



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

GUIDANCE TO GOTS APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODIES

SECTIONS 2.2.1 AND 2.2.2 OF THE GOTS STANDARD :
ORGANIC FIBRES THAT MAY NOT BE PERMITTED FOR THE
PRODUCTION OF GOTS GOODS

Version 1.0

6 May 2021

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

1 INTRODUCTION

Organic production regulations traditionally do not contain express social and/or animal welfare criteria. GOTS approved Certification Bodies do not inspect production facilities/sites, as the GOTS processing control system only starts with the first processing step. In spite of this, GOTS is increasingly held responsible for (alleged) violations of such criteria. This is why Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2¹ were introduced into the GOTS Standard providing limitations to the organic / organic-in-conversion fibre that may be permitted into GOTS processing..

In addition to the requirement organic certification, both these sections contain (additional) exclusion criteria related to the production environments of certified fibre.

“ No fibres shall be used which originate from production projects with regard to which there is evidence of a persistent pattern of gross violations of the ILO core labour norms (as far as these are relevant for agriculture) and/or of animal welfare principles (including Mulesing) or irrefutable evidence of a persistent pattern of land grabbing methods. ”

This document aims to provide guidance to CBs to assist in determining possibilities of violation of ILO labour norms or animal welfare principles or land grabbing. While some instances are mentioned within this document, these should by no means be considered to be the only ones and CBs are expected to have their own risk assessment policies in place so that determinations are made with local knowledge, specific circumstances and appropriate thought.

The provided guidance should be therefore utilised judiciously. CBs should discuss these matters with their (GOTS Certified) clients prior to allowing certified organic raw material into the GOTS supply chain.

This document is primarily focussed on the first processing stage of organic fibres, where the GOTS certification commences.

2 VIOLATIONS

2.1 “EVIDENCE OF A PERSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATION OF ILO CORE LABOUR NORMS”

The used language “EVIDENCE” clarifies on the one hand that mere rumours, suspicions or allegations would not be sufficient for a CB to exclude organic fibres from entering into GOTS processing, on the other hand that the respective information must appear true without reasonable doubt.

“**PERSISTENT PATTERN**” clarifies that evidence of isolated instances may require CBs’ intensified attention but do not as such lead to exclusion of the respective fibres from entering GOTS processing.

CBs SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHILE MAKING DECISIONS IN THEIR ASSESSMENTS

- Current status and developments in regional and national regulations
- Continued and consistent negative investigative reports from reliable organisations or

¹ Standard Sections in this document are cross-referenced to GOTS version 6.0. Updates to the GOTS Standard and corresponding changes to these cross-references shall be current.

news organisations

- International advisories or regulations or decisions related to the textile industry in the concerned production region from credible sources such as UN organisations, ILO, OECD etc.
- Liaison or consultation with relevant and internationally credible local NGOs
- Consultations with local experts and or labour unions
- Officially filed complaints of labour norm violations with local / national authorities.
- CBs knowledge of local conditions and facts.

2.2 EVIDENCE OF A PERSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATION OF ANIMAL WELFARE PRINCIPLES”

The used language

“EVIDENCE” clarifies on the one hand that mere rumours, suspicions or allegations would not be sufficient for a CB to exclude organic fibres from entering into GOTS processing, on the other hand that the respective information must appear true without reasonable doubt.

“PERSISTENT PATTERN” clarifies that evidence of isolated instances may require CBs’ intensified attention but do not as such lead to exclusion of the respective fibres from entering GOTS processing.

CBs SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHILE MAKING DECISIONS IN THEIR ASSESSMENTS

- Current allowed practises within regional and national regulations
- Continued, consistent and persistent negative investigative reports from reliable organisations or news organisations
- International advisories or regulations or decisions related to the textile industry in the concerned production region from credible sources such as UN organisations, ILO, OECD etc.
- Liaison or consultation with relevant local NGOs active in the field of animal welfare
- Consultations with local authorities and / or experts.
- CBs knowledge of local conditions and facts.

2.3 IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE OF A PERSISTENT PATTERN OF LAND GRABBING METHODS

The use of the language "IRREFUTABLE" indicates a higher degree of “evidence” in such a way that all counter arguments have been proven wrong.

CBs should consider the following while making decisions in their assessments

- Public or official complaints against the production project or concerned management related to land grabbing
- Continued and consistent negative investigative reports from reliable organisations or news organisations

- International advisories or regulations or decisions related to the textile industry in the concerned production region from credible sources such as UN organisations, ILO, OECD etc.
- Reports from internationally credible local NGOs
- Consultations with local authorities and / or experts
- CBs knowledge of local conditions and facts.
- Related court procedures instituted

3 ACTION EXPECTED TO BE TAKEN BY CBs

CBs should maintain documentation related to any investigation or information that was compiled as part of their decisions. Such documentation can be reviewed by their Accreditation Bodies as part of annual audits.

On taking a decision of not accepting material into the GOTS certification system, CBs shall:

- Inform the Certified Entity of their decision including reasons for the same in writing by email / letter
- Inform GOTS of their decision including reasons for the same by email to assurance@global-standard.org, with additional information of the source, the quantity and region from where the material originated.
- Keep record of any such rejection and monitor closely all material offered for acceptance into the GOTS system that originates from the same production environment in the future.
- Inform all other GOTS Approved CBs (through the respective Certifier Council Member) of the decision to reject material, the production environment/region where the material was sourced and reasons for rejection for their information and vigilance.

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

Rahul Bhajekar
Managing Director
bhajekar@global-standard.org

**Copyright: © 2021 by
Global Standard gGmbH**