

TECHNICAL CIRCULAR Ref. DC2022SPM099

DATE Milan, 16-05-2022

To all PRD accredited and applicant CABs

To the Associations of conformity assessment bodies

To all ACCREDIA assessors and experts

SUBJECT **Certification and Inspection Department**

Technical circular DC N° 12/2022 – Dispositions for the accreditation, PRD scheme, of the GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD (GOTS) certification scheme

The general reference framework

The GOTS standard was developed by four organizations: Organic Trade Association (OTA, USA), Internationaler Verband der Naturtextilwirtschaft (IVN, Germany), The Soil Association (UK) and Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA, Japan) which have great experience in the promotion of organic products and which have developed a standard in order to provide assurance for the consumer of textile production which respects the environment and social aspects in all stages of production, from harvesting to labelling of the finished product.

Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) is a standard for organic textiles.

Its main objectives are the use of organic natural fibres, traceable in all stages of the supply chain, the adoption of eco-sustainable processes and social responsibility requirements concerning the rights of workers.

International markets recognize organic textile products with GOTS certification.

The certification ensures the use of natural fibres (cotton, linen, hemp, wool, silk) grown according to the principles of organic agriculture in all stages of production.

The natural raw materials used in the textile sector come from primary agricultural or animal production, and fall within the scope of application of organic agri-food legislation (e.g. Reg. 848, NOP, NPOP, GB/T19630, standards approved by the IFOAM family).

However, in order to guarantee this certification through all the textile supply chain, organizations must satisfy the requirements of the GOTS standard in order to be certified.

Certification guarantees the maintenance of the GOTS identity from the farm to the final product, including the inputs and accessories used. Only products that fulfil all the requirements can be "GOTS" certified according to the following specifications:

- Certified "organic" or "organic in conversion" product: at least 95% of the fibre content of the products - excluding accessories - shall be of certified organic origin or "in conversion" and, if applicable, a maximum of 5% of the content of product fibres may be made of non-organic fibres specifically listed in section 2.4.9 "additional fibre materials" of the standard;
- Certified product "made with [X]% organic materials": at least 70% of the fibre content of the products - excluding accessories - shall be certified as of organic origin or "in conversion" and, if applicable, a maximum of 30% of the fibre content of the products may consist of non-organic fibres listed in section 2.4.9 "additional fibre materials" of the standard;
- "Gots approved" chemical inputs: with limited environmental and/or toxicological impact.

The added value of GOTS certification is to encourage the adoption of environmental, ethical and social sustainability policies within the textile industry, as well as to encourage the use of environmentally friendly materials to reduce the impact on the environment and stimulate the development of a sustainable supply chain.

Certification process

CERTIFICATION RULES	
Accreditation standard	UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Requirements for Certification Bodies (CABs) certifying products, processes and services
Certification standard (main references)	<p>Main document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) version 6.0; <p>and other normative documents in their current revision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval Procedure for CABs; • Implementation Manual; • Condition for the use of GOTS signs; • SC Policy (Scope Certificates, SCs); • Policy Letters of Approval; • TC Policy (Transaction Certificate, TCs). <p>All documents applicable to the standard are available on the Scheme Owner's website (www.global-standard.org).</p>

Criteria of competence of the personnel of the CABs	The criteria of competence and qualification of the personnel of the CAB (including auditors and the decision-making body) are defined in paragraph 5.1.2. of the "Approval Procedure for Certification Bodies" procedure.
Typologies of parties who can request certification and possible exclusions	<p>In compliance with the requirements of the standard, operators can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • producers, processors, traders of textile products; • producers of chemical inputs. <p>Possible exclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trader (B2B) whose annual revenue of GOTS products is less than 20.000 € (however, registration with an accredited CAB is mandatory); • Retailer who only does retail sales (B2C) and has an annual turnover of GOTS products of less than 20.000 €
Audit times and periodicity of audits and possible exclusions	<p>Audits by CABs must be conducted on each certified organization at least annually.</p> <p>The audit times must be defined by the CAB, based on the business complexity and risk factors.</p> <p>Possible variations are provided for in the "Implementation Manual section 4.1".</p>
Procedures of the CAB	<p>The CAB, in undertaking its activities with reference to this Standard, must possess, at least, the following procedures for describing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • certification process; • minimum competences of the staff involved; • risk analysis criteria for defining the times, frequencies and durations of the audits; • use of the GOTS logo; • approval of the labels; • sanctions to be imposed in cases of nonconformity; • contractual documents regarding the client; • pricelist; • management of complaints and appeals;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management of any exceptions with regard to the requirements of the standard.
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For further requirements for the management of the certification process, refer to the details set out in the Standard.

Accreditation process

CABs that request accreditation shall previously sign a license agreement with GOTS and shall incorporate the requirements of the scheme documents into their document system.

A condition for a CAB to be accredited is the possession of the requirements set out in the ACCREDIA Regulation RG-01 for the accreditation of Certification and Inspection Bodies and in the ACCREDIA Regulation RG-01-03 for the accreditation of Product/Service CABs

If the CAB already possesses accreditations issued by other Accreditation Bodies, a case-by-case assessment must be carried out, based on the applicable EA/IAF MLA agreements.

In order to obtain GOTS accreditation it is necessary that CAB renounces its own private standards relating to organic textiles. The Scheme Owner does not expressly require that the CAB in order to operate in GOTS, must be accredited for the organic sector.

To offer the certification service with respect to the GOTS standard, the CAB must already be accredited to the standard UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17065 and must provide evidence of acceptance of its application by the Scheme Owner.

Having verified the possession of the minimum requirements, the accreditation process will start with the conduct of the assessment activities as provided for in the above Regulations and in accordance with the rules/documents applicable to accreditation. In particular:

- Document review of 1 man/day;
- Head office assessment of 1 man/day;
- Witness assessment at a textile manufacturing mill (preferably including wet processing units, provided that the CABs has requested this scope).

Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) accreditation is granted according to the following scopes:

- Scope 1: Certification of mechanical textile processing and manufacturing operations and their products;
- Scope 2: Certification of wet processing and finishing operations and their products;
- Scope 3: Certification of trading operations and related products;
- Scope 4: Approval of dyes and textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists.

Since the collaboration with the Accreditation Body represents for GOTS a fundamental part of the monitoring of the CAB and the correct use and control of its Standard, the Certification Body, by requesting accreditation, also makes itself available to the possibility that ACCREDIA and Global Standard gGmbH share information on the activities of the CABs and copies of the assessment reports.

Maintenance of accreditation

For the maintenance of accreditation through the accreditation cycle, except for special situations (e.g. management of complaints and feedbacks, modifications made to the certification scheme, changes in the staff structure of the CABs), on-site assessments will be conducted every two years. About witnesses is required an assessment of the scope 4 and an assessment or review audit for one of the other scopes (scope 1, 2, 3) at least once in the accreditation cycle. The witness assessments shall be performed every two years.

The following elements must be verified during the on-site assessments:

- For the evaluation of Scopes 1, 2, 3: at least 5 files or 1.5% of the CAB's clients;
- For the evaluation of Scope 4: at least 5 files regarding chemical inputs or 1.5% of the CAB's clients who manage inputs.

Transfer of accreditation

For CABs which intend to request to transfer their accreditation to ACCREDIA from another Accreditation Body signatory to the EA/IAF MLA agreements, the provisions of the ACCREDIA Regulation RG-01 are applicable.

With kind regards,

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Vice Director Department
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