


6.4 Factsheet Textile Exchange GRS

This factsheet aims to provide accessible and factual information on the Textile Exchange GRS certification scheme. This factsheet presents the actual status of the scheme in March 2023. For more detailed information on the system, the reader may visit the website of the certification scheme or contact the scheme owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this factsheet is for informational purpose only and cannot be used in replacement of the official Textile Exchange standards and procedures

Table 12 Factsheet Textile Exchange GRS

Scheme Feature	Description
General	
Name of scheme	Textile Exchange Global Recycled Standard (GRS)
Scheme owner	The Textile Exchange is a global non-profit organization that works to promote sustainability in the textile industry working closely with stakeholders to drive industry transformation in preferred fibers, integrity and standards, and responsible supply networks. It is governed by a Board of Directors and operates with the support of its members and partners. Textile Exchange owns the following standards: Content Claim Standard (CCS), Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), Global Recycled Standard (GRS), Organic Content Standard (OCS), Responsible Down Standard (RDS), Responsible Woold Standard (RWS), Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) and Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS).
Website	https://textileexchange.org/recycled-claim-global-recycled-standard/
Label provided	
Operational since	2002
Number of active certificates	Over 10.000 (available from https://textileexchange.org/find-certified-company/)
Standard ownership	The Textile Exchange GRS is a private and voluntary standard.
General objective	The primary goal of the Textile exchange GRS is to increase use of recycled materials in products and reduce the harmful social, environmental, and chemical impacts of production. Textile Exchange's has a goal of helping the fashion, textile, and apparel industry to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that come from fiber and raw material production by 2030, which they call Climate+.
Scope	
Biomass feedstock coverage	The Textile Exchange GRS certification scheme is focused on the use of range of post- and pre-consumer reclaimed feedstocks of any source including both animal, plant based fibers and synthetic fibers. It does not cover virgin biomass feedstock.
Sector/Product group coverage	Predominantly textile sector, however the Global Recycled Standard is intended for use with any product that contains at least 20% Recycled Material.
Supply chain coverage	The Textile Exchange GRS certification scheme covers the entire supply chain of products made with recycled content, from raw materials to the final product. The supply chain coverage of the GRS includes: collection and sorting, processing, spinning and weaving, manufacturing, distribution and retail. Overall, the supply chain coverage of the GRS is comprehensive, ensuring that products made with recycled content meet certain environmental and social criteria throughout the entire production process.
Geographic focus of the standard	Global

Governance, Standard Development and Certification Requirements

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Scheme governance	The Textile Exchange Governance Board is responsible for approval of substantive changes to Textile Exchange strategy, particularly in reference to any changes to the goals and scope of the standards. The development of Textile Exchange standards shall be led by the International Working Group (IWG), composed of the secretariat and IWG members. IWG members represent brand/retailer, civic society, raw material producers and supply chain services. The secretariat has the administrative role of the IWG, which includes record keeping, stakeholder management, and other functions such as assurance management, and monitoring and evaluation.
Standard documents	The following documents are considered part of the Global Recycled Standard, and are fully binding: Content Claim Standard, Content Claim Standard Implementation Manual, Global Recycled Standard, GRS Logo Use and Claims Guide, Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange, Standards, Policy and Template for Issuing Certificates of Compliance (Scope Certificates, SCs), Scope Certificate Template, Policy and Template for Issuing Transaction Certificates (TCs), Transaction Certificate Template and Textile Exchange Accepted Equivalent Standards. All documents can be found at http://globalRecycled.org .
Transparency and accessibility of standard documents	All Textile Exchange standard documents are publicly available and free of charge on its website.
Multi-stakeholder participation in standard development	Decisions are made by consensus among the members of the International Working Group (IWG), composed of the secretariat and IWG members. Stakeholder engagement is part of the standard development or revision activities with targeted outreach to key stakeholders and an open public invitation to participate and provide feedback.
Compliance with ISEAL's Standards-Setting, Impacts and Assurance Codes of Good Practice	As a full member of the ISEAL Alliance, Textile Exchange follows the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice for standard setting bodies to ensure having a robust and transparent processes for their standards.
Compliance with regional, national, international laws	Textile Exchange expects all organizations certified under Textile Exchange standards to comply with all applicable local, national, and international laws and regulations at all times. In all instances, the international labour standard, national and/or local legislation or GRS requirement that is the most stringent, shall apply to the extent that it does not place them in violation of applicable law.
Reference to standards and policies	Provided in the Global Recycled Standard v 4.0, Section A2.2. Referenced Documents.
Obligation for certification	The GRS certification scheme requires certification of all parties involved in the supply chain of a product that contains recycled content, from the supplier of the recycled material to the brand or product manufacturer who sells the final product. By requiring certification of the entire supply chain, the GRS aims to ensure that the recycled content in the product is accurately traced and verified, and that environmental and social standards are upheld throughout the supply chain.
Certification process	There are 6 steps for achieving the GRS certification standard. Step 1. Select an approved certification body, Step 2. Send application, Step 3. schedule and audit, Step 4. on-site audit (the CB will send an auditor against the requirements of the standard), Step 5 follow up if needed (if a follow-up is needed, a corrective action plan to follow will be given), Step 6. Certification decision (audits results will be reviewed to make a final certification decision).
Traceability and Chain of custody	The Content Claim Standard (CCS) is the Textile Exchange chain of custody standard and is aimed at ensuring the accuracy of content claims, It tracks verified input material through the supply chain and applies to any product, from any industry. The CCS is intended to maintain the integrity of the claimed material's attributes from the original input source to the final product. The CCS is verified by an accredited third-party certification body. The chain of custody model used for the CCS is primarily batch-level segregation with scope certificates and transaction certificates. Scope certificates verify that a company is qualified to produce certified products. Transaction certificates verify that specific products are certified to a given standard. A form of mass balance has been introduced in the Alternative Volume Reconciliation Policy, but with a limited scope of site and process eligibility.
Verification of compliance	An accredited third-party certification body verifies the compliance with applicable Textile Exchange standards.
Accreditation of Certification Bodies	Each certification body is independently accredited by an authorized accreditation body following ASR 101 Accreditation and Certification Procedures and signs a licensing agreement with Textile Exchange. Requirement of certification bodies is covered in section D of the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards v2.1. Requirements from ISO17065 are referenced in this section.
Training of auditors and staff and qualification and evaluation of competencies	The CB shall make sure that all auditors taking part in evaluation and certification have the required training and qualifications in the scope of certification as provided in the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards v2.1. Section D.3 Resource requirements. D3.1 Certification Body Personnel (incl. management of competence) and D3.2 Resources for evaluation. The certification body

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	shall have a program for the ongoing training and calibration of auditors and other certification personnel Auditors shall receive ongoing training on updates to the relevant Standard(s) and related requirements.
Audit process	The certification body shall carry out audits in order to verify information and conformity with certification requirements applicable to the organization. Risk assessments shall be conducted by the certification body prior to each audit and at other times as needed. Certified Organizations shall demonstrate that their working conditions are in line with the social principles in Section B2 and environmental requirements in section C of the GRS standard during the annual audit. If they pass this first audit, the company is awarded a “scope certificate” for that standard and from then on are re-assessed annually for compliance. In addition to this, for every sale of certified products, the company must apply for a “transaction certificate” that represents the actual product certification.
Frequency of audit	Annually
Internal audit	Internal audits shall be performed normally once a year. An audit programme shall be established, taking into consideration the importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of previous audits. Following ISO 17011 clause 9.7.1-4.
Certification claims and labels	Guidelines for making claims and communicating about the GRS can be found in the Standards Claims Policy document (https://textileexchange.org/app/uploads/2022/09/TE-301-V1.2-Standards-Claims-Policy.pdf) and guidelines for the use of the GRS logo can be found in the Standards Logo Use Specifications document (https://textileexchange.org/app/uploads/2020/10/TE-302-V1.1-Standards-Logo-Use-Specifications.pdf)
Sanctions, non-conformities and suspension	When a non-conformity is identified during an audit, it will be classified as critical, major, or minor in the written audit report that the certification body will provide to the (to be) certified site after the audit. A certification decision can be expected once all non-conformities are resolved. See Appendix B in the ASR-101 Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards for a classification and management of non-conformities (https://textileexchange.org/app/uploads/2021/02/ASR-101-V2.1-Accreditation-Certification-Procedures-for-Textile-Exchange-Standards.pdf)
Complaint and appeal mechanisms	The Textile Exchange Complaints and Feedback Policy explains how Textile Exchange receives, manages, and addresses both complaints and general feedback relating to Textile Exchange standards, standards logos, and scheme participants. A complaint form can be found in: https://textileexchange.org/complaint-form/
Guarantee smallholder inclusiveness of the standard	GRS, A5.2c - Traders with an annual turnover of less than \$10,000 of GRS products, and retailers are exempt from the certification obligation.
Promote continuous improvement	GRS 4.0 was released in 2017; the next scheduled revision was merged with development of a consolidated standard system referred to as the unified standard. TE currently plans to finalize the unified standard system by 2024 by revising their standards framework with the aim of developing a single, more outcome-focused standard that incorporates the Climate+ strategy. The unified standard will let TE track progress more efficiently and effectively while increasing the value of our existing certification system. Organisation should adhere to the GRS criteria for continuous improvement: C1.1e Annual plan to target and reach meaningful environmental improvements across all indicators (Sections C2.1, C2.2, C2.4, and C2.5).
Assurance of quality	Textile Exchange has an Assurance team to implement and maintain the quality assurance and credibility of the Textile Exchange Standards. ASR-202 Assurance System Report describe the measures taken such as both accreditation and certification involve annual assessments and audits.
Impact assessment	Textile Exchange’s mission is to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile industry. The GRS, besides the main goal of increasing the use of recycled materials in products and reduce/eliminate the harm caused by its production, it contains a set of objectives: 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. TE has a Monitoring and Evaluation system in place to ensure that the individual goals of each standard is being accomplished using guidance from the ISEAL Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards Systems. Success indicators are defined for each standard e.g., social and environmental requirements for GRS. The results will be reported out to stakeholders in a publicly available annual report, used to further adjust requirements of the standards, and/or reported back to any individual units if deemed appropriate.
Risk management	In standard development a project plan is prepared that guides the process of standard development or revision as defined in ASR-102 Standard Setting Procedure. This plan includes an assessment of risks in implementing the standard, and how to mitigate these. Additionally, risk

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	management is part of the audit process and is further defined in ASR-101. Appendix C of the document further highlights Risk Assessment process to be carried out by CBs.
Cost of certification	TE licenses certification bodies to perform certifications in accordance with the standards. The certification bodies are charged the following fees: a. A one-time application fee; b. An annual licensing fee per standard scope; c. A fee for each certified site; and d. A fee per day spent auditing group certifications. TE does not charge fees for transaction certificates or for logo use & claims by certified organizations, certification bodies, or accreditation bodies at this time. The certification body sets and charges its own fees, which may or may not include fees charged by Textile Exchange as a separate line item. It is up to the certification body whether they directly pass on any fees to their clients or build it into their fee structure. In addition to many different factors that affect the cost, the amount is ultimately determined by the Certification Body who audits against the standards, so it is recommended to reach out to a few different certification bodies for quotes. For detailing of the different fees, a Textile Exchange Certification Fee structure 2021 is available in: https://textileexchange.org/app/uploads/2021/02/ASR-107-V2021.1-Certification-Fee-Structure.pdf
Sustainability Principles and Criteria	
Reference Document	The Global Recycled Standard (GRS) is the reference document that sets requirements for third-party certification of Recycled Content, chain of custody, social and environmental practices, and chemical restrictions.
Major Must and Minor Must	In the GRS, the following verbal forms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions, or capabilities: “shall” indicates a requirement, “should” indicates a recommendation, “may” indicates a permission, “can” indicates a possibility or capability. “Desired Outcomes” have been included to detail the intent of requirements, but they are not requirements themselves. They are designated by an icon before each module.
Reduce GHG emissions	
Reduce GHG emissions	Textile Exchange has the Climate+ goal of enabling and guiding the textile industry to reduce GHG emissions (CO ₂ equivalents) to 45% by 2030 in the pre-spinning phase of textile fiber and materials production. The Climate+ Dashboard measures progress toward their Climate+ goals. It looks at fiber and material production data against a 2019 baseline and calculates the associated GHG emissions and water impacts. While the GRS does not have specific requirements for mitigating GHG emissions, it does include a number of criteria related to environmental sustainability that can help to reduce the carbon footprint of products made with recycled materials.
Protection of land with high carbon stock	n/a
Protection of peatland	n/a
Promote sustainable forest management	n/a
Protection of land with a high biodiversity value	n/a
Restoration, preservation and strengthening of biodiversity	n/a
Sustainable use of water	Requirements from section C2.2 Water use, more explicitly: C2.2c Measurement and record keeping of water usage shall be undertaken on a monthly basis. C2.2d The Certified Organization shall set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in water use and review progress annually.
Maintaining and enhancing water quality	Requirement from section C2.3 Wastewater/Effluent, more explicitly: C2.3d There shall be identification of the contaminants and wastewater quality parameters and their flow direction, and C2.3e There shall be a system in place to ensure that wastewater receives proper treatment, either on or off-site, to meet minimum requirements before entering the water stream. In Appendix D Wastewater parameter limit values are provided.
Maintaining and enhancing soil quality and productivity	n/a
Soil quality consideration for use of residual flows	n/a
Prohibition on the use of hazardous/toxic chemicals	Requirement D2.1 Inherently problematic substances. Any chemicals used in processing of GRS Products shall not contain Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) as referred to in Article 57 of European Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation,

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	Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), and included in Annex XIV of the Regulation. Requirement D2.2 Exclusion of substances and mixtures classified with particular hazard codes or risk phrases. No use is allowed of substances or mixtures that are assigned (or may be assigned by the time of the application) any of the hazard statement codes and/or risk phrases (or a combination of them). A table is included showing the prohibited hazard codes and risk phases of substances.
Implement best practices for the use of (agro)chemicals	The Certified Organization shall have a Chemical Management System (CMS) in place (as specified in Section C1.2), which includes Mechanism to monitor and meet all relevant legal requirements related to chemical management, and accurate lists of all chemical inputs. Additionally, organisation shall maintain a process to assess all chemicals used in GRS products against hazard criteria. Regarding handling of chemicals: B2.5 requires Certified Organizations to undertake sufficient training of workers and management in waste management, handling and disposal of chemicals and other dangerous materials.
Restrict air pollution, promote good air quality	Requirements from section C2.4 Emissions to Air, more explicitly: C2.4e The Certified Organization shall set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in emissions to air and review progress annually.
Limit the risk of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)	n/a
Circularity	
Promote waste reduction and responsible waste management	Requirements from section C2.5 Waste management, more explicitly: C2.5e Inventory, management, storage and transportation procedures for all waste streams shall be in place, C2.5f No on-site waste burning or uncontrolled waste landfilling may be undertaken; C2.5i The Certified Organization shall set and meet targets for meaningful reductions in waste production, improvements in waste management, and review progress annually.
Raw material efficiency	Implicitly covered in C2.5g The Certified Organization shall look for and implement ways to minimize waste production and increase re-use or recycling.
Efficient use of energy	Requirement from section C2.1 Energy Use, more explicitly: C2.1d The Certified Organization shall set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in energy use and review progress annually.
Promote use of renewable sources	Not explicitly covered.
Promote material circularity	TE GRS specifically addresses use of recycled input. This is covered in section A4.1 Material Recycling (Entities involved in Material Recycling are subject to GRS certification) and A3 Principles of GRS Certification (The Standard applies to products that contain 20% or more Recycled Content.).
Social	
Compliance with labour rights	Covered in Sections B2 Social Requirements: B2.1 Forced, bonded, indentured and prison labor, B2.2 Child labor, B2.3 Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, B2.4 Discrimination, harassment and abuse, and B2.6 Wages, benefits and terms of employment (fair salary and remuneration). Grievance mechanism is not explicitly covered.
Respect wellbeing of workers	Covered in Sections B2.4 Discrimination, harassment and abuse, B2.5 Health and safety (occupational health and safety), B2.6 Wages, benefits and terms of employment (covering contract) and B2.7 Working hours (overtime)
Respect property and usage rights	n/a
Respect wellbeing of the local population	Not explicitly covered
Food security	n/a
Economic	
Financial and economic viability	Economic criteria are outside scope
Fair business practices, Integrity	Economic criteria are outside scope
Promote local development, Inclusive economic growth	Economic criteria are outside scope
Use of knowledge and technology	Not explicitly covered.
Fair trade and market practices	Economic criteria are outside scope
Risk assessment and management	Risk assessment is carried out related to the hazard risks of chemical substances (Section D.2 Restricted chemical substances)

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Sources:

- Textile Exchange website: <https://textileexchange.org/>
- Textile Exchange library of tools and documents <https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/documents/> (Last visited: 28 March 2023)