GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MANUAL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GRTS

VERSION 1.0

BASED ON THE GLOBAL RESPONSIBLE TEXTILE STANDARD (GRTS)

Draft for Public Consultation

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Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH
Rotebühlstr. 102 · 70178 Stuttgart · Germany

www.global-standard.org

This document provides interpretations and clarifications for specific criteria of the Global Responsible Textile Standard (GRTS) and related official reference documents (e.g. Conditions for the Use of Signs - GRTS) of the Global Standard gGmbH where the current wording of the specific criteria could lead to (or may have already led to) inconsistent, inappropriate or even incorrect interpretation. It may further contain requirements for the application of the GRTS and the implementation of the related quality assurance system for Approved Certification Bodies. This document also contains references for further study or details. Hyperlinks to these have been included, where possible.

This manual is to be seen as a flexible quality assurance tool to give advice and clarification to *Approved Certification Bodies* and users of GRTS where felt necessary as it can be updated short-term.

The interpretations, corrections, and further clarifications as provided with this document are binding for all *Approved Certification Bodies* and users of the GRTS. Any products already assessed and certified/approved on the basis of other interpretations which were also plausible with regard to the current wording of the GRTS retain their assessed/certified/approved status.

The general implementation deadline to comply with a new version of this Manual is 12 months after its release unless other/specific advice is given.

GRTS welcomes corrections or further inputs to this document from all stakeholders. Comments may be sent to revision@global-standard.org.

Note:
In this Manual, the relevant Sections of GRTS are quoted to which the interpretations and further clarifications refer to. Partial wording taken from GRTS is referred to/quoted as *"… ."*. In all cases, the wording from the Standard is to be considered final and definitive.

How to Read this Document
The following verbs 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

Availability of documents:
GRTS and the Manual for the Implementation of GRTS, reference documents and any further relevant public information as released by Global Standard gGmbH are available for public download on the Global Standard website

ABOUT GRTS
Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated in Germany in 2002 for the purpose of administrating the Global Responsible Textile Standard.

Vision
Our vision is a world where all textiles are produced in accordance with the principles of health, ecology, fairness and care to enhance people's lives and the environment. Organic textiles are an integral part of this holistic approach.

Document History
No earlier version of this document has been released.

Further information is available at: www.global-standard.org.

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- Interpretation and requirements in general shall be the same as that for the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

GRTS SECTION 1.2.1

"….The final product categories may include, but are not limited to, fibres, yarns, fabrics, garments, textile accessories (carried or worn), textile toys, home textiles, mattresses, beddings as well as personal care textile products, and food contact textiles."

INTERPRETATION

- Interpretation shall be the same as that for the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

GRTS SECTION 2

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GRTS SECTIONS 2.1.1

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INTERPRETATION

Key requirements of fibre standards accepted within GRTS are enumerated below.

A) Chain Of Custody With Identity Preservation

GRTS traceability is modelled on chain of custody through physical segregation and identity preservation, not mass balance. Therefore, fibre production standards are required to provide physical chain of custody.

Although there are also private-label standards/brands that offer traceable and responsible fibres through their own internal verification systems, the level of transparency required for GRTS means that only third-party certification schemes shall be considered. Schemes that prescribe or follow the ISO 17065 “product certification bodies accreditation standard” criteria shall be accepted.

b) Third-Party Certification Scheme

Third-party certification requires that the standard setter and Certification Body are separate entities.

However, non-natural fibres, such as regenerated cellulosics (e.g. lyocell) do not have independent third-party certification standards and therefore require a different approach. GRTS shall accept regenerated cellulosic fibres manufactured in closed-loop systems, using feedstock from responsible forestry (FSC, PEFC).

Traceability shall be established by approved certification bodies (CBs) reviewing documentation from the fibre manufacturer to ensure compliance with GRTS requirements, such as declaration/certificate of authenticity.

Proof of compliance from third parties will include ISO standard certifications, thereby fulfilling this requirement without the framework of a fibre production standard.

c) No Genetically Modified Organisms (non-GMO)

Global Standard considers GMOs contrary to the principles of responsible textiles. Fibres that can be used in GRTS shall be grown without the use of genetic modification technologies. GMO tests will be used as proof of compliance with this requirement when a fibre production standard does not explicitly prohibit the use of GMOs. This criterion is most relevant to cotton fibres, though it also applies to the source of feedstock used in manufacturing cellulosic fibres. As required by GOTS for organic cotton, a non-GMO test (ISO 5354-1 and ISO 5354-2, earlier designated ISO IWA 32*)* shall also be required for responsible cotton.

Regardless of a fibre standard’s stance on GMO (against or neutral), standards that do not prohibit GMO may still qualify as “responsible” if they can prove their non-GMO status through recognised negative GMO tests.

d) No Highly Hazardous Pesticides Used in Production

In line with the ecological and social protection requirements in Global Standard’s mission and vision, only fibre production standards that prohibit the use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides during production can be considered for GRTS.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (UNEP, 2021) state that:

“Pesticides are inherently hazardous, and among them, a relatively small number of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) cause disproportionate harm to environment and human health including severe environmental hazards, high acute and chronic toxicity.” “Highly Hazardous Pesticides means pesticides that are acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification

systems such as WHO or Global Harmonized System (GHS) or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous."

Global Standard accepts the following lists as they pertain to Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the natural fibre and forestry sectors:

- Pesticide Action Network (PAN) 2024. *PAN International List of Highly Hazardous Pesticides.*358 pesticides listed. https://pan-international.org/wp-content/uploads/PAN_HHP_List.pdf
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). 2024.*Lists of Highly Hazardous Pesticide.*50 pesticides listed. https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/315

e) Respect for Animal Welfare

Responsible animal husbandry is required to deliver required to ensure the well-being and humane treatment of animals

Animals shall be granted the five freedoms from: hunger; thirst; discomfort; injury; and illness/anxiety.

f) No Live Lamb Cutting (Mulesing)

Live lamb cutting, also known as "mulesing," is the practice of removing wool-bearing skin around the anus of sheep to prevent flystrike in susceptible sheep breeds. Given it causes acute pain to lambs and that it is deemed unnecessary in responsibly managed grazing systems, no mulesed wool is accepted. If mulesing is prohibited by local regulations or laws, their reference shall be considered adequate proof of compliance (e.g. in New Zealand).

If a standard does not explicitly prohibit mulesing (e.g. Australia's National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce), a third-party certificate of conformity can be used, such as ZQ. The Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) is also reliable proof of non-mulesing for independently certified producers.

g) Non-toxic, Closed Loop Manufacturing for Regenerated Cellulosic and Synthetic Fibres

The manufacturing of regenerated cellulosic fibres such as lyocell, modal, and viscose, shall be done with feedstock that is responsibly sourced, meaning its cultivation and/or harvesting does not contribute to deforestation, and does not utilize Highly Hazardous Pesticides or GMOs.

Facilities that manufacture regenerated cellulosic fibres and biopolymers shall utilize closed-loop manufacturing processes and non-toxic inputs. This can be demonstrated through certification to ISO 14001: Environmental Management Systems, or alternative equivalent standards.

h) Cellulose Feedstock from Non-GMO and Responsible Forestry

Cellulosic feedstock used in regenerated fibres shall have FSC or PEFC certification to demonstrate that it came from responsible forestry. The feedstock shall additionally be non-GMO.

i) Biopolymers Shall be Biodegradable and Responsibly Sourced

Biopolymers (e.g. protein or cellulose based) shall be biodegradable, as defined by internationally applicable standards and carry a certificate of conformity, and they additionally shall be made with responsibly sourced feedstock, i.e., non-GMO crops and responsible forestry. Micro-organisms used for biosynthesis shall be non-GMO.

Biodegradability standards are listed below:

Standard	Applicability	Test Environment	Key Criteria
ISO 14855	International	Composting (Aerobic)	CO_2 evolution ≥ 90% in 180 days
ISO 17556	International	Soil (Aerobic)	CO_2 evolution in soil
ISO 11734	International	Anaerobic (Sludge)	Biogas (CH_4 + CO_2) production
ISO 16929	International	Composting (Disintegration)	Physical breakdown <2mm in 12 weeks
EN 13432	Europe	Composting (Industrial)	Biodegradation, disintegration, ecotoxicity, heavy metals
EN 14995	Europe	Composting (Industrial)	Same as EN 13432, for non-packaging
ASTM D6400	USA	Composting (Industrial)	Biodegradation & disintegration in 180 days
ASTM D5988	USA	Soil (Aerobic)	CO_2 evolution in soil over 6 months
ASTM D5511	USA	Anaerobic (Landfill)	Biogas evolution under anaerobic conditions

j) Inclusion of Social Norms During Fibre Manufacturing

Manufactured fibres (e.g. biopolymers, regenerated cellulosics, recycled synthetics) shall show compliance to social welfare norms in their manufacturing facilities, as specified by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Compliance shall be demonstrated through third-party certification to standards such as ISO 45001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems).

Note:

Social criteria for natural fibre production are not currently included in the requirements for responsible fibre standards, because existing natural fibre standards focus on environmental protection, delegating social protection norms to national legislation. It is likely that social criteria at the farm level be introduced in future revisions of GRTS with guidelines for how auditors are to assess compliance.

GRTS SECTION 2.1.2

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2.1.2 RESPONSIBLE FIBRES SHALL ALSO BE PRODUCED WITH DUE CONSIDERATION FOR:

2.1.2.1 Reduction of GHG emissions

2.1.2.2 Reduced water use and contamination

2.1.2.3 Protection of soil health and biodiversity

“

DUE CONSIDERATION CRITERIA FOR GRTS FIBRE SELECTION

The following are preferred but not necessarily required for consideration of standards as responsible due to incongruencies regarding methods for measurement and verification. It is nevertheless expected that responsible fibre standards address these criteria in some

manner. It is also intended that more specific criteria shall be explored – and included - over time to ensure consistency and efficacy.

a) Reduction of GHG emissions

Responsible fibre production requires consideration of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and integration of requirements that contribute to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation. While GHG accounting is ultimately necessary to quantify and monitor impact to ensure that emissions are being reduced, fibre production standards that integrate requirements that indirectly contribute to GHG emission reduction also qualify. This can be demonstrated through requirements such as reducing the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, both of which use considerable amounts of energy in their production and use, increased energy efficiency, use of renewable energy on farms, increased soil carbon, etc.

b) Reduced water-use and contamination

Responsible standards shall require that fibre production does not cause water pollution and does not overdraw limited water resources, ensuring that local communities are not deprived and ecosystem functions are not undermined. Use of buffer zones, rainfed agriculture, and drip-irrigation in contrast to inefficient flood irrigation, are examples of preferred practices.

c) Soil health and biodiversity

Responsible standards require fibre production methods that prevent soil degradation and protect biodiversity habitat. Examples are practices such as crop rotations, rotational grazing, use of cover crops, minimum tillage, care for farm biodiversity, and limited use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

GRTS SECTION 2.1.6

“

2.1.6 The Implementation Manual of GRTS includes detailed information about fibre selection criteria, a list of allowed fibre standards and how this list shall be reviewed and updated.

“

FIBRE STANDARDS AND FEEDSTOCK THAT COMPLY WITH RESPONSIBLE CRITERIA AND ACCEPTED FOR GRTS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE AS APPLICABLE

a) MULTI-FIBRE STANDARDS (with proof of non-GMO and no-mulesing)

1. Fairtrade Textile Standard
2. Organic – IFOAM Family of Standards (*also organic in-conversion)*
    a. *Organic Australia (requires non-mulesing verification)*
3. Organic – non-IFOAM (*also organic in-conversion)*
4. Organic Content Standard (*also organic in-conversion)*
5. Regenerative Organic (USDA Organic + ROC)

b) COTTON FIBRE STANDARDS (with non-GMO proof)

6. Better Cotton
7. Cotton Connect REEL
8. Cotton Made in Africa

9. myBMP Australia
10. Regenerative Cotton Standard
11. Responsible Brazilian Cotton

c) BAST FIBRE STANDARDS

12. Masters of Flax (European Flax) Standard
13. Responsible Hemp Standard

d) ANIMAL FIBRE STANDARDS

14. Responsible Wool Standard
15. Good Cashmere Standard
16. Sustainable Animal Fibre Standard
17. Responsible Alpaca Standard
18. Responsible Mohair Standard
19. ZQ Natural Fibre
20. New Zealand Wool

e) MANMADE CELLULOSIC / SYNTHETIC / RECYCLED FIBRE / FEEDSTOCK STANDARDS

21. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
22. Programme for the Enforcement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
23. International Sustainable and Carbon Certification
24. Global Recycled Standard
25. Recycled Claim Standard
26. Recycled Content Standard

FIBRE STANDARD SELECTION AND REVIEW PROCEDURE

- Global Standard maintains a dynamic policy for recognition and listing of fibre / feedstock standards that shall be acceptable for GRTS using the criteria detailed above.
- The list of acceptable fibre / feedstock standards can be enhanced following a formal application by standard bodies followed by an evaluation by Global Standard gGmbH.
- This application procedure is made available on the Global Standard GRTS website.
- Global Standard encourages applications from voluntary 3rd party certification standards who believe that they satisfy the key requirements of fibre selection criteria.
- Evaluation processes and results shall be made available transparently, while decisions of Global Standard gGmbH shall remain final in this regard.

GRTS Section 2.2

Certification and Auditing

GRTS SECTION 2.2.1

“Processors, manufacturers, and traders of GRTS Goods (intermediate and finished) shall be certified to GOTS requirements”

INTERPRETATION

- The same requirements as for GOTS shall apply here with logical interpretations for different fibres when it comes to first processing stages, such as :
  a. Ginning for cotton
  b. Retting for bast fibres
  c. Boiling and washing cocoons for silk
  d. Spinning for synthetic fibres
  e. Pulping for cellulosic regenerated fibres
  f. Scouring for wools and other animal fibres

GRTS Section 2.3

“Scope Certificate”

INTERPRETATION

- Detailed mandatory instructions with regard to policy, layout, format and text/codes for issuing Scope Certificates (SCs) are provided in the ‘Policy for the Issuance of GRTS RTS Scope Certificates’ document that is available on the Global Standard website. Approved Certification Bodies are responsible for issuing SCs for Certified Entities, with corresponding information such as product categories that Certified Entities can offer in compliance with GRTS as well as processing steps and activities that are qualified for GRTS certification. The entire list of GRTS certified suppliers is accessible on the Global Standard website.

REFERENCE

- www.global-standard.org

GRTS Section 2.4

“Transaction Certificate”

INTERPRETATION

- Detailed mandatory instructions with regard to policy, layout, format and text/codes for issuing Transaction Certificates (TCs) are provided in the 'Policy for the Issuance of GRTS Transaction Certificates' document that is available on the Global Standard website.
- TCs can and shall be requested only by a Certified Entity through their respective Approved Certification Body whenever necessary.
- An uncertified retailer may request TCs from its certified suppliers to ensure that the whole volume of shipment purchased is indeed GRTS certified. TC shall be issued by the Approved Certification Body of the supplier.
- TCs can be issued to a (un)certified retailer even if the final consumer products do not carry GRTS Signs.

REFERENCE

- www.global-standard.org

GRTS Section 2.5

GRTS SECTION 2.5.3

"Certified Entities shall collect, collate, and share non-commercial information related to impact measurement if and as required by Global Standard."

INTERPRETATION

- There will be no mandatory requirement for commercially sensitive data such as financial, business, or technical information to be shared by Certified Entities. Information requested will only be related to measuring public-facing impact. Examples of such information are the number and break-up of employees, energy sources, water sources etc.

GRTS Section 2.6

GUIDANCE

- All stipulations given for the corresponding section in the Manual for the Interpretation of GOTS shall apply with corresponding transpositions of 'organic fibres' with 'sustainable fibres'.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- For the purposes of traceability and operation of the Global Trace-Base (under development), information about the fibre input is required to be collected and maintained by the Certified Entity. Data would need to be maintained in a suitable document, such as a spreadsheet, in a prescribed format.

GRTS Section 2.7

GRTS SECTIONS 2.7.6.2

“The Accompanying Labelling Information, which shall include the reference to the Approved Certification Body and the SCO-ID of the Certified Entity. “

GUIDANCE

- A reference to the Approved Certification Body can be the certifier’s name, short form and/or its logo.
- The SCO-ID of the Certified Entity is the number provided by the Approved Certification Body and stated on the Scope Certificate.

GRTS SECTION 3

GRTS Section 3.2

“Additional Fibre Materials”

INTERPRETATION

- Conventional cotton which is not certified to any of the fibre standards, regardless of if it is GMO-free allowed by GRTS is not permitted as an additional fibre material at any level.
- Conventionally grown cotton fibre, even if it is non-GMO and/or recycled, is not permitted as additional fibre.
- Table 5.2.3 lists the residue limits for finished GRTS Goods therefore any blended additional fibre should not violate the limit.
- Virgin polyester is not permitted as an additional fibre material. All polyester fibres blended in a GRTS Good, under GRTS Section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, shall be (thermo-mechanically or chemically) recycled from pre-or post-consumer waste.
- Fibre purity for recycled content: it is recognised that mechanically recycled natural and synthetic materials may contain unintended fibre traces as contamination. Such contamination may result from inherent limitations in the recycling process. Some trace fibres may not be detectable through standard testing methods, making precise fibre identification and quantification challenging. Unintended contamination shall only be considered for mechanically recycled materials, categorised as "others" in document issuance e.g. Transaction Certificates. However, no intentionally added virgin polyester shall be allowed.

GRTS SECTION 4

GRTS Sections 4.1 and 4.2

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATION

- All stipulations in the Manual for the Interpretation of GOTS for this section shall also apply for GRTS, as directly relevant.
- Especially important are the limit values for chemical inputs.

GRTS Section 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATION

- All stipulations in the Manual for the Interpretation of GOTS for the respective sections shall also apply for GRTS

GRTS SECTION 5

GRTS Section 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATION

- All stipulations in the Manual for the Interpretation of GOTS for the respective sections shall also apply for GRTS

GRTS SECTION 6

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATION

- While GRTS is set up for the purposes of offering a ‘clean’ processing criteria for sustainable fibres other than organic fibres within the jurisdiction of GOTS, it also aims at being an instrument for organisations that need to comply with supply chain regulations in many countries.

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