



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD  
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# POLICY FOR ISSUANCE OF TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

VERSION 3.0

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This policy details requirements and guidance to be followed by certification bodies licensed to issue Transaction Certificates in accordance with GOTS. The purpose of this policy – and the corresponding template – is to unify requirements, layout, format, and text among the different certification bodies in order to enable an easy, practical handling and verification for all users of Transaction Certificates. This policy is harmonised with Textile Exchange.

Global Standard gGmbH considers all information included on Transaction Certificates to be confidential information which may only be shared with the organizations named as the seller and the buyer along with their certification bodies and the applicable accreditation bodies. Global Standard gGmbH considers the identity of the seller to be confidential when only the Transaction Certificate number is provided but may publish a list of invalid Transaction Certificate numbers.

The policy is effective **July 1, 2022**, but may be used before the effective date. All transaction certificates issued on or after the effective date shall be issued in accordance with this policy and using the corresponding template.

## 2 REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

### 2.1 ISSUANCE OF TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

- 2.1.1 Transaction Certificates (TCs) are issued by an Approved Certification Body (CB) to verify one or more products as certified.
- 2.1.2 Transaction Certificates may only be issued to a certified organisation with a valid Scope Certificate that is selling the certified product(s). TCs shall be issued by the same CB that issued the certified organisation's Scope Certificate.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.1.3 The certification body shall not issue a Transaction Certificate unless the certified organisation held a valid scope certificate for the standard(s) with the same certification body on all the applicable shipment date(s). A suspended, withdrawn, or expired scope certificate is not considered to be valid. TCs may be issued during the recertification period of the Scope Certificate.

### 2.2 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

- 2.2.1 The Transaction Certificate shall be issued by the certification body using the most recent version of *Template for Transaction Certificates*. References to the “template” refer to this document.
- 2.2.2 All template text (not highlighted) which appears on the template shall be included on each transaction certificate, even if it is not directly referenced in this policy. All field text (highlighted in grey) shall be replaced by the applicable data. All instruction text (highlighted in light green) shall be deleted.

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<sup>1</sup> Except in the case of migration to a new CB during the nominal period of validity of the Scope Certificate.

- 2.2.3 Information from Box 1 to Box 8 shall appear on the first page. Box 8 may be continued on the second page if more space is needed. Boxes on page 2 with content of variable length may be continued on subsequent pages for as many pages as necessary.
- 2.2.4 The Transaction Certificate shall be issued as an electronic document in PDF format. The PDF document shall be signed<sup>2</sup> by means of a cryptographic certificate issued by a certificate authority which is listed on the Adobe Approved Trust List (AATL)<sup>3</sup> or which is derived from a certificate authority on the AATL.
- 2.2.5 The Transaction Certificate template may be modified to use an alternative font or add graphical elements to reflect the certification body's branding.
- 2.2.6 This policy refers to the use of terminology and codes specified in "*Material, Processes, & Products Classification*"<sup>4</sup> (referred to as "*Classification Document*" in this document).

## 2.3 STANDARD FORMATS

- 2.3.1 The official Transaction Certificate shall be published in English. An unofficial translated version may also be prepared by the certification body. Translations may be provided to the certified organisation, but they are to be clearly identified as for informational purposes only in page footers (see a)). Bilingual or multilingual Transaction Certificates are not allowed.
- 2.3.2 Names of geographic areas (country/area and state/province) shall match the "Country/area name" and "State/province name" in *GOTS Geographic Classification*.
- 2.3.3 All data submissions to GOTS regarding Transaction Certificates shall identify country/area using the "Country/area code" and state/province using the "State/province code", as specified in *GOTS Geographic Classification*.
- 2.3.4 Dates shall be specified using the ISO 8601 format: YYYY-MM-DD, e.g., 2021-07-01.
- 2.3.5 When writing numbers, the "." character shall be used as a decimal point, and the "," character shall be used as a thousands separator, e.g., 12,345.67.
- 2.3.6 Explanatory text may be added to the transaction certificate to clarify date or number formats. Such text may be added as a declaration in Box 7, see 3.2.7.

## 2.4 DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATION

- 2.4.1 The certification body shall inform Global Standard gGmbH of how their certificates can be authenticated. This information will be published on the GOTS web page 'Approved Certification Bodies'.
- 2.4.2 One or more of the following alternatives for authentication shall be used by each certification body:

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<sup>2</sup> The signature shall be applied with permissible operations on the document restricted to reading and printing. No further operations shall be allowed after signing.

<sup>3</sup> For a current list of these certificate authorities see <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/approved-trust-list1.html>

<sup>4</sup> In all cases, the latest versions of every referenced document shall be applicable

- a) a specific email address from which the certification body will respond to confirm certificate validity within two business days;
- b) the address of a single web page which can be visited to look up valid certificates;
- c) a statement that each certificate will contain a web address (either as text or as a QR code, with the web address containing some random element<sup>5</sup>), together with the specification of the domain name which will be used for these web addresses;
- d) a statement that the cryptographic signing certificate may be used for authentication, together with the specification of the name of the certificate authority which issued the cryptographic signing certificate (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) and the company name of the holder of the cryptographic signing certificate<sup>6</sup>;
- e) another method of authentication approved by Global Standard gGmbH.

## 2.5 MULTI-STANDARD TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

A Transaction Certificate shall not be issued for other standards in combination with GOTS.

## 2.6 MULTIPLE SHIPMENTS ON A TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

The certification body may issue a single Transaction Certificate that covers the information of multiple shipments, provided the following conditions are met:

- 2.6.1 The seller, seller's CB, and buyer<sup>7</sup> agree to include multiple shipments on a single TC and agree on the number of shipments and/or time period.
- 2.6.2 The CB shall give written permission to the seller – copying the buyer – to use a single TC for the agreed number of shipments and/or time period (either for the individual case or as a procedural rule).
- 2.6.3 The seller shall receive the buyer's permission in advance to include multiple shipments in one TC. The seller shall notify the buyer of the time period for which each TC is intended to cover.
- 2.6.4 All shipments on a single TC shall be sent from the same seller at the same location (Box 2).
- 2.6.5 All shipments on a single TC shall be sold to the same buyer (3.2.3Box 3, Ref 3.2.3).
- 2.6.6 A Transaction Certificate shall not include more than 100 shipments (Box 9) and 1000 products<sup>8</sup> (Box 10).

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<sup>5</sup> The random element shall serve as a protective measure against looking up information about arbitrary certificates. It shall therefore be long enough as to provide protection against automated guessing (so-called brute force attack).

<sup>6</sup> The holder of the cryptographic signing certificate can be the certification body itself or it can be some trust service provider. The name of the holder shall be printed on the Transaction+ Certificate as it appears on the cryptographic signing certificate.

<sup>7</sup> **Guidance:** The buyer is urged to discuss the matter of multiple shipments with their own CB, if the buyer is also certified. For example, the buyer may purchase inputs (intermediates) from a company that is supplying on an open TC, use these inputs to produce their own goods, then sell them before the inputs' TC is closed. In this case, the buyer's CB shall not issue the TC for the buyer's goods being sold without receiving a TC for the incoming goods. The buyer's CB may also require written confirmation that the multiple shipment practice was agreed to by the seller's CB.

<sup>8</sup> Refers to each type of product as listed on the certificate and not to individual units of a certified product.

2.6.7 The maximum time period<sup>9</sup> that a single Transaction Certificate may cover is 90 calendar days from the date of the first shipment to the date of the last shipment.

2.6.8 A TC may not be open past the end of the validity of the seller's scope certificate.

## 2.7 EXCEPTIONS TO TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

2.7.1 Transaction Certificates are not required for sales or transfer of products between wholly owned subsidiaries which are included in the same parent company's scope certificate, provided that products are not repacked, relabelled, or processed by or on behalf of the subsidiary companies.

The parent company shall document all ownership changes in the flow of goods, which documentation shall be verified by the CB. This also applies to Section 3.2.3 when goods are bought "on behalf of".

2.7.2 Certified retailers are not required to receive and maintain TCs provided that products are labelled with the licence number of the immediate supplier or manufacturer instead of the license number of the retailer.

## 2.8 TIMELINES FOR TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES

2.8.1 The certification body shall issue Transaction Certificates within 14 calendar days after receipt of a complete and valid application from a certified organisation whose scope certificate was issued by the same certification body.

2.8.2 Certification bodies are not required to issue TCs more than 180 days after the date of the earliest shipment to be included. However, should the CBs find all documentation adequate and information complete, TCs may be issued based on their individual risk assessment.

2.8.3 If a certified organisation changes certification bodies, each Transaction Certificate shall be issued appropriate to and in accordance with conditions laid down in Sections 2 or 3 of the latest version of "Policy For Change Or Migration Of Certifier".

2.8.4 The certification body shall not issue a Transaction Certificate if a scope certificate has been suspended or withdrawn due to critical or major non-conformities, including if the scope certificate was valid on the shipment date.

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<sup>9</sup> **Guidance:** The choice of a time period requires a balancing of costs and risks. While using a single TC for multiple shipments should reduce the annual cost of TCs, it does mean that there will be periods of time during which goods being sold have not yet been verified by a CB. This will be of concern to the buyers of the product. While a time period of 90 days may be reasonable in some situations, it is expected that a more realistic timeframe would be closer to 30 days in most cases.

## 3 TEMPLATE

### 3.1 GENERAL CONTENT

#### 3.1.1 Header

Beginning with the second page, each page shall include the Transaction Certificate number and “(continued)” in the header.

#### 3.1.2 Title

The document shall be titled “Transaction Certificate (TC)”. Other terms (such as “product certificate”, “export certificate”, or “certificate of inspection”) are not allowed. The standard shall be named as: “Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)”

#### 3.1.3 Transaction Certificate Number

Each Transaction Certificate shall have a unique “Transaction Certificate Number” generated by the certification body. Each Transaction Certificate number shall be unique within the certification body and shall not include any information which could potentially reveal the identity of the seller, e.g., the seller's license number.

NOTE: At some point, GOTS will require that certification bodies use Transaction Certificate numbers generated by its future central database system<sup>10</sup>.

#### 3.1.4 Authorisation

An authorisation statement shall appear at the bottom of each page of the Transaction Certificate.

The authorisation statement shall include:

- a) Place and Date of Issue;
- b) Signature of Authorised Person;
- c) Name of Authorised Signatory;
- d) Certification Body Stamp or Logo; and
- e) Standard Logo(s).

#### 3.1.5 Declarations

A declaration as follows shall be included at the bottom of the first page, as specified on the template.

“For directions on how to authenticate this certificate, please visit GOTS' web page 'Approved Certification Bodies'<sup>11</sup>.”

#### 3.1.6 Footer

The footer of each page of the Transaction Certificate shall include:

- a) One of the following version statements:
  - “This electronically issued document is the valid original version”;

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<sup>10</sup> Indicative title of the central database system is Global Trace-Base.

<sup>11</sup> <https://global-standard.org/certification-and-labelling/certification/approved-certification-bodies#sort=name&sortdir=asc>

- “This electronically generated document is not the official version”<sup>12</sup>; or
  - “This translation is provided for information purposes only.” if the document is in any language other than English.
- b) The license number of the seller; and
- c) Page number in the format “Page X of Y” where ‘X’ is the current page and ‘Y’ is the total number of pages.

## 3.2 NUMBERED BOXES

### 3.2.1 Box 1 – Certification Body

The certification body’s name, address, and GOTS -assigned licensing code shall be specified.

### 3.2.2 Box 2 – Seller of Certified Products

3.2.2.1 The name and address of the seller of the certified products shall be specified.

3.2.2.2 The seller may be the main location of the certified organization, which is listed on the Facilities Appendix of the scope certificate, or one of its other facilities in this appendix so long as the facility is an independent legal entity. (A subcontractor shall not be a seller.)

3.2.2.3 If the seller is not the certified organisation but one of its legally independent facilities, the name of the certified organisation should be stated under “Selling on behalf of” (this is hidden if the seller is the certified organisation itself).

3.2.2.4 Irrespective of whether the seller is the certified organisation or one of its eligible facilities, the scope certificate number and licence number of the certified organisation shall be specified.

### 3.2.3 Box 3 – Buyer of Certified Products

3.2.3.1 The name and address of the buyer of the certified products shall be specified.

3.2.3.2 If the owner of the certified products 3.2.3.3 is a certified organisation, its license number shall be stated in box 3.

3.2.3.3 An organization may only buy on behalf of a certified organisation if

- a) the buyer is one of the facilities of the certified organisation which are listed on the Facilities Appendix of the scope certificate of the certified organisation and
- b) the buying facility is an independent legal entity which is wholly owned by the certified organisation.

3.2.3.4 A subcontractor shall not be entitled to buy on behalf of the certified organisation.

3.2.3.5 In case of buying on behalf (see section 3.2.3.3), the certified organisation shall be treated as the owner of the certified goods and may use these goods as inputs to produce further products to be certified (chain of custody) whereas the buyer itself will not become part of the chain of custody of the certified goods.

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<sup>12</sup> This sentence is applicable only for certificates generated by Global Trace-Base in those cases where the valid original versions have been issued by the certification body itself.

- 3.2.3.6 If the buyer buys on behalf of a certified organisation (see section 3.2.3.3), the name of the certified organisation shall be stated under “Buying on behalf of”. If the buyer is not buying on behalf of a certified organisation, the sub-section “Buying on behalf of” shall be removed.

### **3.2.4 Box 4 – Gross Shipping Weight**

The total weight of products covered by the Transaction Certificate including packaging and accessories shall be specified in kilograms (kg). This shall be equal to the sum of the gross shipping weights for each shipment listed in Box 9 (see section 3.2.9.4).

### **3.2.5 Box 5 – Net Shipping Weight**

The total weight of products covered by the Transaction Certificate excluding packaging shall be specified in kilograms (kg). This includes the weight of any non-certified portion of the product including accessories. This shall be equal to the sum of the net shipping weights for each product listed in Box 10 (see section 3.2.10.5).

### **3.2.6 Box 6 – Certified Weight**

The total weight of certified material in the products shall be specified in kilograms (kg), excluding non-certified material, excluding packaging and non-certified portions of the products. This shall be equal to the sum of the certified weights for each product listed in Box 10 (see section 3.2.10.7).

### **3.2.7 Box 7 – Declarations by Certification Body**

The declarations as prescribed on the TC template shall be used.

- 3.2.7.1 This box shall be used to declare if all of the organic fibres used meet the certification requirements of a specific organic farming standards to refer to them as organic.
- 3.2.7.2 Information for the United States shall always be included, as follows: “Certification of the organic material used for the products listed complies with USDA NOP rules  yes  no”.
- 3.2.7.3 In-conversion material shall not be listed as complying with USDA NOP rules.

### **3.2.8 Box 8 – Certified Input References**

The following certificate numbers shall be specified, all without any licence numbers.

- 3.2.8.1 The Transaction Certificate numbers of claimed input products to this Transaction Certificate under “Input TCs”, unless all inputs are unprocessed certified raw fibres, where “Not Applicable” shall be stated in this field.
- 3.2.8.2 For unprocessed certified raw fibres, the scope certificate numbers of applicable farms, the farm Transaction Certificate numbers for applicable transactions, and the Transaction Certificate numbers for any purchases made from traders who are certified under the organic farming standard. If the organic farming standard does not provide Transaction Certificates, “Not Applicable” shall be stated in the applicable space.

NOTE: Farm scope certificates, farm Transaction Certificates, and trader Transaction Certificates for organic materials are only required for unprocessed certified raw fibres. Optionally, this information may be passed along the supply chain via subsequent Transaction Certificates.

- 3.2.8.3 For all Transaction Certificates where certified entities which do not have the input of respective unprocessed certified raw materials, the rows for “Farm SCs”, “Farm TCs”, and “Trader TCs for Organic Material” shall be removed.

### 3.2.9 Box 9 – Shipments

Detailed information shall be specified per shipment included on the Transaction Certificate, as follows:

- 3.2.9.1 Shipment number – A sequential number (1, 2, etc.) identifying the shipment within the Transaction Certificate.
- 3.2.9.2 Shipment date.
- 3.2.9.3 Shipment document number – The identification number from the shipping document used to confirm the details of the shipment.
- 3.2.9.4 Gross shipping weight - The total weight of products in the shipment including packaging, in kilograms (kg).
- 3.2.9.5 Invoice references – The invoice numbers and dates for all invoices included in the shipment.
- 3.2.9.6 Consignee name and address – The name and address of the physical location which the products are shipped to. A facility which does not take physical possession of products shall not be named as the consignee. If the buyer is arranging transportation from the seller or the seller's subcontractor, the address where the buyer picks up the certified products shall be listed.

### 3.2.10 Box 10 – Certified Products

Products shall only be listed on the Transaction Certificate if they are also included on the seller's scope certificate. Detailed information shall be specified per certified product included on the Transaction Certificate, as follows:

- 3.2.10.1 Product number – A sequential number (1, 2, etc.) identifying the product within the TC.
- 3.2.10.2 Order number – The seller's invoice number or the buyer's purchase order number associated with the product. The order number is optional information.
- 3.2.10.3 Article number – A number to uniquely identify the product in the seller's system (e.g., lot number, EAN, SKU etc.). The article number is optional information.
- 3.2.10.4 Number of units – Number of units of the product, e.g., 1....1000 bales, garments, fabric rolls. The unit is to be given after the number.
- 3.2.10.5 Net shipping weight – The total weight of the product excluding packaging, in kilograms (kg).
- 3.2.10.6 Supplementary weight – The total weight of the following:
  - a) Non-certified accessories which are excluded from material composition; and/or  
Example 1: Weight of all materials in the product that are categorised under Section 2.4.9.2 of the Standard (Accessories). A sweater has buttons which are classified as accessories. The supplementary weight is the weight of the buttons.  
Example 2: For a certified mattress, the supplementary weight would be the weight of all accessories including supports, frames, and foam.
  - b) for combined products with one or more certified components, the total weight of the product minus the weight of the certified components.
- 3.2.10.7 Certified weight – The total weight of claimed material in the product, in kilograms (kg).
- 3.2.10.8 Production date – The date of production of the product. Where the product was produced over multiple days, the latest date shall be used. If the seller did not process the product, the date shall be copied from the incoming Transaction Certificate. This information is optional.

- 3.2.10.9 Product category – The applicable product category from the Classification Document. The product category code shall be that of a product listed on the Scope Certificate.
- 3.2.10.10 Product detail – The applicable product detail from the Classification Document. The product detail code shall be as listed on the Scope Certificate
- 3.2.10.11 Material composition – The material composition, including raw material codes from the Classification Document in parentheses for the product, including both certified and non-certified raw materials. The exact material composition with a percentage content is mandatory.
- 3.2.10.12 Label grade – Label grade, as listed on the scope certificate for the product.
- 3.2.10.13 Additional information – Space for other relevant information such as product quality. Fibre quality parameters as required for first processing TCs (fibre length and micronaire for first cotton and yarn count for yarn) shall always be placed in this box.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.2.10.14 Last processor name and license number – The name of the last facility to process the product and license number (if applicable). If the seller chooses not to list this information, “Undisclosed”.
- 3.2.10.15 Last processor country/area – The country/area where the last processing of the product occurred. This information is mandatory even if the identity of the last processor is undisclosed.

### **3.2.11 Box 11 – Certified Raw Materials and Declared Geographic Origin**

Each raw material and its geographic origin shall be listed.

- 3.2.11.1 The following information shall be included:
- a) The name of the raw material;
  - b) The raw material code from the Classification Document, in parentheses;
  - c) The total certified weight of the raw material, in kilograms (kg);
  - d) Each country/area of origin of the raw material; and
  - e) Each state/province of origin of the raw material, in parentheses beside the applicable country/area
- 3.2.11.2 Geographic origin information for primary scopes shall be obtained from the farm scope certificates of the raw fibre.
- 3.2.11.3 State/province information is listed in GOTS Geographic Classification.
- 3.2.11.4 The sum of the certified weights for all raw materials shall be equal to the total certified weight in Box 6 (see section 3.2.6).

### **3.2.12 Box 12 – Declarations by Seller of Certified Products**

This box provides space for declarations made by the seller which have not been verified by the certification body.

- 3.2.12.1 The seller may declare information about outsourcing such as the subcontractor name(s), processing steps, or specific products included in outsourcing.

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<sup>13</sup> This requirement was made mandatory by GOTS from October 1, 2020. "GOTS Transaction Certificates will now require to state technical parameters of the GOTS goods when issued for certified cotton gins and spinning units." (email from GOTS to certification bodies, dated 1 July 2020)

3.2.12.2 The seller may request that any other declaration be included provided that it does not include any of the following:

- a) Information which is inaccurate or misleading;
- b) References to brand names;
- c) References to trade names (e.g. merino);

3.2.12.3 The certification body shall refuse to include any declaration which they know to be inaccurate or misleading. In all other cases the certification body may add a statement that the declarations have not been verified by the certification body.

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**Important:**

The following verbal forms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions, or capabilities in this document:

- “**shall**” indicates a mandatory requirement
- “**should**” indicates a recommendation
- “**may**” indicates a permission
- “**can**” indicates a possibility or capability

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