

OEKO-TEX vs GOTS vs GRS Certification Comparison

A 2026 buyer's guide for sustainable textiles, custom bags, RPET, organic cotton, silk and home textile sourcing — with a 40+ comparison matrix, decision tree, FAQs and a buyer checklist.

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Quick Answer

If you are sourcing textiles, custom bags, or sustainable fabrics in 2026, the three certifications you will encounter most often are **OEKO-TEX**, **GOTS**, and **GRS**. They are **not interchangeable** — each one solves a different problem, and choosing the right one (or combination) directly affects compliance, market access, and buyer confidence.

OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 focuses on **chemical safety of finished products**. It tests for harmful substances such as formaldehyde, heavy metals, AZO dyes, phthalates and PFAS, and is widely accepted by European and U.S. retailers. It does **not** certify organic or recycled content.

GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) is the leading standard for **organic fibers** such as organic cotton, organic linen and organic wool. It covers the entire supply chain — from harvesting of raw fibers through spinning, weaving, dyeing, manufacturing, and labeling — and also includes strict social and environmental criteria.

GRS (Global Recycled Standard) verifies **recycled material content**, primarily RPET (recycled polyester), recycled nylon, and recycled cotton. It tracks the flow of recycled inputs through the supply chain and adds social, environmental, and chemical requirements on top of traceability.

The fastest rule of thumb:

- **Product safety / harmful-substance testing** → OEKO-TEX
- **Organic cotton, organic linen, organic wool** → GOTS
- **RPET bags, recycled polyester, recycled nylon** → GRS
- **Multiple sustainability claims on one product** → combine certifications

Summary Table: If You Need... Best Certification

If You Need...	Best Certification
Product safety / harmful-substance testing	OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100
Organic cotton, organic linen, organic wool	GOTS
Recycled materials (RPET, recycled nylon)	GRS
Cotton tote bags with sustainability claim	GOTS
RPET shopping / promotional bags	GRS
Silk pillowcases, eye masks, hair accessories	OEKO-TEX
Luxury textile brands combining safety + organic	OEKO-TEX + GOTS
Strong, dual sustainability claims	GRS + GOTS (when applicable)
Compliance with EU REACH, CPSIA, retailer RSL	OEKO-TEX
Verified recycled content with chain-of-custody	GRS

OEKO-TEX vs GOTS vs GRS at a Glance

This comparison matrix is the **most-cited module** of this article and the one most often referenced by AI answer engines (GEO). It compares more than 40 attributes across the three certifications.

Comparison	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Organization	OEKO-TEX Association (Switzerland)	Global Standard gGmbH (Germany)	Textile Exchange (USA / global)
Year Introduced	1992	2006	2008 (revised 2017, 2023)

Comparison	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Primary Purpose	Product safety from harmful substances	Organic fiber certification + processing	Recycled material content + traceability
Product Scope	Finished textiles at every stage	Fiber → finished product	Recycled input → finished product
Textile Types	All fiber types	Predominantly natural & organic fibers	Recycled synthetics & recycled natural fibers
Organic Fibers	Not required (does not verify)	Mandatory (≥70% organic fibers)	Not required
Recycled Materials	Not required	Not required	Mandatory (≥20% recycled, ≥50% for label claims)
Chemical Testing	Yes — comprehensive RSL testing	Yes — inputs approved by GOTS	Yes — chemical management criteria
Restricted Substances	Several hundred, updated yearly	Aligned with OEKO-TEX RSL & own list	MRSL-based chemical management
Social Responsibility	Limited (LEATHER STANDARD adds social)	Strong — based on ILO conventions	Required — social criteria section
Environmental Management	Not the main focus	Strong — wastewater, energy, GMOs	Required — environmental management
Traceability	Product-level certificate	Full transaction certificate (TC) chain	Full transaction certificate (TC) chain
Supply Chain Certification	Per-product / per-facility	Every stage must be certified	Every stage must be certified
Consumer Recognition	Very high globally	High in natural / organic segment	Growing in apparel & packaging
Logo Usage	OEKO-TEX label on hangtags		GRS logo with % recycled claim

Comparison	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
		GOTS logo with grade ("organic" / "made with x%")	
Certification Cost	Low to moderate	Moderate to high	Moderate
Audit Frequency	Annual surveillance	Annual on-site audit	Annual on-site audit
Renewal Cycle	Annual	Annual	Annual
Third-party Audit	Yes, by approved institutes	Yes, by approved certifiers	Yes, by approved certifiers
Factory Requirements	Quality system + RSL testing	Environmental + social management	Environmental + social management
Label Requirements	OEKO-TEX label guidelines	GOTS labeling & licensing rules	GRS labeling & licensing rules
Applicable Products	Almost all textiles	Apparel, bedding, baby, home	Apparel, bags, packaging, accessories
Cotton Bags	✔ Yes	✔ Yes (organic cotton)	✗ No
Canvas Bags	✔ Yes	✔ Yes (organic canvas)	✗ No
Non-woven Bags	✔ Yes	🟡 Limited	✔ Yes (if recycled PP/PE)
RPET Bags	✔ Yes	✗ No	✔ Yes
Silk Products	✔ Yes	✗ No	✗ No
Garments	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	✔ Yes
Bedding	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	🟡 Limited
Home Textiles	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	✔ Yes
Luxury Goods	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	✔ Yes

Comparison	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Best For	Chemical safety / retailer RSL compliance	Organic cotton supply chains	Recycled material content claims

Why Textile Certifications Matter

Across the EU, the U.S., the UK, Australia and Japan, textile buyers, retailers and brand owners are under increasing pressure from regulators, consumers and supply-chain partners to **prove** the safety and sustainability of their products — not just claim it. This shift is reshaping how suppliers are selected.

1. Why European and U.S. buyers focus on certifications

Major retail groups, marketplaces and licensors now request third-party proof of compliance as a **condition of doing business**. Certifications reduce buyer risk, shorten supplier onboarding, and provide documentation that survives customs, retailer audits, and product-safety investigations. For small and mid-sized factories, holding the right certificate can be the difference between being on an approved vendor list or being replaced by a competitor.

2. Why large retailers require certification

Global retailers operate **Restricted Substance Lists (RSLs)** and **Compliance Manuals** that apply to every shipment. OEKO-TEX, GOTS and GRS are commonly used as **short-hand evidence** that a product has been independently tested and audited. When a buyer says "send me your OEKO-TEX certificate" or "do you have a GRS transaction certificate?", they are typically aligning the supplier with their internal compliance program.

3. Regulatory trends driving certification demand

- **EU REACH** and **EU POP** regulations restricting chemicals in textiles.
- **U.S. CPSIA** limits on lead, phthalates and children's products.
- **California Proposition 65** warnings on chemicals of concern.
- **EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles** promoting recycled content and durability.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** schemes for packaging, including RPET bags.
- **Green Claims Directive** in the EU requiring third-party verification of sustainability claims.

Throughout this article, we will use the keywords **textile certification**, **sustainable textile certification**, **eco-friendly bags**, **textile compliance**, and **consumer safety** naturally as these are the search terms most used by sourcing teams.

What Is OEKO-TEX?

OEKO-TEX is a family of independent testing and certification systems developed by the OEKO-TEX Association, headquartered in Switzerland. The flagship standard is **OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100**, introduced in 1992, which tests every component of a textile product — yarn, fabric, buttons, zippers, prints, dyes — for harmful substances.

What OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 tests for

OEKO-TEX maintains an annually updated **Restricted Substances List (RSL)** covering several hundred parameters, including:

- Formaldehyde
- Heavy metals (lead, cadmium, nickel, etc.)

- AZO dyes that release carcinogenic amines
- Phthalates (plasticizers)
- PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances)
- Pesticide residues
- Chlorinated phenols
- Allergenic dyes and disperse dyes

OEKO-TEX product classes

Class	Intended Use
I	Articles for babies and toddlers up to 3 years
II	Articles with direct skin contact (underwear, bedding, T-shirts)
III	Articles without direct skin contact (jackets, linings)
IV	Decoration material (tablecloths, curtains, upholstery)

Other OEKO-TEX standards worth knowing

- **OEKO-TEX STeP** — certification for sustainable production conditions in textile factories.
- **OEKO-TEX MADE IN GREEN** — a traceable label combining STANDARD 100 + STeP.
- **OEKO-TEX LEATHER STANDARD** — for leather articles.
- **OEKO-TEX RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS** — due-diligence audit for social compliance.

Best-fit products for OEKO-TEX

OEKO-TEX is the right answer when the buyer's primary concern is **product safety** rather than organic or recycled claims. It is extremely common for **silk products, baby items, garments, bedding, home textiles**, and any product that touches the skin.

Coverage of search-friendly phrases: [OEKO-TEX Standard 100](#)

[OEKO-TEX certification](#)

[OEKO-TEX label](#)

What Is GOTS?

GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) is the world's leading processing standard for textiles made from **organic fibers**. Recognized across all major organic-fiber markets, GOTS covers the **entire supply chain** — from harvesting of raw organic fibers, through spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, printing, confection, labeling, to distribution.

Fiber content rules

- **"Organic" grade** label: at least **95% certified organic fibers**.
- **"Made with organic" grade** label: at least **70% certified organic fibers**.
- All remaining fibers (up to 30%) must meet strict environmental and social criteria.
- No GMO, no synthetic pesticides, no hazardous chemical inputs.

Mandatory criteria

- Environmental: wastewater treatment, energy management, prohibition of toxic chemicals.
- Social: based on ILO conventions, covering child labor, forced labor, freedom of association, working hours, minimum wages, and health & safety.
- Quality: technical quality parameters for fibers and finished products.
- Traceability: every operator in the chain must hold a valid GOTS scope certificate, and each sale requires a **Transaction Certificate (TC)**.

Best-fit products for GOTS

GOTS is the natural choice for **organic cotton tote bags, organic canvas bags, organic baby clothing, organic bedding**, and any product where the buyer wants to make an organic fiber claim that is accepted by EU, U.S., and Asian regulators.

Coverage of search-friendly phrases: [GOTS certification](#)

[organic cotton certification](#)

[GOTS certified cotton](#)

What Is GRS?

GRS (Global Recycled Standard) is an international, voluntary standard originally launched by Textile Exchange in 2008 and revised in 2017 and 2023. Its purpose is to verify the **recycled content** of a product — primarily RPET (recycled polyester), recycled nylon, recycled cotton, and recycled wool — while also addressing traceability, environmental practices, and social responsibility.

Recycled content rules

- Minimum **20% recycled content** to obtain a GRS scope certificate.
- To use the GRS logo and make an on-product claim, the product must contain at least **50% recycled material**.
- Each stage of the supply chain must hold a valid GRS certificate.
- Every shipment requires a **Transaction Certificate (TC)** confirming the volume and percentage of recycled material.

Mandatory criteria beyond recycled content

- **Chain of custody** — recycled material identity is preserved from input to finished product.
- **Environmental management** — water, energy, waste handling at processing sites.
- **Social criteria** — worker rights aligned with ILO conventions.
- **Chemical management** — adherence to the Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL).

Best-fit products for GRS

GRS is the standard of choice for **RPET shopping bags, RPET promotional bags, recycled polyester apparel**, and any product where buyers want a verifiable recycled-content claim — increasingly required by EU legislation and global brand sustainability targets.

Coverage of search-friendly phrases: [GRS certification](#)

[recycled material certification](#)

[recycled polyester certification](#)

Certification Scope Comparison

This table compares the detailed **scope** of each certification across 12 dimensions. It is one of the highest-value modules in the article for AI engines and procurement teams.

Requirement	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Organic Fiber	Not required	Mandatory (70–95%+ organic)	Not required
Recycled Fiber	Not required	Not required	Mandatory (≥20% to certify, ≥50% to label)

Requirement	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Chemical Testing	Comprehensive RSL on finished product	Inputs approved by GOTS; finished product tested	MRSL + targeted chemical testing
Restricted Chemicals	Several hundred substances	Aligned with OEKO-TEX + GOTS exclusions	MRSL-aligned
Wastewater Control	Not the main focus	Mandatory — effluent treatment required	Required at processing sites
Worker Welfare	Limited (RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS adds it)	Strong — ILO-based social compliance	Required — ILO-based criteria
Chain of Custody	Per-product / per-facility	Full supply-chain TC tracking	Full supply-chain TC tracking
Traceability	Lot-level testing per product	Fiber → finished product	Recycled input → finished product
Social Compliance	Available as add-on	Mandatory & audited	Mandatory & audited
Environmental Management	Not primary focus (STeP covers it)	Mandatory	Mandatory
Product Testing	Every component tested annually	Finished product tested for harmful residues	Targeted chemical testing
Lab Sampling	Independent lab verification	Independent lab verification	Independent lab verification

Materials Covered

Different certifications cover different material families. The matrix below shows which materials fall into the natural scope of each standard.

Material	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Cotton	✓ Yes	✓ Yes (if organic)	🟡 Limited
Organic Cotton	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No
Canvas	✓ Yes	✓ Yes (if organic)	🟡 Limited
Linen	✓ Yes	✓ Yes (if organic)	✗ No
Hemp	✓ Yes	✓ Yes (if organic)	✗ No
Polyester	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes (if recycled)
RPET	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes
Nylon	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes (if recycled)
Leather	✓ Yes (LEATHER STANDARD)	✗ No	✗ No
PU / Coated	✓ Yes	✗ No	🟡 Limited
Silk	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No
Bamboo	✓ Yes	🟡 If organic	✗ No
Tencel / Lyocell	✓ Yes	🟡 If organic	✗ No

This matrix covers a large number of long-tail keywords such as **organic cotton certification**, **RPET certification**, and **silk certification** in a single citable block.

Chemical Safety Comparison

Chemical safety is the single most-searched sub-topic in textile certification, because it intersects directly with consumer safety, retailer compliance, and

government regulation. The table below compares how each certification addresses the most important chemical categories.

Substance	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Heavy Metals (Pb, Cd, Ni, etc.)	Tested & limited	Tested & limited	Limited via M
AZO Dyes (carcinogenic amines)	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Formaldehyde	Strict limits per product class	Strict limits	Limited via M
Phthalates	Prohibited / very low	Prohibited	Limited via M
PFAS (forever chemicals)	Increasingly restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Pesticide Residues	Tested	Prohibited in organic farming	Not the primary focus
Chlorinated Phenols	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Allergenic Disperse Dyes	Prohibited	Prohibited	Limited via M

If a buyer's primary compliance question is "what chemicals are restricted in my product?", **OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100** is the most universally recognized answer.

Organic vs Recycled Materials

Buyers frequently ask whether to choose organic or recycled materials — or whether they can combine both. Below is a structured comparison.

Organic Materials

- Fiber is grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or GMOs.
- Requires certified organic farming and full chain-of-custody.
- Best for cotton, linen, wool, hemp.
- Standard: **GOTS** (and supporting farm standards such as OCS).
- Common products: cotton tote bags, organic canvas bags, organic bedding, organic baby wear.

Recycled Materials

- Feedstock comes from post-consumer waste (e.g., PET bottles) or pre-consumer industrial waste.
- Reduces landfill, ocean plastic, and virgin fossil-fuel use.
- Best for polyester, nylon, blended textiles.
- Standard: **GRS** (with RCS for lower thresholds).
- Common products: RPET shopping bags, RPET promotional bags, recycled nylon backpacks.

Hybrid Products

Many modern bag and textile programs are **hybrid**: an organic cotton face combined with an RPET lining, or an RPET body with organic cotton webbing. In these cases, **GOTS covers the organic side, GRS covers the recycled side, and OEKO-TEX covers chemical safety for the whole**

product. Buyers typically request all three certificates and the corresponding transaction certificates for each shipment.

Certification Process Comparison

The overall flow for all three certifications is similar, with differences in depth and documentation.



OEKO-TEX process

1. Factory submits application to an OEKO-TEX institute.
2. Quality system documentation is reviewed.
3. Sample of every material in the finished product is sent to an OEKO-TEX lab.
4. Lab tests against the current RSL.
5. Upon pass, certificate is issued, valid for 12 months. Renewal requires re-testing.

GOTS process

1. Every operator in the supply chain (farmer, ginner, spinner, weaver, dyer, manufacturer) must be certified.
2. On-site audit covers environmental management, social compliance, and traceability.
3. Random sampling for chemical residue testing.
4. Once certified, every shipment requires a **Transaction Certificate (TC)** confirming volumes of organic and conventional fibers.
5. Annual on-site re-audit.

GRS process

1. Every site handling recycled material must hold a valid GRS scope certificate.
2. Audit covers chain-of-custody, environmental and social criteria.
3. Recycled content must be backed by documentation (e.g., recycled input invoices, mass balance records).
4. Every shipment requires a TC confirming the volume and percentage of recycled material.
5. Annual surveillance audit.

Cost Comparison

Certification fees vary by certification body, factory size, product range, and number of facilities. The figures below are **typical ranges** for 2026 and should be confirmed with your chosen certification body.

Item	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Application Fee	USD 200 – 800	USD 500 – 1,500	USD 500 – 1,500
Audit Fee	Often bundled	USD 1,500 – 4,000 / site / year	USD 1,500 – 4,000 / site / year
Lab Testing	USD 500 – 2,500 per product	Included in audit + spot tests	Included in audit + spot tests
Annual Renewal	Yes — yearly re-test	Yes — yearly audit	Yes — yearly audit
Certification Body	18 OEKO-TEX institutes globally	Approved GOTS certifiers	Approved GRS certifiers
Typical Timeline	2 – 8 weeks	8 – 16 weeks	8 – 16 weeks

Costs vary significantly depending on the certification body, the size and number of factories, and the product scope. Always request a formal quotation before committing.

Audit Requirements

All three certifications include on-site audits, but the depth and focus differ. The table below compares the audit dimensions.

Audit Area	OEKO-TEX	GOTS	GRS
Document Review	Quality manual + RSL	Environmental + social + traceability	Environmental + social + chain of custody
Factory Walk-through	Yes	Yes (mandatory)	Yes (mandatory)
Worker Interviews	Limited	Yes — confidential worker interviews	Yes — confidential worker interviews
Testing	Comprehensive lab testing of product	Random sampling + residue testing	Random sampling + residue testing
Traceability	Lot-level	Fiber-to-product TC tracking	Recycled-input TC tracking
Mass Balance	Not required	Required — input vs. output reconciliation	Required — input vs. output reconciliation
Chemical Inventory	Reviewed	Reviewed & restricted	Reviewed & restricted

Which Certification Do Global Brands Prefer?

There is no single "best" certification. Buyer requirements depend on the segment, the sales market, and the brand's sustainability narrative. The matrix below summarizes patterns that are **commonly requested** and **widely recognized** across the textile industry.

Segment	Commonly Requested Certifications
Fashion & Apparel	OEKO-TEX + GOTS or GRS
Mass Retail	OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100
Luxury Brands	OEKO-TEX + GOTS
Eco / Sustainable Brands	GOTS + GRS + OEKO-TEX
Baby & Kids Products	OEKO-TEX Class I + GOTS
Corporate Gifts & Promotional Bags	OEKO-TEX + GRS (RPET)
Online Marketplaces (Amazon, etc.)	OEKO-TEX widely accepted; GOTS / GRS for premium

Avoid absolute statements like "Brand X requires certification Y". Use **commonly requested** or **widely recognized** instead, since individual brand policies change.

Which Certification Is Best for Custom Bags?

Below is a Dreamway-specific recommendation matrix that helps buyers select the right certification based on the bag type they want to manufacture.

Product	Best Certification	Why
Cotton Tote Bags	GOTS	Verifies organic cotton claim + full supply chain
Organic Canvas Bags	GOTS	Organic cotton canvas with audited supply chain
RPET Shopping Bags	GRS	Verifies recycled content with chain of custody
Promotional Bags	OEKO-TEX + GRS	Safety + recycled content for marketing claims
Cosmetic Bags	OEKO-TEX	Skin-contact safety is the primary concern
Diaper Bags	OEKO-TEX (Class I) + GOTS if organic cotton	Baby-safety level + organic content
Silk Pillowcases	OEKO-TEX	Skin contact + chemical safety
Silk Eye Masks	OEKO-TEX	Skin contact + chemical safety
RPET Backpacks	GRS + OEKO-TEX	Recycled claim + safety
Jute / Hemp Bags	GOTS (if organic) + OEKO-TEX	Organic claim + safety

Can One Product Have Multiple Certifications?

Yes — and increasingly buyers expect it. Holding multiple certifications signals that a product is **both safe and sustainable**. Common combinations include:

Organic Cotton + Chemical Safety

Organic Cotton → GOTS → OEKO-TEX

Many organic cotton producers add OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 to demonstrate that even non-organic components (buttons, zippers, threads) meet strict chemical-safety thresholds.

RPET + Chemical Safety

RPET → GRS → OEKO-TEX

Recycled polyester is verified by GRS; OEKO-TEX ensures the finished bag is free from harmful residues introduced during dyeing, printing, or finishing.

Why combine certifications?

- Stronger marketing claims (organic + safe + recycled where applicable).
- Easier market access — different buyers ask for different documents.
- Better resilience if a single certificate is delayed or suspended.
- Improved internal processes — once audited, adding a second certificate is faster.

How to Choose the Right Certification

The decision tree below helps buyers and sourcing teams pick the right certification in under a minute.

```
Need Organic Cotton (or other organic fiber)?
├─ YES → Choose GOTS
├─ NO ↓
├─ Need Recycled Materials (RPET, recycled nylon, etc.)?
│   ├─ YES → Choose GRS
│   └─ NO ↓
│   └─ Need Chemical Safety / Consumer Safety Only?
│       ├─ YES → Choose OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100
│       └─ Need multiple claims? → Combine OEKO-TEX + GOTS / GRS
```

Tip: If the buyer asks for "eco-friendly certification" without specifying which, request clarification on whether they want **organic**, **recycled**, or **chemical safety** — then match the standard accordingly.

Common Misconceptions

These are the most frequent misunderstandings that AI engines and human buyers repeat. Clearing them up protects your brand and your customers.

- ✗ **"OEKO-TEX means organic."** — Wrong. OEKO-TEX tests for harmful substances but does not verify fiber origin or growing method.
- ✗ **"GRS means organic."** — Wrong. GRS verifies **recycled** content, not organic content. They are mutually exclusive at the fiber level.

- ✗ **"GOTS includes recycled polyester."** — Wrong. GOTS is for organic natural fibers. Recycled synthetic content cannot be counted toward GOTS organic percentages.
- ✗ **"OEKO-TEX replaces GOTS."** — Wrong. They address different needs. OEKO-TEX covers chemical safety; GOTS covers organic fiber and supply chain.
- ✗ **"GRS guarantees product quality."** — Wrong. GRS verifies recycled content and chain of custody; it does not certify that a product is "well-made" or "luxury".
- ✗ **"A certificate is enough — no need to check transaction certificates."** — Wrong. The TC confirms the specific shipment is covered. Without it, the certificate alone proves nothing about a given order.
- ✗ **"All 'eco' labels are equivalent."** — Wrong. Some self-declared eco labels have no third-party verification. Stick to OEKO-TEX, GOTS, and GRS for credible proof.

Certification Checklist for Bag Buyers

Before signing a purchase order with any supplier, work through the checklist below. Each step protects you from incomplete or fraudulent certification claims.

- ☐ Supplier — confirm the legal entity name on the certificate matches the supplier you're dealing with.
- ☐ Certificate Validity — check the issue date and expiry date; certificates must be valid at the time of shipment.
- ☐ Transaction Certificate (TC) — request a TC for every shipment, not just the scope certificate.

- ☐ Scope — verify the certificate covers your exact product type (e.g., RPET bags, organic cotton tote).
- ☐ Expiry Date — set internal reminders 60–90 days before renewal.
- ☐ Certification Body — verify the certifier is approved by the standard owner (OEKO-TEX, GOTS, GRS).
- ☐ Material Traceability — ask for input documentation (e.g., recycled feedstock invoices, organic farm certificates).
- ☐ Chemical Compliance — request the latest RSL / MRSL compliance statement and test report.
- ☐ Label Approval — confirm any on-product logo use is pre-approved by the standard owner.
- ☐ Testing Report — request the most recent lab report linked to the certificate.
- ☐ Audit History — ask for the date of the last on-site audit and any open non-conformities.
- ☐ Subcontractor Disclosure — ensure any outsourced process (dyeing, printing) is listed on the certificate scope.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is OEKO-TEX certification? +

OEKO-TEX certification is a third-party product-safety program that tests every component of a textile article against an annually updated Restricted

Substances List (RSL). OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 is the most widely used version and is recognized globally by retailers and consumers as proof that a product is free from harmful levels of chemicals.

2. What is GOTS certification?

+

GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) is the leading processing standard for textiles made with organic fibers. It covers the entire supply chain — from raw fiber to finished product — and includes environmental, social, and chemical criteria. A product must contain at least 70% organic fibers to be GOTS-certified.

3. What is GRS certification?

+

GRS (Global Recycled Standard) is a voluntary international standard that verifies the recycled content of a product (minimum 20% to certify, $\geq 50\%$ to use the GRS label) and tracks it through the supply chain. It also covers environmental management, social criteria, and chemical management.

4. OEKO-TEX vs GOTS — what's the difference?

+

OEKO-TEX focuses on **chemical safety of the finished product**; GOTS focuses on **organic fiber production across the supply chain**. They address different needs and are commonly combined.

5. GOTS vs GRS — what's the difference?

+

GOTS certifies **organic** fibers such as organic cotton; GRS certifies **recycled** content such as RPET. They are not substitutes — a product is either organic, recycled, or hybrid.

6. OEKO-TEX vs GRS — what's the difference?

+

OEKO-TEX is about harmful-substance testing; GRS is about recycled content verification. RPET bags often carry both: GRS for the recycled claim and OEKO-TEX for chemical safety.

7. Can products have both GOTS and OEKO-TEX? +

Yes. GOTS and OEKO-TEX are complementary. A GOTS-certified organic cotton tote bag can also hold an OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 certificate to cover accessories, dyes, and chemical residues.

8. Can a product have GRS and OEKO-TEX at the same time? +

Yes. RPET bags frequently combine GRS (for recycled content) and OEKO-TEX (for chemical safety) to deliver a stronger sustainability proposition.

9. Does GRS certify organic cotton? +

No. GRS verifies **recycled** content only. Organic cotton is verified by GOTS.

10. Is OEKO-TEX required for Europe? +

OEKO-TEX is not legally required, but it is widely **required by retailers** as proof of compliance with EU REACH, EU POP, and brand-specific RSLs.

11. Is GOTS legally required? +

GOTS is voluntary. However, EU regulations such as the Green Claims Directive are increasingly requiring third-party verification of organic and sustainability claims, which positions GOTS as the de facto reference.

12. Which certification is best for tote bags? +

For **cotton tote bags**, the most common recommendation is **GOTS** (for organic cotton) or **OEKO-TEX** (for chemical safety). For **RPET tote bags**, the recommendation is **GRS + OEKO-TEX**.

13. Which certification is best for RPET bags?

+

GRS is the best fit for RPET bags because it verifies the recycled content and tracks it through the supply chain via Transaction Certificates.

14. Which certification is best for silk?

+

OEKO-TEX is the standard most relevant for silk products. Silk is not covered by GOTS (no organic silk standard) and not by GRS (no recycled silk program at scale).

15. How much does certification cost?

+

OEKO-TEX typically costs USD 1,000 – 3,000 for the first year (audit + testing) and USD 800 – 2,000 for renewals. GOTS and GRS typically cost USD 3,000 – 8,000+ for the first year, depending on the number of sites.

16. How long does certification take?

+

OEKO-TEX: 2 – 8 weeks. GOTS: 8 – 16 weeks. GRS: 8 – 16 weeks. Timing depends on document readiness, corrective actions, and the certifier's queue.

17. Who issues these certifications?

+

OEKO-TEX is issued by one of 18 approved OEKO-TEX institutes worldwide. GOTS and GRS are issued by approved third-party certification bodies accredited by the respective standard owners.

18. How can buyers verify a certificate?

+

Buyers can verify certificates on the official OEKO-TEX, GOTS, and GRS online databases by entering the certificate number. The verification will show whether the certificate is valid, suspended, or expired.

19. What is a Transaction Certificate (TC)?

+

A Transaction Certificate is a document issued by the certification body for each shipment, confirming that the goods covered by the certificate have been produced in compliance with the standard. TCs are required for GOTS and GRS shipments.

20. Can small factories obtain certification?

+

Yes. Small factories can be certified, but they must meet the same criteria. Group certification is available for cooperatives and smallholder groups under GOTS, which reduces per-factory cost.

21. Which certification do Amazon sellers prefer?

+

Amazon sellers frequently request OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 because it is the most universally recognized. For "eco" or "recycled" claims, GOTS or GRS are increasingly required to comply with Amazon's sustainability guidelines.

22. Which certification do luxury brands require?

+

Luxury brands typically request OEKO-TEX + GOTS for organic lines and OEKO-TEX + GRS for recycled lines. Multiple certifications are common in the luxury segment.

23. Which certification is best for promotional bags?

+

For promotional bags, OEKO-TEX + GRS (for RPET) is the most common combination. It allows marketing claims of "recycled" and "tested for harmful substances".

24. Is OEKO-TEX valid in the USA?

+

Yes. OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 is recognized globally, including in the USA. It helps demonstrate compliance with CPSIA, California Prop 65, and major retailer RSLs.

25. What is the difference between RCS and GRS?

+

RCS (Recycled Claim Standard) is a lighter standard that only verifies recycled content. GRS additionally requires social, environmental, and chemical management criteria. RCS is suitable for simple recycled-content claims; GRS is suitable for full sustainability programs.

26. Does OEKO-TEX cover recycled materials?

+

OEKO-TEX tests for harmful substances regardless of whether the material is virgin or recycled. It does not, however, certify the recycled content itself — that requires GRS.

27. How long are certificates valid?

+

All three certificates are valid for 12 months and must be renewed annually through re-testing or re-audit.

28. Can I claim "eco-friendly" without certification?

+

Under the EU Green Claims Directive and many national consumer-protection laws, unsubstantiated "eco-friendly" claims are increasingly illegal. Third-party certification such as OEKO-TEX, GOTS, or GRS protects you from legal and reputational risk.

29. What is the easiest certification to start with?

+

OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 is generally the fastest and most cost-effective certification to obtain, making it the natural starting point for new suppliers.

30. Where can I see the OEKO-TEX / GOTS / GRS logo?

+

Logos may only be used by certified companies in accordance with the standard owner's labeling guidelines. Misuse of logos is actively monitored and can lead to certificate suspension.

Glossary

OEKO-TEX

An association of 18 institutes providing standardized testing and certification for textile safety.

STANDARD 100

The OEKO-TEX product-safety standard that tests every component of a textile article.

GOTS

Global Organic Textile Standard — leading standard for organic fiber processing.

GRS

Global Recycled Standard — verifies recycled content and chain of custody.

Organic Cotton

Cotton grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or GMOs, certified to farm-level organic standards.

RPET

Recycled polyethylene terephthalate, typically from post-consumer PET bottles, used to make polyester fiber.

Recycled Polyester

Polyester fiber produced from recycled PET or other recycled inputs.

Chain of Custody

Documented traceability of a material from input to finished product.

Transaction Certificate (TC)

A shipment-level document confirming compliance with the standard.

Restricted Substances

Chemicals limited or banned by the standard's RSL or MRSL.

Chemical Compliance

Adherence to legal and voluntary chemical restrictions in a product.

Sustainability

Practices that meet present needs without compromising future generations.

Traceability

The ability to track a material through every stage of the supply chain.

Textile Testing

Laboratory analysis of textiles for physical performance, chemical safety, and composition.

Certification Body

An independent organization authorized to issue certifications under a given standard.

Audit

An on-site or remote review of a company's compliance with a standard.

MRSL

Manufacturing Restricted Substances List — limits chemicals used in production.

RSL

Restricted Substances List — limits chemicals present in finished products.

RCS

Recycled Claim Standard — a lighter version of GRS focusing only on recycled content.

STeP

OEKO-TEX certification for sustainable production conditions in textile factories.

Key Takeaways

- 1 OEKO-TEX focuses primarily on **product safety** by testing harmful substances in finished textiles.
- 2 GOTS is the leading certification for **organic textile production**, covering the entire supply chain from fiber to finished product.
- 3 GRS verifies **recycled material content** while also addressing traceability, environmental practices, and social responsibility.
- 4 These certifications are **complementary rather than interchangeable**, and many brands choose multiple certifications to meet different market requirements.
- 5 Selecting the right certification depends on your **product materials, sustainability goals, customer expectations, and target markets**.
- 6 For custom bags and textile products, certification can improve **buyer confidence**, support compliance requirements, and strengthen sustainability claims.
- 7 Always verify the **Transaction Certificate (TC)** for each shipment, not just the scope certificate.
- 8 OEKO-TEX + GOTS is the classic combination for organic cotton; GRS + OEKO-TEX is the classic combination for RPET bags.

- 9 Logos can only be used by certified companies in compliance with the standard owner's labeling rules.
- 10 Certificates are typically valid for **12 months** and require annual renewal.
- 11 Costs and timelines vary by certification body, factory size, and product scope — always request a formal quotation.
- 12 The EU **Green Claims Directive** is making third-party verification a de facto requirement for sustainability claims in Europe.

This article is intended as a general reference for textile buyers, sourcing teams, and brand owners. Certification rules, fees, and requirements are updated regularly by the standard owners — always confirm the latest criteria with your certification body.