Textile Exchange Standards
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

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Introduction

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Introduction

Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

About the Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Chain of custody certification requires that each stage in the supply chain takes the proper steps to ensure that the integrity of the claimed material can be maintained. This helps to maintain the identity of materials as they move from the farm or producer to the final product. Understanding how this system works will help your company on your journey to adopt verified preferred fibers and materials.

The goal of this document is that brands and retailers have a resource to introduce new users to the system of Textile Exchange standards, understanding how certification works, and identifying the key steps to source certified products.

For those who have already begun to use product certification, the Brand and Retailer Certification Toolkit will provide answers to implementation issues, how to interpret certificates, how to label products, and other additional technical issues.

About Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit that works closely with our members to drive industry transformation in preferred fibers, integrity and standards, and responsible supply networks. We identify and share best practices regarding farming, materials, processing, traceability and product end-of-life in order to reduce the textile industry's impact on the world's water, soil and air, and the human population.

About
Certification

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About Certification

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Why is Certification Necessary?

Certification is a way to ensure social and/or environmental performance for a product and ensures that claims are correct and verified by someone outside of the business relationship.

Textile Exchange considers third-party certification to be one of the strongest ways to ensure the integrity of sustainability claims. In this system, an independent third-party (certification body) gives assurance that a company, process, or product is in conformity with requirements in a particular standard.

Certification provides brand protection, purchase assurance, and greater credibility to the claims being made. Above all, certification ensures that environmental and/or social improvements lead to real and meaningful change.

Types of Verification

Third-party certification: A company, process, or product is certified to a standard by a certification body. Ideally the party who has written and owns the standard is a separate entity from the party certifying to the standard. The certification body will be authorized by another separate party, called an accreditation body, to ensure consistency in the way the certification is carried out.

For more details on how our third-party certification system works, read How Does Certification Work?.

The benefits of working with independent certification bodies (CBs) include (but are not limited to):

- CBs are required to have relevant professional experience and qualifications.

- CBs have no commercial interests in the products, companies or services assessed and certified.

- CBs are typically licensed or reviewed by accreditation bodies, which monitor their integrity and performance.

Verification by standard-setting body: Some internationally recognized standard bodies also conduct their own audits to monitor conformity with their standards rather than using a separate accredited certification body.

Second-party verification: Verification done by a company in a business relationship with the party being assessed. For example, a spinning factory may be assessed by a buyer. This may be time-consuming and costly for the company gathering information and requires a strong understanding of both the requirements being made, the production processes and business operations of the companies involved.

Self-Reporting (First-party verification): Direct reporting of product information from the supply chain members themselves. These may take the form of written assurances or formal affidavits that their processes and products are in conformance to a given set of requirements; either self-developed guidelines or a third-party standard.

Testing: Product testing may be used to verify the presence of certain materials through the use of tracers or DNA markers applied at the fiber level. Testing may also be performed to check for harmful substances in the final product.

Example:
Company X puts a marker into its recycled polyester fiber. It can then test final products for the presence of this marker, to ensure that their recycled fiber is actually being used.

> **Note:**
>
> Certification is one of a number of options to verify claims being made on products. While it is most often considered to be the strongest method of verification, there may be situations where other methods are adequate or even more appropriate.

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Benefits of Certification

Credible Claims: Brands making claims need confidence that the claims made to consumers are true. Certification provides a credible voice for suppliers and brands, verifying that claims are valid[1].

The system of recognizable standards creates a common language for suppliers, brands, retailers, and consumers globally.

Industry Alignment: Certification to internationally recognized standards contributes to greater industry alignment on specific issues. This allows the industry to move faster towards progress on sustainability goals.

Demonstrates commitment to integrity: Certification provides an opportunity for brands to back-up their commitments and have their products or services verified by a third-party, which can lead to higher confidence from your customers.

Limitations of Certification

Certification is a snapshot: Certification is a tool that supports integrity. However, the audit happens at a particular space and time and does not guarantee the situation between visits. It is important to continue commitments to building capacity with your suppliers, practice continuous improvement, and maintaining strong relationships. No system is fool-proof, and certification is one of the best tools we have.

Increased cost: Because the cost is based on the number of facilities, companies producing a small number of certified products may find the costs per unit to be prohibitive. There are some considerations that can help you save money:

- Be prepared for the audit.
- Consolidate certified products to create efficiency.
- Be prepared for initial costs up front to bring your process into conformity, these will go down over time.

For more information on the costs of certification, see The Costs of Certification.

It takes time: We typically estimate the certification process to take 6-8 weeks if a company is prepared and responds quickly to requests from the certification body. This may be longer if the certification body is facing high demand. The process seems to be easiest for those that work through certification alongside their suppliers and customers. Communicate with your supply chain partners and ensure expectations are managed through the process.

See The Certification Process – The Essential Steps for Brand and Retailers for additional information.

Audit fatigue: Audits take time. Certified companies are required to provide additional internal resources to prepare and be present during the audit. When manufacturers are required to conform with many different standards, multiple audits occur. This can become burdensome for them and result in less diligence with each audit. Choosing independent, credible standards that are well established and widely used in the market helps to reduce the number of audits a given facility is asked to complete.

Conclusion

Certification remains one of the strongest methods of ensuring product claims are accurate and clear. The value of third-party certification in verifying product integrity and building strong relationships between suppliers, brands and retailers helps to ensure that our industry can continue to deliver real and meaningful change.

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[1] Check the labeling laws in the country of sale; or for online sales, check the country where the item is being sold into.

How Does Certification Work?
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How Does Certification Work?
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

This section will focus on how the system of third-party certification works. It is important to have a solid understanding of the terms used to explain the process of certification. You can find a list of key terms in Appendix A: Glossary.

Our Approach

The Development of Standards

A proper sustainability standards development process will include the following:

- A clear and realistic scope of positive impact and metrics to measure progress along the way.

- A multi-stakeholder process to ensure that interested parties are represented.

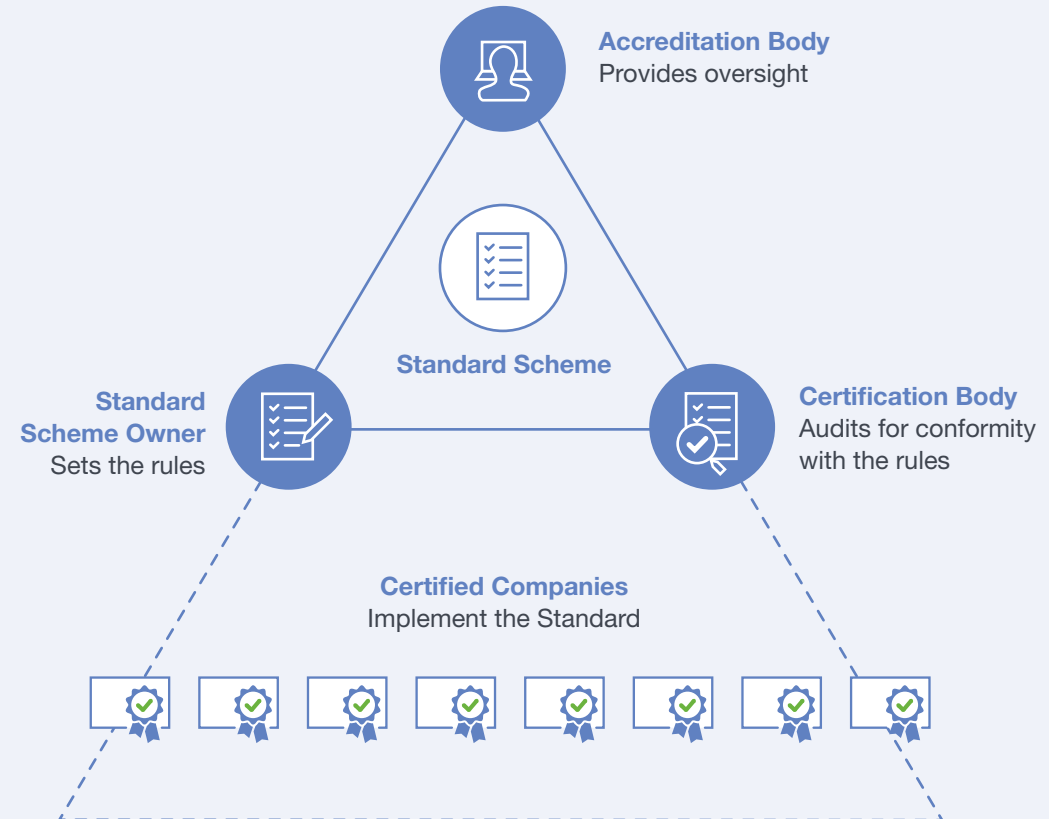- Strong system of credibility in the assurance system that governs auditing and certification requirements.

ISEAL Alliance

As a full member of the ISEAL Alliance, Textile Exchange follows the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice for standard-setting bodies to ensure we have a robust and transparent processes for our standards.

Participation

Textile Exchange's highest priorities are to include all parties that may be affected by the standard, and to create a tool that balances strict requirements with realistic and auditable criteria. The development of all Textile Exchange standards is done through international working groups (IWGs), representing the full spectrum of interested parties, including animal welfare groups, farmers, supply chain members, industry associations, as well as brands and retailers.

The Certification System

Accreditation Body
Provides oversight

Standard Scheme

Standard Scheme Owner
Sets the rules

Certification Body
Audits for conformity with the rules

Certified Companies
Implement the Standard

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The Role of Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange provides leadership within the textile industry to increase understanding, confidence, and adoption of preferred fibers and materials and proper verification strategies. While Textile Exchange has extensive experience in standards development and ownership, we do not engage in certification activities: all of the organization's focus is on supporting the quality and adoption of our standards.

The Role of the Certification Body

The certification body (CB) has the only formal relationship with the certified company. They handle certification to the requirements of the Textile Exchange standard(s). The certification body is accredited to provide these services. The certification body shares information regarding its certified sites with Textile Exchange.

The Role of the Accreditation Body

The accreditation body (AB) has the responsibility for checking that the certification body follows our guidelines. Textile Exchange works with the accreditation body to ensure that our standards are consistently applied across all certification bodies working with our standards.

Certified Companies and Consumer Claims

Companies that have met the requirements of Textile Exchange standards have been audited by a certification body and have been issued a scope certificate. This means that they are eligible to produce certified products. Only products accompanied by a transaction certificate are considered certified.

Companies with fully certified products may make claims to consumers about their conformity with the standard. They may also use the standards as an internal tool to verify their own claims to consumers without mentioning the standard. All claims must meet the requirements found in the relevant Logo Use and Claims Guide.

Chain of Custody

Chain of Custody

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What is Chain of Custody?

Chain of custody is a system that documents and ensures the path taken by a defined entry material through all stages of transfer and production, to the final product.

Principles of Chain of Custody

Product Identification:

- Certified products are accurately identified
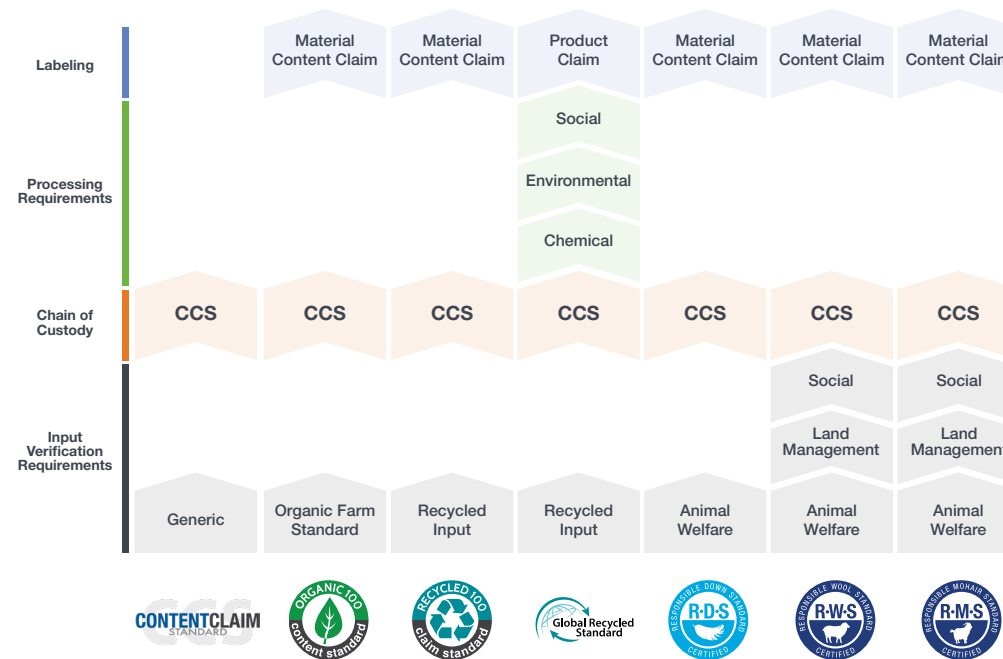- Content percentages of claimed materials are accurate

Product Segregation:

- Certified goods are not mixed with non-certified goods
- Certified goods are stored separately from non-certified goods

Volume Reconciliation:

- Certified outgoing products match the incoming certified goods
- (Input) +/- (production loss) = (output)

Content Claim Standard (CCS)

The Content Claim Standard (CCS) is the chain of custody system for all Textile Exchange standards. On its own, the CCS can be used to verify any claimed material through any supply chain. It is the foundation for all of our standards.

Labeling		Material Content Claim	Material Content Claim	Product Claim	Material Content Claim	Material Content Claim	Material Content Claim
Processing Requirements				Social			
				Environmental			
				Chemical			
Chain of Custody		CCS	CCS	CCS	CCS	CCS	CCS	CCS
Input Verification Requirements							Social	Social
							Land Management	Land Management
		Generic	Organic Farm Standard	Recycled Input	Recycled Input	Animal Welfare	Animal Welfare	Animal Welfare

CONTENTCLAIM STANDARD · ORGANIC 100 Content standard · RECYCLED 100 claim standard · Global Recycled Standard · RESPONSIBLE DOWN STANDARD R·D·S CERTIFIED · RESPONSIBLE WOOL STANDARD R·W·S CERTIFIED · RESPONSIBLE MOHAIR STANDARD R·M·S CERTIFIED

Flow of Documents

Textile Exchange uses scope certificates (SC) and transaction certificates (TC) to establish chain of custody. You can find templates for both scope certificates and transaction certificates in this section; more information about the templates may be found on the Textile Exchange website.

TC → TC → TC → TC → TC → TC → TC → TC

Farm → **Trader** → **Sourcing** → **Yarn** → **Fabric** → **Garment** → **Brand** → **Retailer**

SC — SC — SC — SC — SC — SC — SC
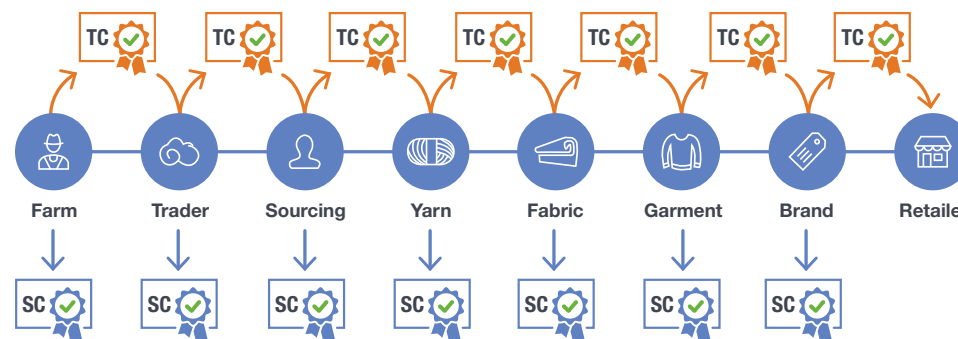
Chain of Custody
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Scope Certificates (SC)

Scope certificates (SCs) indicate that a company is in compliance with a given standard and is able to supply products that are certified to that standard. Scope certificates are issued after a certification body has done a physical inspection of the company and has reviewed their documentation.
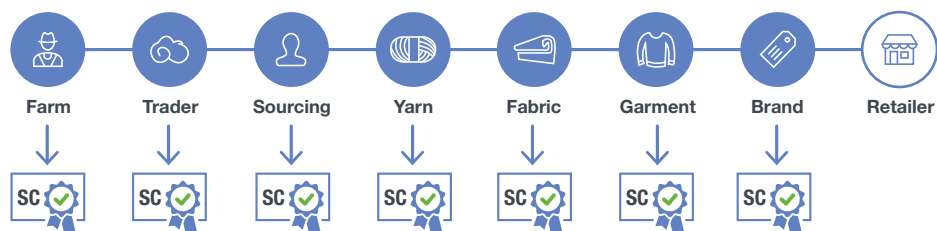
Appendix B: Scope Certificate (SC) Example

Scope Certificate (SC) Checklist:

☐ The certification body listed at the top is accredited to the standard. (The list of accredited certification bodies for each standard may be found on the Textile Exchange website.)

☐ The "Name of Certified Company" is accurate.

☐ The correct standard is listed on the front page.

☐ The applicable product categories are listed on the front page or annex.

☐ The applicable processing steps or activities are listed on the front page or annex.

☐ The site supplying the product is listed on the front page or annex.

☐ The certificate is still valid, i.e. within the date listed on the front page.

☐ The certificate is signed and stamped by the certification body.

☐ The scope certificate can be validated, either by a web link or QR code on the scope certificate itself, on the Textile Exchange scope certificate listings, or from the certification body.

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Transaction Certificates (TC)

Transaction certificates (TCs) indicate that a given shipment of goods has been produced in accordance to a specific standard. Because the transaction certificates are required to follow the raw material through to the final product, they create a chain of custody system that ensures the products contain the indicated raw material and that the standard has been followed at all steps of production. Companies purchasing certified products should request a transaction certificate with each shipment order. A valid transaction certificate between you and your supplier could only be issued if all previous TCs were in place, so it is only necessary to see the TC from your direct supplier.

TCs are issued by the certification body that issued the scope certificate for the seller in the transaction. The certified site requests a transaction certificate from the certification body. The certification body will then check the flow of inputs and outputs in a mass balance calculation to verify the quantities produced at that site. The certification body will then directly issue the transaction certificate to the certified company, who will then supply it to their customer. This happens after goods have been shipped, so there is generally a delay of one to two weeks from the time the shipment was sent.

When you receive the transaction certificate, use the below checklist to verify key information.

Farm → Trader → Sourcing → Yarn → Fabric → Garment → Brand → Retailer
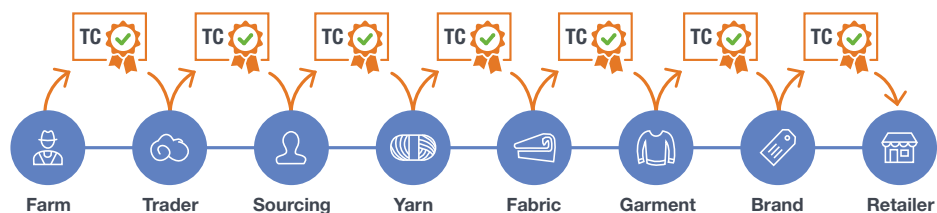
Appendix C: Transaction Certificate (TC) Example

Transaction Certificate (TC) Checklist:

☐ Selected standard is listed at the top.

☐ The certification body listed in box 2 is accredited to the standard. (The list of accredited certification bodies for each standard may be found on the Textile Exchange website.)

☐ Your supplier is listed in box 3.

☐ Your company name is listed in box 7.

☐ The facility receiving the goods is listed in box 8; make sure your company or facility is listed as the consignee of the product in box 8.

☐ The details in box 10 match the details of the shipment, product (material & composition) & label grade.

☐ Be sure to check for a second page: this is where annexes are listed if there is insufficient space on the first page

☐ Make sure the input fiber certification is correct in box 14.

☐ Certified Volume under Box 13, Box 13a, & 13b.

☐ The certificate is signed, stamped and dated by the certification body.

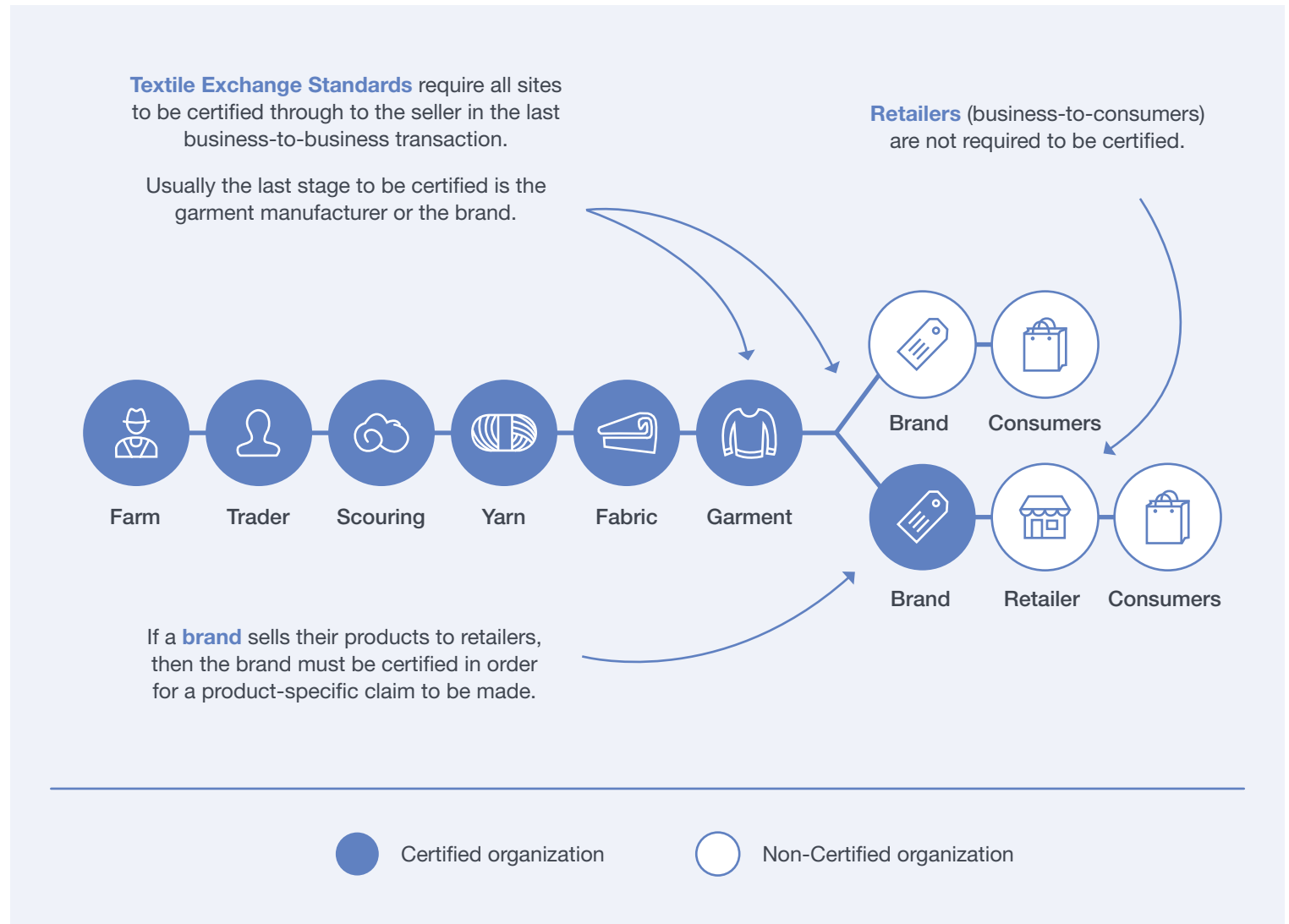# The Certification Process

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The Certification Process
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Who Needs to be Certified?

Textile Exchange standards require each stage of the supply chain to be certified, starting from the raw material producer (e.g. duck or goose farm, recycler, sheep farm, or first processor of organically grown material) all the way to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction. This ensures the full chain of custody of the claimed material can be verified.

Brands selling through independent retailers are required to be certified in order to label products with reference to the standard. Brands or retailers that sell only direct to consumer are not required to be certified, but are still required to follow all the requirements in the relevant Logo Use and Claims Guide.

Textile Exchange Standards require all sites to be certified through to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.

Usually the last stage to be certified is the garment manufacturer or the brand.

Retailers (business-to-consumers) are not required to be certified.

Farm — Trader — Scouring — Yarn — Fabric — Garment

Brand — Consumers

Brand — Retailer — Consumers

If a **brand** sells their products to retailers, then the brand must be certified in order for a product-specific claim to be made.

● Certified organization   ○ Non-Certified organization

The Certification Process

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The Essential Steps for Brands and Retailers

Set your Fibers and Materials Strategy. Textile Exchange recommends reviewing your full portfolio of materials and identifying where standards or adoption of preferred fibers can help you reduce your negative impact and improve the environmental outcomes of your products. You can learn more on our Fiber and Materials webpage.

Determine which claims you want to make about your company or product and choose a standard that supports this claim. Consider your sustainability strategy and priorities, and the areas you would like to address through certification. For example, you may only want to back up the use of certain fibers such as organically grown cotton, or you may want to make more of a full product claim that addresses the raw material use, as well as social and environmental considerations, such as the GRS.

Select a standard based on these considerations. Be sure to read the standard and fully understand the requirements of the standards you have chosen.

Inform your suppliers of your selected standards and the timeline for compliance. You will likely need to give your suppliers some time to understand the standard and get certified. Communicate with them regularly to ensure they have made progress. You may also need to work on suppliers one tier at a time. Work with suppliers closest to the material first and then work your way towards your garment manufacturers and direct suppliers.

Confirm with your suppliers that they can provide you with the certified product(s) you need.

Working with your current suppliers:

- We always recommend working with your existing supply chain, even if it might take a bit longer if they are not yet certified.

- Check if your supplier is already certified by visiting our website (insert link to certified unit list).

If your suppliers are not yet certified to the standard:

- Advise your suppliers to get a copy of the Supplier Certification Toolkit. You may also choose to find the list of accredited certification bodies on the standard's website and provide this list to your suppliers.

- Support their application and certification process in any way you can. The best thing you can do is to assure them that you will give them sufficient business for the certified products to justify their efforts and investments.

To find new certified suppliers:

- Visit the Textile Exchange website or contact the applicable standards organization directly to request a list.

Request the following documentation:

Scope certificates (SC) indicate that the facility has met the requirements of the standard.

- Request the SC prior to placing an order.

- Be sure that the products you will be ordering are included in the categories listed on the SC.

- Check that the SC has not expired.

- Verify that the SC is valid by checking that the company is listed on the Textile Exchange website.

Transaction certificates (TC) indicate that the products listed on the certificate were produced in accordance with the standard. This will come from the last point of production or sale (for example, a sewing factory for garments, or a wholesaler).

Require that all shipments of certified products have a TC or a method of tracking from the last point of manufacture, and check the following:

- Your company or your importer is named as the buyer or consignee.

- The seller information is accurate.

- The date is valid.

- The certificate correctly identifies the goods and amounts being shipped to you.

- The certificate is to the standard you requested.

- The TC is issued by the same certification body named on the company's SC.

Additional information about scope and transaction certificates may be found in the section on Chain of Custody.

The Certification Process

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Getting Certified as a Brand or Retailer

Brands and retailers often use our standards with two primary goals:

1. As an internal verification of materials in their portfolio, possibly to support sustainability claims or goals.

2. As a consumer communication tool, reference the standard on products, online, or in marketing materials.

On the right is a decision tree, to help you decide whether you need to be certified directly.

About Post-Production Certification

Brands that are required to be certified may benefit from our post-production exemptions. There are three exemptions that companies involved in post-production (brands, traders, distribution centers, warehouses, wholesalers, licensees, etc.) may benefit from:

1. 100% Exemption

2. Brand Network Certification (BNC)

3. Batch Code Exemption

This following page will explain the qualifications of each type of exemption, how it works, and what type of labeling is permitted. We recommend discussing this with your certification body to make sure you understand before making your choice.

Do you want to mention standards on the product?

Yes → **Is the product intended for labeling sold...**

No → **You do not need to be certified.**

...through a retail partner? → **You must be certified to label these products.**

...direct to consumer? → **Are you ok listing your suppliers publicly?**

Yes → **You do not need to be certified.**

No → **Get certified to skip listing suppliers on the product.**

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100% Exemption

How does it work?

Under this exemption, a brand has shown that for a given material type (e.g. down, cotton, or wool), the brand only purchases certified products. This lowers the risk significantly and allows the brand to sell to wholesalers and others without the need for TCs.

How to qualify?

During the audit of the brand, they should be able to show that all product that contains a given type of material is certified across all branded products, including licensees. Brands must inform the CB of all post-production sites that handle certified product.

Labeling Product under the 100% Exemption

Claims are allowed on the final product, but they must be limited to general statements and not statements that the product is directly certified. For example, they hangtag may include the logo, reference to the CB, and reference to the last certified supplier, and the language would be something like, "All of our cotton is certified to the Organic Content Standard."

Brand Network Certification (BNC)

How does it work?

Under the Brand Network Certification, all post-production sites between the manufacturer and the final retailer are certified as a group or "network." The network is assigned a risk level and auditing is conducted on a sampling rate, rather than requiring that each site be certified independently. TCs are issued to the brand that is responsible for the network and may be issued directly to the final retailer.

How to qualify?

To qualify, a brand must identify all post-production sites between the manufacturer and the final retailer and provide enough information for the CB to conduct a risk assessment.

Labeling Under the BNC

Labeling products works just as if the brand was fully certified, following the guidelines of the applicable Logo Use and Claims Guide.

Batch Code Exemption

How does it work?

A batch code is permanently affixed to the product, usually in the sewn-in label. This includes:

1. Textile Exchange Standard acronym, CB acronym code (assigned by Textile Exchange), and brand's licensing number, as supplied by their CB.

2. Unique batch code number (issued by the brand to each unique supplier that is unique to a distinct group of certified products).

3. Product ID.

The batch code is also listed on the TC, so that when the product is sold to the final consumer, there remains a link to the last transaction certificate. No further TCs are required. For example, if a brand certified under the batch code system sold to a trader, who then sold to a retailer, that trader would not be required to be certified.

How to qualify?

- Brands agree to use the batch code system on all products, collect TCs for all certified goods.

- All post-production sites that handle certified product are reported to the CB.

- Records are kept for at least five years.

Labeling Product under the Batch Code Exemption

Labeling products works just as if the brand was fully certified, following the guidelines of the relevant Logo Use and Claims Guide.

Questions?

If you have questions concerning certification, contact your certification body. They will be able to help you first, and if not, they can come to Textile Exchange to resolve issues.

The Cost of Certification

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The Cost of Certification
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Cost Estimates

The cost estimates in this section are based on Textile Exchange standards and will vary. The requirements of different standards vary, and so the cost will also vary. Unless otherwise noted, any estimates refer to the cost of a single site being certified, using the average daily rates provided to us by certification bodies.

In addition to the price structure of the certification body, the cost will be influenced by the following factors:

- Complexity of standard chosen

- Location of site in relation to certification body's location of auditors (audit travel cost)

- Complexity of site operations

- Number of sites and subcontractors to be audited

- Initial non-conformities requiring follow-up

- Number of transaction certificates and label releases, if fees present

- Fee structure of chosen certification body

Direct Cost Fee Structure

The pricing structure of the different certification bodies should be available on their website or by request.

Read the Textile Exchange Certification Fee Structure to learn more about certification cost to the certification bodies.

How to Save on Cost

Reduce Direct Cost

- **Prepare documentation and necessary procedures** – use the standard as a tool to prepare for the audit. Preparation reduces the amount of time the auditor spends during the initial inspection and reduces the chance of non-conformance follow-up inspections.

- **Compare prices of multiple certification bodies** – request fee schedules from certification bodies that operate in your region before engaging with a certification body. Since it will hopefully be a long-term relationship, you should get cost estimates from several certification bodies when possible, since fee schedules vary widely between CBs depending on various factors. Ask which fees are not included in a quote. Fees such as travel time/cost, TC fees, or label release fees may or may not be included in the price.

Improve Efficiencies

- **Consolidate suppliers** – If you are engaging with many suppliers for a certified material, you could be missing out on cost savings. Reward a few suppliers with increased business as they commit to standard compliance. When you deal with fewer suppliers, the economies of scale of larger orders lead to bigger discounts and lower the overall cost of certification per item, not to mention reduced per-unit transaction certificate costs.

- **Request your suppliers to be certified to a standard and allow them to choose their own certification body** – specifying which certification body your suppliers should work with could lead to less competition. The chain of custody system does not require the entire supply chain to be certified by the same certification body.

Marketing your Certification

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Marketing your Certification
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Legal Labeling Requirements

First and foremost, a product should follow the labeling requirements of the country in which the product will be sold in compliance with the law.

The goal of legal and voluntary standard labeling requirements is two-fold:

1. To protect consumers by ensuring the clarity and validity of claims in the marketplace

2. To protect businesses by limiting possible benefit from false product claims and create an even playing field.

The Role of Voluntary Claims in Labeling

As mentioned in the section on the Certification System, brands and retailers often use our standards with two primary goals: 1) as an internal verification of materials in their portfolio, possibly to support sustainability claims or goals and 2) as a consumer communication tool, reference the standard on products, online, or in marketing materials.

Textile Exchange standards are voluntary, and we do not have any authority over your sustainability claims to your customers. If you do not mention the standards on the product, you are not required to follow the guidelines listed

below. We have listed some helpful tips on making sustainability claims below, and further down, you will find our guidelines for how to communicate about the standards.

Making Sustainability Claims

The best resource on how to make credible claims comes from ISEAL, an international alliance of sustainability standards.

The **Five Universal Truths to Sustainability Claims**[2] states that all claims shall be:

1. Clear: easy to understand and not misleading.

2. Accurate: truthful, based on evidence.

3. Relevant: related to issues that are significant to the product or business.

Verified using a system that is…

4. Transparent: clear how the system works and able to get more information.

5. Robust: controls in place over the claims.

For all labels, any claims should be able to be verified and should comply with the laws of the country in which the products are being sold. Companies may have their own label referring to the claim they are making, or refer to an existing label. Product labeling should be clear; without language or images that resemble third-party certification when there is none.

What is Greenwashing?

The term comes from an older word, "whitewashing" which refers to someone trying to cover something up, a concerted effort to give a false impression, usually of something negative. Greenwashing attempts to give the impression of environmental benefits from a product, when there are none, or very few. The end result of excessive greenwashing is that consumers lose trust in "green" claims being made on products, even when they are true.

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[2] This section is pulled from ISEAL's work on credible claims, learn more at https://community.isealalliance.org/challenge.

Marketing your Certification
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Textile Exchange Standards Claims

Any claims that mentions Textile Exchange standards must follow the guidelines and intent of the standard. In order for our standards to maintain their credibility and lead to meaningful change, it is important that all parties respect these guidelines when making claims. The following requirements guide provides clear guidance for making claims to customers and consumers around Textile Exchange standards. For further information, please reference the Logo Use & Claims Guide for the standard you are using.

The benefits of labeling with third-party standards are:

- Safeguard reputation and provide credibility
- Demonstrate product integrity and protect against litigation
- Differentiate your product and boost consumer recognition with known logos
- An easy reference for sales force to convey the message to consumer

Key points to remember:

- Claims about Textile Exchange standards are subject to our requirements and these may include any combination of logo use, text claims, and/or links to additional information that mention the standard by name.

- There are two types of claims that are used to communicate about a standard: general marketing claims & product-specific claims, both of which can be used in business-to-business or consumer-facing communications.

- Product-specific claims require approval from an authorized CB.

Textile Exchange Standards Labeling Requirements

Only products that meet each of the requirements below are eligible for labeling:

Requirement 1: The final product is certified up to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.

- If a brand is selling direct to consumers, they are not required to be certified (unless labelling happens at their facilities and not at their direct suppliers).

- If a brand is selling to a retailer, the brand is required to be certified.

Requirement 2: The final certified product contains the minimum required certified material as outlined in the chart below:

	Minimum %	Blending* allowed?
OCS Blended	5%	Yes
OCS 100	95%	No
RCS Blended	5%	Yes
RCS 100	95%	No
GRS	50%	Yes
RDS	5%	No
RWS	5%	No
RMS	5%	No**

* with conventional material of the same type

** Non-RWS wool may be blended with RMS mohair, and non-RMS mohair may be blended with RWS wool

Requirement 3: Any product-specific claims and associated label/hangtag artwork is approved by a certification body - see claims-making process below.

Requirement 4: A valid scope certificate (SC) is held by the final certified company and includes the correct product category.

Requirement 5: Printed claims (e.g. hangtags, sewn-in labels) are physically attached to certified products by certified companies only.

- Brands and retailers who do not require certification must request that their direct certified supplier apply hangtags.

Engage with Textile Exchange

If you have questions about a specific claim or labeling situation, the first organization you should contact is your certification body, or the certification body of your supplier. They will be able to guide and assist you on your certification journey.

For more general questions, Textile Exchange offers tools and support for making claims and labeling to our standards. Please visit our webpage to learn more or contact us at: Standards@TextileExchange.org.

Textile Exchange Standards

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Textile Exchange Standards

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Recycled Claim Standard (RCS)

The Recycled Claim Standard (RCS) is an international, voluntary standard that sets requirements for third-party certification of recycled input and chain of custody. The goal of the RCS is to increase the use of recycled materials.

The objectives of the RCS are:

- Alignment of recycled definitions across multiple applications.

- Track and trace recycled input materials.

- Provide consumers (both brands and end consumers) with a tool to make informed decisions.

- Provide assurance that materials are actually recycled and in a final product.

The RCS is intended for use with any product that contains at least 5% Recycled Material. The scope of the RCS starts at the recycling stage and extends to the seller in the final business-to-business transaction. Material collection and material concentration sites are subject to self-declaration, document collection, and on-site visits.

Please refer to the RCS 2.2 Implementation Manual to learn more.

Global Recycled Standard (GRS)

The Global Recycled Standard (GRS) is an international, voluntary, full product standard that sets requirements for third-party certification of recycled content, chain of custody, social and environmental practices, and chemical restrictions. The goal of the GRS is to increase use of recycled materials in products and reduce/eliminate the harm caused by its production.

The objectives of the GRS are:

- Alignment of definitions across multiple applications.

- Track and trace recycled input materials.

- Provide customers (both brands and consumers) with a tool to make informed decisions.

- Reduce harmful impact of production to people and the environment.

- Provide assurance that materials in the final product are actually recycled and processed more sustainably.

- Drive innovation in addressing quality issues in the use of recycled materials.

The GRS is intended for use with any product that contains at least 20% recycled material. Each stage of production is required to be certified, beginning at the recycling stage and ending at the last seller in the final business-to-business transaction. Material collection and material concentration sites are subject to self-declaration, document collection, and on-site visits.

Please refer to the GRS 4.2 Implementation Manual to learn more.

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Organic Content Standard (OCS)

The Organic Content Standard (OCS) is an international, voluntary standard that provides chain of custody verification for materials originating on a farm certified to recognized organic standards. The standard is used to verify organically grown raw materials from the farm to the final product. The goal of the OCS is to increase organic agriculture production.

The objectives of the OCS are to:

- Provide the industry with a tool to verify the organically grown content of the products they purchase.

- Provide companies with a trusted tool to communicate organically grown content claims to the industry.

- Provide organic farmers with broad access to the global organic market for their products.

The scope of the OCS starts at the first processor of organically grown material and extends to the seller in the final business-to-business transaction.

The OCS accepts organically grown material from farms certified to a national organic standard recognized by the below standards:

- IFOAM

- USDA's National Organic Program (NOP)

- Regulation (EC) 834/2007 & EU 2018/848

- Any other organic standard that is approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards.

Material-specific requirements:

- Organic Cotton – GMO testing for the organic cotton in accordance with OCS-103 GMO Screening of Organic Cotton.

- Wool - the first processor or OCS certified sites shall only accept organic wool as an input if it is non-mulesed or from a farm with ceased mulesing status.

Please refer to the OCS 3.0 User Manual to learn more.

Responsible Down Standard (RDS)

The Responsible Down Standard (RDS) is an international, voluntary standard that addresses animal welfare in the duck and geese supply chain and chain of custody of down and feather material from certified farms to the final product.

Individual sites are certified by independent third-party certification bodies using annual audits. Material is tracked from the farm to the final product using transaction certificates, following the requirements of Textile Exchange's Content Claim Standard (CCS).

The objectives of the RDS are to:

- Ensure that down and feathers do not come from supply chains where animals have been subjected to any unnecessary harm.

- Reward and influence the down and feather industry to incentivize practices that respect the humane treatment of ducks and geese.

- Education and development of the supply chain in order to drive continuous improvement of best practices.

- Provide companies with a tool to know what is in their products, and to make accurate claims.

- Ensure strong chain of custody for certified materials as they move through the supply chain.

The scope of the RDS starts from the farm and extends to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.

Please refer to the RDS 3.0 User Manual to learn more.

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Responsible Animal Fibers (RAF)

The Responsible Animal Fiber Standard (RAF) is an umbrella term for multiple standards related to animal fibers. Current RAF standards are the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) and the Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS).

A single farm may be certified to either the RWS or the RMS and separate scope certificates are issued. For the supply chain, scope certificates are issued for the RAF and both RWS and RMS products can be added.

The following sections provide more detail on the goals and objectives of the RWS and the RMS.

Please refer to the RAF Transition Policy to learn more.

Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)

The Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) is an industry tool designed to recognize the best practices of farmers, ensuring that wool comes from farms with a progressive approach to managing their land, and from sheep that have been treated responsibly.

As an independent, voluntary standard, companies can choose to become certified to the RWS. On farms, the certification ensures that sheep are treated with respect to their Five Provisions[3] and also ensures best practices in the management and protection of the land. The standard is globally applicable to all breeds of sheep, and mulesing is strictly prohibited.

The scope of the RWS starts from the farm and extends to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction. Please refer to the RWS 2.0 User Manual to learn more.

The objectives of the RWS are:

- Ensure that wool does not come from animals that have been subjected to any unnecessary harm.
- Reward and influence the wool industry for strong animal welfare, land management, and social welfare practices.
- Provide robust chain of custody from farm to final product.
- Create an industry benchmark to drive improvements in animal care, land management, and social welfare where needed.

Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS)

The Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) is an industry tool designed to recognize the best practices of farmers, ensuring that mohair comes from farms with a progressive approach to managing their land, and from goats that have been treated responsibly.

As an independent, voluntary standard, companies can choose to become certified to the RMS. On farms, the certification ensures that goats are treated with respect to their Five Provisions and also ensures best practices in the management and protection of the land.

The scope of the RMS starts from the farm and extends to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction. Please refer to the RMS 1.0 User Manual to learn more.

The objectives of the RMS are:

- Ensure that mohair does not come from animals that have been subjected to any unnecessary harm.
- Reward and influence the mohair industry for strong animal welfare, land management, and social welfare practices.
- Provide robust chain of custody from farm to final product.
- Create an industry benchmark to drive improvements in animal care, land management, and social welfare where needed.

[3] The Five Provisions are internationally recognized standards for the protection of animal welfare, consisting of: 1. Good Nutrition; 2. Good Environment; 3. Good Health; 4.Appropriate Behavior; 5. Positive Mental Experiences. (Source: Farm Animal Welfare Council).

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary

Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Accreditation: The process by which third-party entities (certification bodies) are evaluated and endorsed to conduct certification activities in connection with a given standard.

Audits: An inspection or examination by certification bodies of facilities and/or documents to verify compliance to the requirements of a given standard. Audits may be scheduled or random with little advance notice.

Blend: Any combination of two or more types of raw material types in a product. eg: a fabric may be made of 50% organic cotton/30% conventional cotton/20% polyester.

Certificate: A document issued by certification body confirming compliance to the given standard; there are different types of certificates depending on which standard you're being certified to.

See *Transaction Certificate* and *Scope Certificate*.

Certification: Refers to the issuing of written assurance (the certificate) by an independent external body that it has audited a management system and verified that it conforms to the requirements specified in the standard.[4] When Textile Exchange uses the word certification, we are always implying third-party verification to a standard.

Certification Body (CB): An accredited third-party body that certifies or confirms that the conditions of the given standard have been met.

Certifier: See *Certification Body*.

Certified Grower: A farmer who produces fiber in fields or farming operations that have been certified by accredited certifiers as following the requirements of a given standard.

Chain of Custody: A system to document and guarantee the path taken by a defined raw material through all stages of transfer and production, to the final product. The chain of custody preserves the identity of the raw material. This can be done through a system of scope certificates and transaction certificates that follow the product through each stage, or a system that manages the flow of goods through data collection at each stage of the supply chain.

Claim: An oral, written, implied, representation, statement, advertising or other form of communication that is presented to the public or buyer.

Commingling: Physical contact between certified and non-certified materials during production, processing, transportation, storage or handling.

Content: Type and proportion of a material in a product.

Inputs: All substances and materials used in the production of textiles.

Inspections: See *Audits*.

Inspector: The representative of the certification body that physically visits the site being certified to review documents and view operations.

Integrity: Making truthful claims; integrity is essential in maintaining the trust of farmers, processors, sellers and consumers, and in ensuring that the targeted social and environmental benefits are actually achieved.

Label: Descriptive, informative or pictorial material on or accompanying a product or its immediate container.

Mass Balance Calculations: A calculation of the total amount of fiber inputs a company receives, and the total amount it shipped out (taking into consideration the gain or loss during production, as well as inventory levels). This information is captured on transaction certificates of companies being certified; this allows the certifier to verify the percentages of fiber in the final product and ensure the site is not sending out more product than they could possibly produce in accordance with a standard.

Mulesing: Removal of wool-bearing strips of skin from between the hind legs of sheep (the "breech" area) in an effort to avoid problems of fly strike.

Non-compliance: Lack of conformity with a standard.

Organic Fiber (or "organically grown fiber"): Fiber grown without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides or fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation or genetic engineering, and certified by an accredited independent organization.

In-Conversion: The establishment of an organic management system and building of soil fertility requires an interim period, known as the conversion period. While the conversion period may not always be of sufficient duration to improve soil fertility and for re-establishing the balance of the ecosystem, it is the period in which all the actions required to reach these goals are started.

Organization: A legal entity which is *certified* to or in the process of becoming certified to the standards. A scope certificate is held by an organization, and an organization has one or more sites.

Appendix A: Glossary
Brand & Retailer Certification Toolkit

Pre-consumer recycled material: Material captured from the waste stream before it has reached the consumer. An example of pre-consumer material that may be recycled is cutting room floor waste. Pre-consumer recycled material is sometimes referred to as post-industrial recycled material.

Post-consumer recycled material: Material captured from the waste stream after being used by a consumer. Examples of post-consumer materials that may be recycled are used t-shirts, plastic drinking bottles, etc.

Records: The information in written, visual, or electronic form that documents the activities undertaken by a user to demonstrate accordance with a standard.

Recycled: Material that would have, under normal industry practices, entered the waste stream and that is processed into a new product. Textile Exchange recognizes both pre- and post-consumer recycled material. Pre-industrial waste is not considered a valid recycled input.

Scope Certificate (SC): A certificate issued by the certifier showing that a specific facility has been certified as conforming to a specific standard.

Standard: A norm setting out conditions for the farming and/or processing of a product.

- *Raw Material Standards* typically cover agricultural production or raw material extraction and often involve addressing environmental or social issues in production or use of the raw fiber. These can be mandatory if making a qualified claim on a product.

- *Processing Standards* cover the processing and flow of goods from the original input to final product; they may address environmental or social issues in the processing of the final product, or may simply address chain of custody.

- *Mandatory Standards* must be complied with in order to meet any legal requirements in the country of sale.

- *Voluntary Standards* are standards that a company is not required to comply with in order to meet any legal requirements in the country of sale, but may choose to use for other reasons.

Sub-contractor: An individual or company that is hired by the producer or handler to perform services. Note that the sub-contractor will not take ownership of the goods being processed.

Supply Chain: The progression of business entities involved in the supply and purchase of materials, goods or services from raw materials to the final textile product.

Trader: The individual or organization that takes ownership of products (for the sake of buying and selling) between the supplier and purchaser of the products (eg: between the sewing factory and the retailer). Traders do not necessarily take physical possession of the goods.

Traceability: The ability to trace the history, application or location of a given material.

> **Note:**
>
> *Tracing* generally refers to going backward through time and the supply chain, while *tracking* refers to moving forward through time and the supply chain.

Transaction Certificate (TC): A certificate supplied by the certification body, confirming that the traded product has been produced in accordance with a specific standard. The quantity, certification body and standard will all be identified. Transaction certificates are issued when goods are changing ownership.

Transitional: See *In-Conversion*.

Transparency: Disclosure relating to the operations, inputs, and materials used in the production of a final product.

Site: The facility in which a specific operation is taking place: gin, spinning mill, knitting or weaving mill, dyeing and finishing unit, and sewing factory. The site may also be referred to as a production unit.

Verification: A system of ensuring that product claims are true and accurate. Verification may take many forms, testing, self-reporting, or certification. See also, *Certification*.

Appendix B: Scope Certificate Example
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Textile Exchange Scope Certificate (SC) Example: ⬇ **Download pdf**

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Textile Exchange Transaction Certificate (TC) Example: ⬇ **Download pdf**

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Yellow Highlighted & Red circle points to check-in TC.