Certification process **OCS**
Organic Content Standard

*Standard in force available on* [http://textileexchange.org/content/standards](http://textileexchange.org/content/standards)
*Or sent on request*
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1/ Organic Content Standard

Textile Exchange is a charitable organization committed to expanding organic agriculture. The organization was established in 2003 under the original name of Organic Exchange, in 2010 it became Textile Exchange.

In 2004 Organic Exchange developed the OE 100 and OE blended standards to verify the organic cotton claims on textile products. The standards set up a system for tracking and documenting the purchase, handling and use of certified organic cotton fiber. Since then there has been a need for a broader organic standard that would support content claims for all organic inputs. To meet this need, Textile Exchange has developed the Organic Content Standard (OCS), based on the generic chain of custody requirements of the Content Claim Standard (CCS).

The OCS standard was written by Textile Exchange in 2013, with the participation of professionals from the certification community. Textile Exchange has partnered with Materials Traceability Working Group (MTWG), and l’Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), consisting of over 140 members from all textile sector.

UPDATE AND INFORMATION

ECOCERT GREENLIFE will inform regularly the operators undertaking to respect the standard OCS, about the terms and updates of the standards, and about any provisions issued by Textile Exchange.

The OCS and CCS standards as well as the labeling guide are available on the web site: http://textileexchange.org/content/standards

The list of OCS operators certified by ECOCERT is available upon simple request to ECOCERT and is available on the Textile Exchange web site (see above).
2/ OCS certification steps

Summary diagram of the steps in the certification process.

A. Application Review
1. Request Information about the OCS certification
   - You

2. Sending: Quote form OCS,
   - List of products to be certified
   - Certification process
   - ECOCERT GREENLIFE

3. Resend to Ecocert the completed files
   (for an approval request or any
   information updates):
   - Quote form OCS
   - List of products to be certified

4. Study of your involvement/renewal
   request
   - If your application is admissible, send quotation
   and conditions of sales
   - Otherwise, we inform you in writing

B. Involvement
5. Involvement (send back the signed
   quotation)
   - You

C. Documentation Review
6. Documents review: delivery of forms and data collection in order to prepare the audit
   - ECOCERT GREENLIFE

7. Transmission of the needed information to documents review
   (approval of composition, labelling...)
   - You

D. Initial Approval Audit
9. Audit on site
   - Noting of discrepancies proposed appropriate correctives actions jointly signed audit report
   - Samples possibly taken
   - ECOCERT GREENLIFE

10. Audit report review and delivery of conclusions
    - Evaluation of appropriateness of proposed corrective actions
    - Study of documents provided and if need be, decision to conduct:
      - Additional audit (back to step 9)

E. Application processing and certification decision
11. Delivery of additional information for resolution of the last discrepancies
    - You

12. Certification decision
    - Awarded, rejected, continued (conditionally or unconditionally)
    - Suspended withdrawn
    - You

F. Monitoring
13. Monitoring
    - Annual contract review: back to step 3
    - Certificate sent out

You must inform ECOCERT Greenlife of any change to processes, composition, labeling... → back to step 3
A. Steps 1 to 4 – OCS certification request

You read the OCS & CCS standards and formalize your certification request by filling the provided Quote form OCS and the list of products to certified, that you send back to ECOCERT GREENLIFE in order to receive a cost estimate. You must declare all the production sites entering in the process including the subcontractors uncommitted with ECOCERT GREENLIFE for certification but having an activity relating to products to certify.

ECOCERT GREENLIFE will check that a certification for your products is possible according to the Textile Exchange standards. If not, ECOCERT GREENLIFE will inform you by writing.

ECOCERT GREENLIFE will establish an annual quote for the current year. This quote will be sent to you along with the general terms and conditions of sale.

B. Step 5 – Involvement

Your involvement comes into effect by signing the quotation.

By signing the quotation, you undertake particularly to:
- Know the general conditions of sales
- know the standard and the certification process,
- Respect all the criteria of the OCS & CCS standards, the OCS certification process, ECOCERT labeling guide, and any provisions to OCS certification program provided by Organic Exchange.
- Declare all the sites concerned by the products to be certified (including the subcontractors uncommitted with ECOCERT GREENLIFE for certification but having an activity relating to products to certify.)
- Accept all necessary audits (announced or not) in all sites concerned by products to certified,
- Accept that possibly samples be taken for analysis,
- Accept that the auditor may have access to accountability, evidence elements and corresponding registrations,
- Be charged for any supplementary audit required by ECOCERT GREENLIFE
- Allow for access ECOCERT GREENLIFE and the responsible authorities to all premises, vehicles, data and other facilities, which ECOCERT GREENLIFE considers in it best professional judgment to be related to the controlled Products, regardless of whether those are owned by or used for the Client Company
- Allow for access ECOCERT GREENLIFE to a diagram and description of the manufacturing process and product flows, all traceability files, procedures for attaining and maintaining compliance to the OCS, a full list of all products being certified to the OCS with their composition, a complete list of suppliers (for OCS or not products), results of your own voluntary inspection, the mass balance equation used to calculate content claims, conversion rates whenever a process is performed, any relevant verification documents to ensure the conformity of your production.
- Authorize ECOCERT GREENLIFE to exchange information related to the certification of its Products with other OCS approved certification bodies or with the responsible authorities, in order to verify information, especially the certification status of the certified products as part of its ongoing evaluation
- Record the claims concerning the certified products and submit them to ECOCERT GREENLIFE.

During the year, you must communicate by mail to ECOCERT GREENLIFE:
- Any request to certify a new product, even if it belongs to an already certified product line.
- Any modification affecting organization or production tools possibly questioning the compliance of already certified products (for instance: working with a not yet certified subcontractor...).

C. Steps 6 & 7 – Documents review

Your file will be allocated to a certification officer, who will be your first point of contact. This officer will send you the forms needed to prepare for your approval audit that are specific to your business.

A documents review is done in order to prepare the audit on your site. The labeling and communication projects must be submitted to ECOCERT for validation. These one must be developed in compliance with the OCS labeling guideline.

D. Steps 8 & 9 – Initial approval audit

Audits are conducted on all sites carrying out operations on products covered by the certification. ECOCERT GREENLIFE conducts audits on the basis of a defined inspection plan, specific to your business.

An auditor is assigned to conduct your approval audit. Approximately ten days before the audit date, the auditor will propose an audit plan and remind you of the documents to be made available (by sending a ‘notification of visit’). The audit plan and these documents are determined by virtue of ECOCERT procedures, on the basis in particular of your role in the product’s development, manufacture or distribution process and of any third parties involved in the said process.

During the audit, the auditor will check the compliance of the operator and their products with the criteria in the standard. During the audit closure meeting, you will be given a report to sign. It includes a summary of the checks carried out and any discrepancies noted. It is your responsibility to suggest your corrective actions, giving the associated implementation timeframes. These proposed remedial measures must be appropriate and comprehensive so that the certification process may continue. Should this not be the case, we will ask you to propose a new action plan. Corrective actions are typically made official during the audit closure meeting.

During audits, samples may be taken. They are then sent anonymously to one of our partner laboratories for analysis. The cost of these analyses, plus management fees, will be added to the invoice.
E. Steps 10 to 12 – processing of the audit report – Certification decision

The auditor will forward the audit report and your proposed corrective actions to the certification department for examination by your certification officer. After checking the relevance and completeness of the application, the certification officer will send you the conclusions from his/her review of the report, including possible penalties relating to each discrepancy. These conclusions may be supported, if necessary, by analysis results.

You must send to the certification department the evidence of your corrective actions within 2 months after the inspection. The certification officer checks your corrective actions within 2 weeks after the receipt of the evidences.

Once your application is fully compliant, the certificate(s) corresponding to the compliant product(s) will be sent to you.

REMINDER:
You are not allowed to market your products with any reference to the certification until you are in possession of the certificates for the products in question. You could have a transaction certificate only after the delivery of your certificate.

F. Step 13 – Monitoring

In subsequent years, on the bases of an updated preliminary questionnaire, ECOCERT GREENLIFE will update your annual quote after reviewing the application (steps 3 and 4).

IMPORTANT:
It is your responsibility to inform ECOCERT GREENLIFE at the real time of any change on your production system, labeling or on your list of products.

If any modification concerns the declared points in the quote form OCS (for instance: product number, number of subcontractors ...), the process restarts at the step 3 in order to take them into account.

To monitor certification, we implement the inspection plan which consists of various evaluation measures, in-depth audits, follow-up and, if necessary, additional audits. The auditor checks that the corrective actions defined to deal with previous discrepancies have been put in place and are effective. (Steps 6 to 12 are reiterated under this certification monitoring process.)

3/ Corrective plan and penalties

Throughout the certification process, your certification officer will make use of the corrective action plan combined with the standard to deal with discrepancies. Each potential instance of non-compliance is listed and categorized depending on its seriousness. Any noted discrepancy will give rise to a request for corrective action, the effective implementation of which will be verified.
Several types of treatment can be assigned to a discrepancy according to its gravity. The fraudulent or expected character of a discrepancy, as well as the notion of first infringement or recidivism in the incompliance, will be taken into account in the way to respond to discrepancies. Non-conformities found during inspection must be corrected within 2 months of the physical inspection or the scope certificate shall be suspended or withdraw. In the case of non-conformities, certification decisions may be made up to 2 weeks after their correction.

**A. MINOR DISCREPANCIES**

Minor non-conformities occur when a single observed lapse has been identified in a procedure required as part of the client’s management system. A non-conformity may be considered minor if it is a temporary lapse; it is unusual/non-systematic; the impacts of the non-conformity are limited in their temporal and special scale; or prompt corrective action has been put in place to ensure that it will not be repeated.

**A. REQUEST FOR CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

A request for corrective actions does not hinder certification of the products in question, but if effective action is not taken within the defined timescales, this may result in conditional certification or a penalty.

**B. PENDING CERTIFICATION / CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION**

The issue of a new certificate will be pending if awaiting the delivery of documents or the completion of an additional audit.

**B. MAJOR DISCREPANCIES**

Major non-conformities occur if, either alone or in combination with further non-conformities of other requirements, it results in, or is likely to result in, a fundamental failure to achieve the objectives of the standards system. Such fundamental failure may be indicated by non-conformities which continue over a long period of time, are repeated or systematic, affect a wide area, or are not corrected or adequately responded to by the client once that have been identified.

**APPLICATION OF PENALITIES:**

In the event of a major discrepancy, repeat offences, or accumulated discrepancies, penalties will be applied:

**A. FORMAL DEMAND**

Compliance must be done in the lead-time, after this time it involves an automatic refusal, suspension or revocation of certificate.

**B. REFUSAL, SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATE** (affects products):

Certain major discrepancies or repeat or accumulated discrepancies may result in suspension of the certificate. The terms and conditions and the duration of
suspensions will be defined in the corrective action plan or, if necessary, proposed by the Certification Supervisory Committee.

Refusal of certification equates to declining a product application for certification. Certification may only be granted after examination of an additional audit report (at the applicant’s expense). In terms of certification monitoring, such discrepancies result in total or partial withdrawal of certification and the delisting of products.

**IMPORTANT:**
A product that has had certification rejected, withdrawn or suspended cannot be marketed with reference to the certification. This ban also applies to any other communication materials.

**ATTENTION:**
The suspension or the withdrawal of the certificate implies the end of validity of the certification document. All non valid documents should be resent to ECOCERT GREENLIFE and you are also obliged to inform your own customers about the end of validity of the certificates.

### 4/ Claim and appeal

**A. Claim:**
You can file a claim by sending a mail to ECOCERT GREENLIFE regarding:
- The compliance of your products with the concerned standard,
- The quality of ECOCERT GREENLIFE service provision or any other cause of discontentment

ECOCERT GREENLIFE systematically answers all claims.

**B. Appeal:**
You can formulate an appeal by sending a mail to the certification department, regarding a certification decision, and within 15 days following the receipt of the mail informing you of this decision. This one will be treated by the certification service upon receipt of the mail.
If you are not satisfied after your first use, you could send a second appeal to the Supervisory Certification Committee. This second appeal is billed and must be done within 15 days. The resort requests do not suspend decisions made previously.

### 5/ Suspension of activity

In the event that you plan to suspend your business activities (halt manufacture or sale of the ECOCERT GREENLIFE certified products), we offer you the option of suspending our service for one or two half-year periods, with our contract remaining in force during this time. We must be notified of this arrangement as soon as possible.
Your certification documents are no longer valid during this period. You are therefore no longer permitted to manufacture or sell products certified by ECOCERT GREENLIFE. No reference to certification wording and/or ECOCERT GREENLIFE is permitted, regardless of the communication materials (labeling, website, communication documents, etc.).

At the end of this on-hold period, the certification process restarts at Step 1 - application review, followed by an initial approval audit as for any initial application.

6/ End of contract

If you wish to disengage and stop our certification services, you have to notify it to us in writing according to the advance notice planned in the general conditions of sales. The end of your contract, at the end of the advance notice, will lead to the end of validity of your certificate. Consequently, from this moment on, you can not put your products on the market with any reference to the certification or to ECOCERT GREENLIFE.

In case you would have stock of certified products to be sold after the expiration date of your certificate, you have to indicate us how long would it take to sell the whole stock. From this moment, your contract will be prolonged and you will be allowed to sell your stock of certified products with an annual control as "distributor", charged at the appropriate rate. The contract and the certificate will stay in force until the date considered as necessary to sell the whole stock of certified products.

During any such contract extension period, you may no longer MANUFACTURE new products making reference to the OCS certification and/or ECOCERT GREENLIFE.

7/ Lexicon

OPERATOR: any physical or moral person who requesting certification following Organic Exchange standards for one or more products in the aim of commercialization.

CERTIFICATE: Attestation of conformity stating for each product that it complies with standard and that allows the manufacture and the sale of the product. Unless otherwise defined by ECOCERT GREENLIFE, the certificate is valid until the end of semester + one year following your in-depth audit within a validity period of 16 months maximum. Renewal of the certificate depends upon the ongoing certification process concerning the operator.

STANDARD: Technical document defining the characteristics that a product must show (criteria or requirements), the terms and conditions of inspection for compliance with these characteristics and the terms and conditions for communication regarding the certification.