3, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
I	Farm (Independently Certified)	Ginner * independently certified * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope	Ginner	Ginner	1, 2, 9	6, 8, 10, 11, 12	14, 15, 18, 19, 20
J	Farm Group (with ICS)	Ginner * independently certified * with independently certified Ginner(s) as sub-contractor(s) under its GOTS Scope	Ginner	Ginner	1, 2, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
K	Farm (Independently Certified)	Ginner * independently certified	N/A	Farm	2, 9	7, 8, 12, 13	14, 15, 18, 19, 20

11.4 Off-Season for Ginning Operations

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
China												
Benin												
Greece												
India												
Pakistan												
Peru												
Tanzania												
Türkiye												
Uganda												
USA												

* Months in grey are generally considered off-season for the respective region.

** For regions not listed, refer to other guidelines or to the closest listed region.

*** This is a general reference calendar; climatic variations may cause periodic changes.

The harvest year, for data collection and reporting, is defined as August 1 to July 31. This is based on the International Cotton Advisory Council (ICAC) guidelines. In regions where the cotton harvest season straddles the July-August cutoff, the harvest is allocated to the previous period.

* * * * *