

What's new in Version 7.0 of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)?

GOTS Version 7 is coming into effect on **1 March 2024**. This is a major update to the standard, so please ensure your system is compliant with the new requirements before your inspection. We have outlined the changes below and will be hosting a webinar on 8 November at 11:00 GMT to clarify any questions you may have regarding GOTS V7 - [please sign up here](#)

Key resources

The [GOTS standard page](#) shows:

- the published **new standard**,
- accompanying guidance in the **manual for implementation**,
- due diligence handbook,
- change log,
- Q&A.

Please familiarise yourself with the new standard and manual to ensure you are aware of the requirements of GOTS certification.

We will also keep [our own webpage](#) updated with current guidance documents and forms.

Your current certificate

Your current GOTS V6 certificate will remain valid until its expiry date, unless you are issued a GOTS V7 certificate before then.

Your next inspection

As part of your contractual agreement with SA Certification, your audit can occur at any time of year. To avoid certificate expiry issues, we aim to inspect to GOTS V7 from November 2023, and some inspections will take place earlier in 2024 than you might expect.

If you need a GOTS V7 certificate sooner than your usual inspection date, please email fashion.textiles@soilassociation.org with the reason why, so we can explore options.

If any findings are raised at inspection before the deadline to comply with the new requirements, this will be reflected in how we review timescales for planned corrective action.

What are the main changes?

Fibre composition – 3.2.3

GOTS' full list of allowed additional fibres can be found in section 3.2 of GOTS V7. Please ensure that all GOTS Goods you intend to sell from 1 March 2024 (or with GOTS V7 status) comply with these requirements, including:

3.2.3 Recycled polymer fibres: new limit of 20% (previously 30%).

6.1.2.4 (tampons): For security veils, only 100% organic cotton fibres are allowed.

Packaging and transport – 2.6

Please submit details of your packaging for approval using the [GOTS packaging release form](#). This form will be used going forwards to ensure any packaging of GOTS goods (within the supply chain and retail) is compliant with GOTS V7.

You will need to keep records of the means of transport used.

Chemical inputs – 4.2.2

You must hold a valid GOTS V7 Letter of Approval for **all inputs and additives** used in processing GOTS Goods. This includes printing inputs, dyes and lubricants. We understand these might not be available immediately, so please liaise with your input suppliers to get confirmation the inputs you are using meet GOTS V7.

In addition, **stain removers** must meet the basic requirements described in standards 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

For all **machine oils** used for processing GOTS Goods, please submit:

- SDS (Safety Data Sheet)
- Your machine oil risk assessment (using our [template](#))
- Supplementary evidence as determined by your risk assessment

Environmental management policy– 4.3

Please review your current environmental policies to ensure they comply with the new requirements; we have a [guidance document on our website](#) to support this. Here are a few examples of what we'll need to see at inspection:

- Environmental and Chemical management policies and procedures – standard 4.3.1 goes into details of what to include, for example manufacturers and processors need to record:
 - o Data on energy and water consumption and waste and discharges, all of which are to be recorded in 'per kg of textile output'

- Details of how you monitor and comply with legal air pollution and noise pollution limits.
- For wet processors, update waste water management in line with 4.3.2

Product quality manual – 5.

Your product quality manual will include certain systems you may already have in place. The level of detail will depend on the level of complexity, and size of your operation, and will include:

- Complaints/returns
- Internal audits (You set the frequency and scope of your internal audits. Internal audits are to check that your staff are following your procedures, these checks are carried out by your staff, and documented. Where a discrepancy is identified between your procedures and your operations, this gets discussed internally and action is taken, for example to update your procedure, deliver new training, or if needed notify customers that a batch did not meet the standards. These internal audits help improve consistency within your organisation and form part of your quality control, to help you be confident that you are meeting the requirements of the standards).
- Risk assessment for contamination and product testing. Please ensure your chemical residue risk assessment is reviewed and updated: the testing parameters have changed, various chemical residue limits have been revised which may affect your risk assessment and choice of laboratory. Please refer to the standard and implementation manual in the first instance, and we have **additional guidance** on our [certification resources](#) page.

Embedding due diligence into business decisions – 4.1

While the changes communicated so far affect your operations, this section requires influencing of supply chains to ensure you are not responsible for and not contributing to the well-publicised issues in the apparel industry. Of course, sourcing from GOTS certified suppliers goes a long way towards compliance. But you also need to perform your own due diligence.

Due diligence is a management process that you conduct on your own activities and those of your suppliers across your supply chain and other business relationships.

The structure of this process includes 6 steps that build on each other:

1. Embed responsible business conduct into existing policies and management systems (the organisation's decision-making)
2. Identify and assess adverse impacts (actual and potential)
3. Cease, prevent or mitigate adverse impacts
4. Track implementation and results
5. Communicate how impacts are addressed
6. (Remediation when appropriate)

A risk-based approach enables you to focus your due diligence activities on areas most likely to occur and those that would present the most severe harm (to the environment, to people, etc.). As such, the use of the due diligence framework is integral to demonstrating compliance with GOTS Environmental Criteria, GOTS Human Rights and Social Criteria, and GOTS Governance Criteria.

In addition to the Standard and Implementation manual, GOTS has provided more detail in sections 3, 4 and 5 of the **GOTS Due Diligence Handbook**.

If you are not yet using due diligence, you will need to dedicate some time to embedding this process into your business decisions and introduce safeguards (e.g. in sourcing policies, code of conduct, etc.). The annexes in the handbook describe some actionable ways of demonstrating compliance, so could be used as an action plan. The handbook confirms that the extent of your due diligence activity will be proportionate to the risk and size of your operations and supply chain.

Human rights risks to inform sourcing – 2.1

As the farm-level fibres are certified organic but not to the GOTS standard, GOTS has introduced a scenario where additional checks may be needed to ensure the GOTS Human Rights and Social Criteria are met. You can determine the origin of fibres on transaction certificates. If the cotton you use comes from a country listed below, please liaise with your GOTS certified supplier to determine how they conclude there are no human rights risks at cotton farm level. This might be through supplier visits or independent social audits e.g. SA8000, Naturland, KRAV, Biosuisse, Fairtrade.

You are encouraged to develop your own approach, as long as it includes the risk countries for cotton which have been identified by independent third parties (including Fairtrade risk map, United Nations, OECD, and a 2020 report by Fashion Revolution): Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Senegal, Uganda, Uzbekistan. We hope to build on this knowledge and keep it up-to-date so if there are any insights or resources you would like us to consider in our approach please get in touch.

A note from us

With supply chain due diligence regulations coming into force in different markets, and with increasing competition from uncertified sustainability claims, GOTS has used its latest version of the standard to demonstrate how your GOTS certificate is ticking all the boxes for sustainability impact. We hope you'll find these changes benefit your business. For any specific questions relating to GOTS V7 please email fashion.textiles@soilassociation.org and we look forward to seeing you at the webinar.

With best wishes from the Fashion & Textiles team at Soil Association Certification

Here are your quick links to:

[Access GOTS V7 standard and implementation manual](#)

[Access Soil Association Certification resources](#)

[Sign up to GOTS V7 webinar by Soil Association Certification](#)

[Send us your queries](#)