



Textiles - Guide to Certification (GOTS)

Who must be certified?

If you are processing, manufacturing, packing, labelling, trading and distributing GOTS goods, you must apply for certification according to the Global Organic Textile Standard in order to make use of GOTS logo and benefit from certified organic claims. If your only involvement with a GOTS certified products is selling directly to the end consumer you do not need GOTS certification, but it will help verify your organic credentials. If you wish to use the Soil Association logo, the UK's best recognised organic logo, you will need to be certified by Soil Association Certification.

Farming projects that want to produce organic fibre cannot apply for GOTS certification, but for certification to organic farming standards (s.a. EEC 834/2007 or USDA NOP).

How long does certification take?

We advise applicants to allow between 8 and 12 weeks from the start of your application, but the more detail and more promptly you can respond, the shorter the time it takes to complete the process. Please let us know if you're working towards a specific deadline and we'll do our best to help you meet it. Please factor in an additional 3-4 weeks if your operations are outside of the UK. Your certification expiry date will be 12 months from the beginning of the application process. We'll be in touch with you ahead of your certification renewal date to take you through the renewal process.

How do I work out the cost of certification?

When you request your application pack, we'll send you a fee sheet to help calculate your fees for Year 1 and beyond. Please note: there is an application fee that only relates to Year 1 and a certified sales declaration (CSD) fee that relates annually from Year 2 onwards. If you're not UK-based, an additional cost will be incurred for inspection travel expenses. However, where possible, we'll try to organise your inspections alongside other licensee inspections in the same country, meaning the cost can be split across licensees being inspected in the same trip.

In which countries can we certify?

Please refer to the [GOTS website](#) for the countries our IOAS scopes for GOTS currently cover.

What do you need to know before applying for GOTS certification?

This summary guide gives you an idea of what's involved in certification for organic textiles. Certification involves your operation being assessed to check that you meet the Global Organic Textile Standard, so it's important that you've read the latest version (including the manual for implementation, licensing & labelling guide, scope and transaction certificate policies) in full and are familiar with it. You'll find this on [our website](#) and the [GOTS website](#).

What are the minimum certification requirements?

Fibres (GOTS 2.2.1 & 2.2.2)

Textile products must be made from at least 70% certified organic natural fibres (excluding accessories). The products may include, but are not limited to: yarns, fabrics, toys, personal care, clothes and home textiles.

Blending conventional and organic fibres of the same type in the same product is not permitted and using conventional cotton, angora and virgin polyester is not permitted in the remaining balance of the fibres. There are other criteria in place for the non-organic fibres permitted - see the GOTS standard for more details.

Suppliers (GOTS 1.3)

Suppliers of unprocessed organic fibres must hold organic certification to a recognised organic agriculture standard.

Direct suppliers of fibres, fabrics and products (including wholesalers and traders) must hold their own GOTS scope certificate confirming the certified products and areas of activity. If correctly certified, the supplier will be able to provide a valid scope certificate and the details on the certificate should match the supplier's details (company name, address, etc) shown on the GOTS public database. This public database allows users to search for certified entities in the supply chain, their location, fields of operation and products. However, certified entities that have requested that their data be kept confidential are not listed.

Record Keeping (GOTS 2.4.12)

All operational procedures must be supported by a documented control system that enable to trace all steps within a facility:

- Goods in – each incoming delivery needs to be recorded, including origin, purchase orders/invoices, nature, quantities, batch codes, additional materials, inputs, organic status checking, and a record of the check kept
- Production/packing records (if applicable) – including what's been made, quantities, batch codes of finished products
- Goods out – including what was despatched, delivery notes/invoices, nature, quantities and batch codes
- Stock records – Stock-takes should be performed at least annually

All invoices/delivery notes must clearly make a reference to 'GOTS' on the respective certified products.

Transaction Certificates (TC) (GOTS 2.4.13)

For GOTS certified companies Transaction Certificates (TCs) are mandatory for all GOTS purchases and they ensure that the products of the respective batch have been produced according to the standard.

If your customers require transaction certificates for the GOTS fibres/fabrics/products Soil Association Certification will issue these for you.

Separation (GOTS 2.4.1)

All stages through the supply chain must ensure that organic and conventional fibres are not mixed and that GOTS goods are not contaminated by prohibited substances.

Companies that intend to process, store, etc both organic and conventional goods at the same site, will need to consider safeguards to prevent contamination such as:

- Dedicated storage areas/equipment
- Adequate cleaning processes
- Shifts of organic and conventional production
- Clear labelling and identification along all stages of the chain

Environment Policy (GOTS 2.4.10)

As a minimum, your business needs to meet any national/local requirements applicable to your activities (e.g. discharge of water, waste disposal etc).

GOTS requires a written environmental policy, including target goals and procedures, monitoring and improving environmental performance.

Where your business is manufacturing/processing, energy usage per kg of textile produced should be monitored. A **GOTS Monitor** is available on their website as an assistive tool. The GOTS Monitor determines actual performance and specific consumption values, providing realistic, factory-specific benchmark values that can be used both as improvement targets and milestones to monitor progress - additionally, we have **guidance documents available**.

Wet processing units must keep full records of the use of chemicals, energy, water consumption and waste water treatment, including the disposal of sludge.

Social Policy (GOTS 3)

Social criteria based on the key norms of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) must be met by all operators (traders, processors and manufacturers). They must have a social compliance management with defined elements in place to ensure that the social criteria can be met.

The use of a social criteria tool, such as SAI's SOCIAL FINGERPRINT™ programme, is encouraged to help companies measuring and improving social performance in their company and in the supply chain.

Chemical and Treatment Parameters (GOTS 2.4.14 & 2.4.16)

GOTS products must meet certain chemical and technical parameters. You'll need to carry out a risk assessment relevant to the types of products and activities you carry out to determine the frequency of testing required to demonstrate that these are being met. We have **guidance available** to help you with this.

In order to demonstrate compliance with the parameters for accessories and additional (nonorganic) materials, OEKO-TEX Standard 100 class 1 certificates are considered adequate proof for accessories used in textiles for babies and personal care. OEKO-TEX Standard 100 class 2 are considered adequate proof for accessories used for all other GOTS goods.

Chemical inputs used to process GOTS goods must be approved prior to their usage on 'letters of approval' issued by certifiers to chemical producers and suppliers. Lists of chemical inputs approved for use are available to all Soil Association Certification applicants and licensees.

If you're buying already manufactured processed goods, these checks will have already been completed by the certifier of your supplier and you won't need to provide further information to use about accessories or chemical inputs used.

Labels (GOTS 1.4)

Anyone who intends to sell, label or represent any textile product with the trademark registered GOTS logo must first ensure that the respective criteria and licensing conditions of the Global Organic Textile Standard Program are met according to the **Labelling Guide**.

Where used, the GOTS logo must be applied in such way that is visible to the buyer/consignee in the textile supply chain or to the end consumer at the time of purchase (e.g. use on the final packaging, hang tag or care label). The GOTS logo must always be accompanied by the applicable label grade, a reference to the Soil Association and/or Soil Association's organic symbol, as well as the license number of the certified entity.

Any retail packaging material used must either be recycled pre or post-consumer waste or certified according to a sustainable program, such as FSC or PEFC, and must not contain chlorinated plastics (PVC).

Each label must be submitted to Soil Association Certification for approval and accompanied by a **Labelling Release Form**. We have hang tag templates available for our licensees to make the design process easier.

Labels (GOTS 1.4) cont...

Examples of label marking:

 <p>'Organic' Certified by Soil Association Certification [licence number]</p>	 <p>'Organic - in conversion' Certified by Soil Association Certification [licence number]</p>
 <p>'Made with [X]%¹ organic materials' Certified by Soil Association Certification [licence number]</p>	 <p>'Made with [X]%¹ organic in conversion materials' Certified by Soil Association Certification [licence number]</p>

When used in advertising material the company must ensure that no confusion arises between GOTS certified and non-GOTS certified products.

Using the Soil Association organic symbol

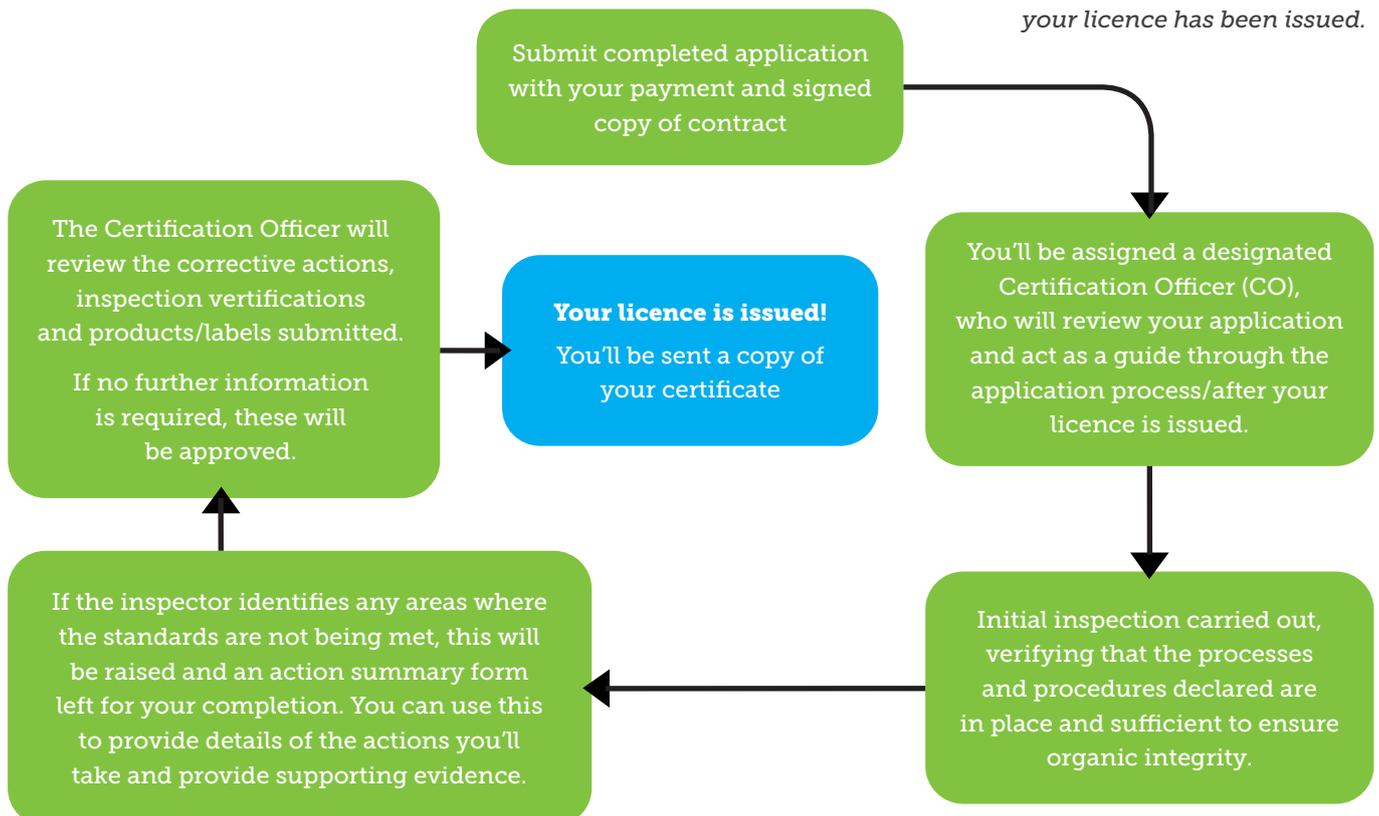


Companies certified by Soil Association Certification can use the Soil Association organic symbol on the labels if they physically apply them.

If the logo is applied by a supplier that's not certified by Soil Association Certification, there's a need to set up a Contracted Symbol User agreement between the operator and the supplier. This will grant the supplier the right to apply our symbol onto your products.

The Application Process

Please note: you're not able to sell or make reference to the Soil Association/GOTS until your licence has been issued.



Once your licence has been issued:

Changes to business set up

You'll be issued with a certificate and product schedule detailing the company name, address, enterprises/activities and products that you're certified for.

If any of these are to change, you'll need to inform us as soon as possible. If the site changes, or you wish to add additional enterprises that we haven't previously inspected (e.g. if you wanted to start packing organic product), an additional inspection may be required.

Products must be approved and added to your licence before marketing. You can add products to your licence at any point during the year through your Certification Officer
- there's no additional cost for doing so.

Annual inspections

We will inspect your operation each calendar year to verify that the requirements continue to be met.

Contact us

If you have any queries or need any help, please get in touch with our **Go Organic team** on **0117 914 2406** or by email at goorganic@soilassociation.org and one of the team will be happy to help.

Soil Association Certification

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