

IOAS Inc.



## **IOAS Operating Manual**

**Information and requirements specific to  
assessment and accreditation against procedures and  
requirements of**

**Textile Exchange**

Valid from: November 1, 2024

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## **1. Introduction**

This operating manual contains specific information and requirements of the Textile Exchange Accreditation scheme implemented by IOAS on behalf of the scheme owner, Textile Exchange. It should always be read in conjunction with IOAS General Operating Manual which contains a full description of IOAS and its overall approach to its work conducting accreditation and surveillance of certification bodies working in the field of organic and sustainable agriculture and related fields which is performed in line with ISO/IEC17011:2017.

It is IOAS' approach to harmonise the assessment process for the increasing range of schemes offered so as to reduce the burden of accreditation to all certification bodies. We are also continually working to gain recognition or equivalence of our work with scheme owners and government authorities such that we can offer 'one assessment, many accreditations'.

## **2. Scheme owner**

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit founded in the USA as Organic Exchange in 2002, committed to the mission of inspiring and equipping people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain.

Originally focused on organic cotton, in 2010 Textile Exchange expanded their approach to include other fibers and materials. Still, the use of organic fibers continues to be strongly promoted by Textile Exchange.

Please find more detail on Textile Exchange's history here:

<https://textileexchange.org/our-story/>.

## **3. Scope Standards**

Textile Exchange has developed several standards primarily for the textile industry to support specific claims.

Textile Exchange standards have broad application potential outside the textile industry, however IOAS reserves the right to reject an application should the intended scope industry be deemed incompatible with the mission of IOAS.

Textile Exchange accreditation may be applied according to one or more of the following scopes:

- ✓ Content Claim Standard (CCS)
- ✓ Organic Content Standard (OCS)
- ✓ Recycled Claim Standard (RCS)
- ✓ Global Recycled Standard (GRS)
- ✓ Responsible Down Standard (RDS)
- ✓ Responsible Animal Fibers (RAF).

All scopes other than CCS Scope are considered to be primary scopes, insofar they cover the farm (RDS, RWS) and/or first processing stage (OCS, RCS, GRS, RDS).

### **3.1 Content Claim Standard (CCS)**

The CCS is a chain of custody standard that provides companies with a tool to verify that one or more specific input materials are in a final product. It can be used to verify any claimed material through any supply chain and requires that each organization along the supply chain take sufficient steps to ensure that the integrity and identity of the input material is preserved. It does not validate any claims about a product beyond the amount of a specific material that is in it.

The CCS is the chain of custody verification used for all other Textile Exchange standards. Accreditation to CCS scope:

- is required for all primary scopes;
- allows a certification body to issue certifications to Textile Exchange Standards for organisations with a secondary scope which does not include supplementary requirements not included in the CCS, i.e. where certification covers the supply chain of products certified to OCS, RCS, RDS, RAF for any sites after the stage where the respective standard is considered to be primary (i.e., after the farm or first processing stage).

The CCS may also be applied on its own, that is outside Textile Exchange Standards, in which case it is valid only for business-to-business relations.

### **3.2 Organic Content Standard (OCS)**

In 2007, Organic Exchange developed the Organic Exchange 100 and Organic Exchange Blended standards to verify organic cotton content claims in products. The standards established a system for tracking and documenting the purchase, handling and use of certified organic cotton fibre. Since then, there has been a need for a broader organic standard that would support content claims for all organic materials, not just cotton. To meet this need, Textile Exchange has developed the Organic Content Standard, based on the generic chain of custody requirements of the Content Claim Standard mentioned above.

The OCS applies to any non-food product containing 5-100% organic material. It verifies the presence and amount of organic material in a final product and tracks certified organic material from the farm to the final product. This process is certified by an accredited third party. The Standard does not cover the certification of the raw material itself, nor does it address other inputs, environmental aspects of processing (such as energy, water, or chemical use), or social issues.

### **3.3 Recycled Claim Standard**

The goal of the RCS is to give credibility to recycled content claims on products. By protecting the trust of consumers as they choose products made of recycled materials, Textile Exchange hope to contribute to the increased use of recycled materials, and a reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfills or incineration.

The RCS applies to any product containing 5-100% reclaimed or recycled material. It verifies the presence and amount of recycled material in a final product through input and chain-of-custody verification from a third party. It allows for transparent, consistent, and comprehensive independent evaluation and verification of recycled material content claims on products. It can be used as a business-to-business tool to give companies the means to ensure that they are getting what they are paying for and selling, or to ensure accurate and honest communication with consumers.

### **3.4 Global Recycled Standard**

The GRS is intended for companies that are making and/or selling products with recycled material content. As with the RCS, this standard applies to the full supply chain and verifies the presence and amount of recycled material from input to final products; additionally, it ensures responsible social and environmental practices as well as responsible chemical management. It applies to any product containing 20-100% reclaimed or recycled material.

### **3.5 Responsible Down Standard**

The RDS is intended for companies manufacturing and/trading products containing down and/or feathers, applying to the full supply chain of waterfowl down, from hatchling through to the assemblers producing the final products. The standard addresses animal welfare requirements and verifies the presence and amount of down/feathers from units managed in line with such requirements.

### **3.6 Responsible Animal Fiber**

The RAF framework is intended for companies manufacturing and trading products containing animal fiber (from sheep, mohair or alpaca), applying to the full supply chain from farm through to final processed products. The standard addresses animal welfare and farm management requirements and verifies the presence and amount of wool from units managed in line with such requirements.

Current versions of all Textile Exchange standards and related official reference documents are available at <https://textileexchange.org/standards/>

## **4. Textile Exchange Accreditation**

Textile Exchange Accreditation is a voluntary accreditation scheme governed solely by Textile Exchange. It is open to any certification body (CB) which meets the requirements of the scheme and has received application approval by the scheme owner.

Textile Exchange signs a licensing contract with the applicant CB. Applicants are informed that Textile Exchange has the right to accompany IOAS assessors on site visits.

IOAS is responsible for granting accreditation in line with its normal procedures. The accreditation decision is notified to Textile Exchange.

Textile Exchange reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the licensing contract and to call on IOAS to investigate problems.

**4.1** Textile Exchange accreditation requirements, against which a certification body is assessed, are the 'Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards', which can be downloaded from use <https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/documents/accreditation-and-certification-procedures/>. These requirements are based upon and in addition to ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

Certification bodies accredited to Textile Exchange are required to certify against the relevant Textile Exchange standard and abide by all relevant normative documents, interpretation, and guidance provided by Textile Exchange.

## **4.2 Application**

### **4.2.1 Application to Textile Exchange**

CBs interested in being approved to certified against a Textile Exchange standard shall contact [Assurance@TextileExchange.org](mailto:Assurance@TextileExchange.org). Application to the scheme owner must specify scope standard/s and indicate the accreditation body (AB). After application approval by the scheme owner, applicant CBs need to apply for Textile Exchange accreditation with an approved AB. See <https://textileexchange.org/accreditation/>.

A prerequisite for the preapproval by Textile Exchange is that the CB already maintains a valid accreditation to perform certification to any standard according to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 or apply for ISO/IEC 17065:2012 at the same time of obtaining accreditation to any Textile exchange standard from IOAS.

IOAS has been operating Textile Exchange Accreditation since 2010 and is currently approved for scope standards CCS, OCS, RCS, GRS, RDS and RAF and can be contacted at [info@ioas.org](mailto:info@ioas.org) for enquiries.

### **4.2.2 Application to IOAS**

4.2.2.1 IOAS will provide an application form to be completed by the applicant CB..

The general application, assessment and surveillance procedures detailed in Section 7 of the IOAS General Operating Manual apply.

4.2.2.2 The applicant is made fully aware of its rights and obligations before application through the provision of this Operating Manual, IOAS General Operating Manual and having access to sample copies of the Contract for provision of IOAS assessment and surveillance (PL0502) and the fee schedule (LS0503).

4.2.2.3 The completed application form must clearly indicate the scheme, the scope standard/s, scope category/ies and geographical scope. The applicant CB must provide evidence that Textile Exchange has approved the application as stated in 4.2.1.

4.2.2.4 If the application form review is satisfactory, the applicant is offered to sign the referred contract (PL0502) and IOAS proceeds with the certification body document review.

4.2.2.5 After the document review is completed and satisfactory, IOAS carries out an on-site visit (office and operator sites) as describe in 4.4.

4.2.2.6 If the visit result is positive, IOAS will address the case to its Accreditation Committee for an accreditation decision.

4.2.2.7 If the accreditation decision is positive, the CB will be issued a certificate as per 5.2.

### **4.2.3 Scope categories**

Textile Exchange accreditation scopes may be limited based on factors deemed relevant by the AB, such as industry or product type. IOAS considers each specific industry/sector to be an individual scope category(\*), for which the CB is assessed specifically against compliance with competence requirements described in the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards, including, but not limited to, demonstrated knowledge of issues, and risks specific to sectors in which audits will be conducted, as well as requirements related to the use of technical experts.

*(\*) For example, 'textile products' is one scope category and 'paper products' is another scope category.*

#### 4.2.4 Geographical scope

Textile Exchange accreditation may be granted globally, for a specific list of countries, or for another defined geographic region.

IOAS assesses the CB's demonstrated competence to certify and conduct audits in the countries / regions applied for, considering:

- At minimum one auditor and one reviewer / decision maker, both qualified for the specific scope, demonstrate sufficient knowledge of relevant local laws, as well as scope specific processes, issues, and risks.
- CB has in place effective measures to ensure local operators understand applicable scheme requirements.
- CB has in place effective measures to ensure accuracy, impartiality, and confidentiality in all communications with local operators and personnel, including requirements related to the use of interpreters/translators.

In principle, each country to be added to the accreditation scope is assessed individually by IOAS.

However, a CB may also apply for 'global' scope, in which case IOAS applies the following additional criteria for assessment:

- CB has received no sanction or CNC (critical nonconformity) within the past 12 months.
- Textile Exchange must clearly allow global geographical scope.
- CB must demonstrate having in place a robust and reliable system to ensure auditing and certification quality meets competence and scheme requirements in all cases, regardless of audit location.

After approval of global geographical scope, IOAS must be able to verify that the system is continuously effective. Any finding indicating malfunction, even if country-specific, may lead to scope reduction returning the CB to approval on individual country basis.

#### 4.3 Grace Period

Textile Exchange contracts with applicant CBs may allow for a grace period, during which Textile Exchange grants the CB a limited license to perform certifications to the specified standard/s prior to achieving accreditation.

Such grace period is valid from the effective date specified in the contract, no longer than 18 months from the initial application to Textile Exchange.

Textile Exchange considers granting a grace period if this is recommended by the AB carrying out the assessment for that CB's application; such written recommendation may only be submitted after completing the document review of the CB's systems and based on the current Grace Period Requirements published by Textile Exchange (See Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards).

#### 4.4 Assessment

IOAS assessment and surveillance service for Textile Exchange accreditation is conducted in line with ISO/IEC 17011:2017 and the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards.

**4.4.1 The initial assessment of a CB** includes at a minimum:

- On-site assessment of the headquarters / main office of the applicant CB.
- On-site assessment of at least 20% of critical offices with focus on risk as determined by the AB.
- Witness audit (shadow assessment) at a representative organization for each applicable Textile Exchange standard. In cases where the CB has no operators at the time of initial assessment, a mock audit may be witnessed.
- Review of operator files as per the scheme owner requirements. Reviewed files shall include suspended or withdrawn scope certificates, cases of certification pending or denied, also a minimum sample of active scope certificates as per table below, covering all applicable Textile Exchange standards and all applicable categories, and representing the CB's geographical scope.
- If a CB has fewer than five active scope certificates at the time of the assessment, all files shall be reviewed. As new sites become certified, the files shall be reviewed remotely (i.e. document review) up to five in total.

**4.4.2 Surveillance assessments of a CB** include at a minimum:

On-site assessment of the headquarters / main office of the certification body once every 2 years (note that the IOAS requirement takes precedence per Section 4.2.2.1 above).

- Shadow assessment performed at a representative organization for each applicable Textile Exchange Standard once every 2 years.
- On-site assessment of all critical offices over 5 years, distributed approximately evenly during that timeframe.
- Annual review (either through on-site audit, remote audit, or desk audit) of the following documentation:
  - management system and certification process of any new critical office.
  - management system of any subcontractor, with focus on those which are new, those which take responsibility for both auditing and client recruitment / management, and/or those located in countries with a Corruption Perception Index below 50.
  - competence of any new certification body personnel working with the standard(s), through verification of qualification and training records, as well as audit records.
  - implementation of corrective measures regarding any non-conformity issued in the previous assessment.
  - records and procedures the CB uses to track and report on certified organizations and sites.
  - crosscheck of the figures of certified and withdrawn sites for each applicable Standard, based on site data received from Textile Exchange. IOAS shall immediately report any deviations to Textile Exchange.
  - Certification files as described for the initial assessment.

IOAS may decide to increase the frequency of witness audits, on risk basis, and / or carry out review audits to operator sites, in addition to the required witness (shadow) audits.

**4.4.3 Technical experts**

IOAS employs assessors with expertise or sufficient knowledge in the scope categories offered. IOAS reserves the right to require additional assistance from a technical expert as it deems necessary and depending on the industry/sector the standard is applied to. The cost of such experts at on-site visits is borne by the certification body. Such a need and a cost estimation will be communicated before proceeding with the visit.

#### **4.4.4 Translators / interpreters**

IOAS reserves the right to require assistance from translators/interpreters as it deems necessary and depending on the country/ies the CB operates in. Translators / interpreters shall be independent from the certification bodies and their certified clients. The cost of translation/interpretation is borne by the certification body. Such a need will be communicated before proceeding with the visit.

#### **4.4.5 combined assessment/ surveillance**

Under IOAS procedures, surveillance or assessment of the CB can be combined with surveillance and/or assessment for other schemes.

### **4.5 scope additions**

#### **4.5.1 adding Textile Exchange accreditation**

Applicant CBs that are already IOAS clients for other schemes may apply for Textile Exchange accreditation at any time in their accreditation cycle (always first obtaining application approval from Textile Exchange) and IOAS will endeavour to conduct the assessment linked to on-going surveillance procedures. However, if the timing of the application does not fit with existing schedules, additional visits may be required, and corresponding fees will be charged. The duration of the initial accreditation contract in such circumstances will be synchronised with all other schemes which means that the initial Textile Exchange accreditation cycle may be shorter than five years.

#### **4.5.2 adding scope standards to Textile Exchange accreditation**

CBs that are already Textile exchange accredited by IOAS may apply for additional Textile Exchange standards at any time in their accreditation cycle (always first obtaining application approval from Textile Exchange) and IOAS will endeavour to conduct the assessment linked to on-going surveillance procedures.

#### **4.5.3 adding scope categories to Textile Exchange accreditation**

CBs that are already Textile exchange accredited by IOAS for a given scope standard may apply for additional scope categories at any time in their accreditation cycle. IOAS will endeavour to conduct the assessment linked to on-going surveillance procedures.

#### **4.5.4 adding scope countries to Textile Exchange accreditation**

CBs that are already Textile exchange accredited by IOAS for a given scope may apply for additional countries (or global scope) for that given scope, at any time in their accreditation cycle and IOAS will conduct the assessment as document review. In case of approval, verification is conducted as part of on-going surveillance procedures. See section 4.2.4.

4.5.5 Regardless of geographical scope amplitude, the contractual requirement for informing the accreditation body of relevant changes to the system (accreditation contract PL0502, Clause C.12) always applies. Relevant changes such as new branch offices / local representations or new inspection bodies shall be informed in a timely manner to IOAS.

**4.6 IOAS Annual report:** IOAS shall submit an annual report to Textile exchange containing information specified by Textile exchange, together with any other information requested, by February 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year.

## **5. Reference to Textile Exchange accreditation and the scheme owner**

5.1 The accredited certification body may refer to being accredited by IOAS in accordance with the requirements described and referred to in the General Operating Manual.

5.2 On being accredited the CB will receive a formal accreditation certificate which states that the organisation has been found to be in compliance with the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards. The relevant standard scope/s will be indicated. IOAS will also publish the name of the CB on a public list indicating full details of the accreditation, the current scope and countries of activity. It is this list which takes precedence over any other source.

5.3 The Textile Exchange web site also maintains information on accredited CBs at <https://textileexchange.org/certification-bodies/>.

5.4 No reference to approval by Textile Exchange or use of the Textile Exchange standard logo/s may be made until a 'certifier's contract' is concluded with Textile Exchange. Any references and claims must be fully in line with provisions of that contract and relevant normative documents published by Textile Exchange:

<https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/documents/standards-claims-policy/>.

5.5 Once a contract has been signed with Textile Exchange and the AB has issued a Textile Exchange accreditation certificate, the accredited certification body may make suitable claims on promotional material (brochures, web sites etc.) that the specified scheme operates in compliance with the Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards. Refer to <https://textileexchange.org/knowledge-center/documents/standards-claims-policy/>

## **6. Fees**

6.1 IOAS fee schedule is available at

<https://ioas.org/accreditation/application/http://www.ioas.org/assessment/application/>.

IOAS is able to provide a quotation of fees for the requested services but due to the many variables involved, these can only be used for orientation.

6.2 Certifiers applying for accreditation to implement more than one Textile Exchange standard will be charged for an additional standard scope according to the current fee schedule.

6.3 There are also fees to be paid to Textile Exchange as stipulated in the licensing contract signed with Textile Exchange.

End

For any specific questions on the Textile Exchange accreditation scheme, please contact your assigned Client Service Manager.

## **Contact details**

### **Textile Exchange**

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