



Global Recycle Standard

Introduction & scope

The Global Recycle Standard (GRS) was originally developed by Control Union Certifications (CU) in 2008 and ownership was passed to Textile Exchange January 1st, 2011. The standard is intended for companies that wish to make a content claim on the amount of recycled material in the final product. The GRS is based on a tracking and tracing principle used for certified products; in addition issues pertaining to environmental and social criteria are also incorporated in line with requests from various leading members in the industry. A further choice was made in the development of this standard to adopt a transaction certificate system. This provides a superior monitoring and controlling mechanism within both supply and value chains to further ensure the integrity of certified final products.

The standard may apply to companies that trade and/or produce the end product or half (finished) product containing recycle material to enter the GRS program. The range of products to be certified is inspired by, but not limited to textile products. In case the party is outsourcing the production of the end product partially or completely, the units involved then have to comply with GRS as well.

A) TRACEABILITY PRINCIPLES

Criteria related to the transport and the use of certificates and prescribed indications

1.1. Material entering the GRS system or material transported between GRS certified companies shall only be transported in a manner that prevents substitution or contamination of the contents. An invoice of the shipment or transport documents (such as a bill of lading etc) must be provided.

1.1a. The invoice of the shipment or transport documents shall state:

- The name and address of the certified company and the sender or receiver.
- The name and quantity/volume of the shipped product.

1.1b. Material entering into the recycle system under a GRS claim must be verified by declaring its original source. Collectors or intermediate distributors using materials that are combined from various suppliers to be entered into the GRS material shall be verifiable and identified with documents that state the originating GRS material declaration forms containing:

- Name and address of the certified company;
- Signature of the entity claiming GRS;
- Supplier's name and address with corresponding amount and material pieces;
- Declaration that supplier follows local legislation regarding labour conditions.

This documentation shall be traceable to the material that is transported forward to the next step in the supply chain or finished product.

Criteria related to control of incoming products

2.1. Upon receipt of GRS certified products or raw materials that *are acceptable under GRS*, the company has an obligation to inspect:

- The accompanying documents of the packaging or container to show that the particulars referred to in criteria 1.1 have been provided;

- The general condition and/or quality of the incoming GRS certified products or raw materials that are intended as input in GRS certified products;
- The quantity of the products or raw materials that are intended as input in GRS certified products;
- The supplier of the raw material acts according to local law

The outcome of this inspection must explicitly be stated in the records of the participating certified company. If this inspection raises doubts about compliance with the above, the processing of this product shall not be commenced until conformity is proven. Until that time the product may not be discharged, unless it is separately segregated and tracked. Upon proof of GRS status, it may be integrated into the product stream.

2.2. Producers and/or collectors of the raw material that is to be recycled have an obligation to collect and verify a written declaration from suppliers of GRS raw material (or products) entering the GRS (a *declaration*¹ with reference to the contract).

2.3. Raw material originating from verifiable governmental or private recycling initiatives that have documentation to show that an external audit has taken place, are permitted as inputs into the certified system. *These products are eligible to be declared as GRS declared materials.* Please see www.TextileExchange.org for a detailed list of the accepted initiatives.

2.4. Sellers of GRS products, whether these are pre-consumer or post-consumer products are obliged to collect and verify valid transaction certificates issued by the Certification Body from the previous certified company for all incoming products. On receipt of the products the certified company must check the integrity of the packaging or container and must verify the origin and nature of the products from the information contained in the label/documentation by way of a *declaration*¹. In case of any doubt as to the product's origin it may only be put into processing or packaging after elimination of that doubt.

2.5. In order to keep track of the amount of GRS (raw) material supplied, the certified company has to monitor and record the amounts of GRS (raw) material supplied.

2.6. The company is obliged to keep the original documents for at least five years, which confirm the status of the purchased product: e.g. documents that accompanied the products, and copies of certificates (issued by an accredited certification body).

Criteria related to administration

3.1. The certified company shall ensure that it is possible for the auditor to:

3.1a. Trace the source, origin, nature and quantities and also the use of all material, delivered to the distinctive unit.

3.1b. Trace the source, origin, nature, quantities and destinations and also the use of all products, which have left a distinctive unit.

3.1c. Trace the source, origin, nature, quantities and destinations and also the use of all internal waste.

3.1d. Check the origin, nature and quantities, additives and substances for manufacturing and the composition of the prepared GRS material. This should include the calculation of the ratio between material originating from certified and non-certified sources, the ratio between pre- and post-consumer material and the verification of purchased quantities and sources at the participating suppliers of raw material.

¹ The format for the **declaration** is available from a licensed Certifying Body

3.2. The certified company is obliged to keep records of the nature, quantities, origins and/or destinations (including name and address of the buyers concerned and the dates of delivery) of all products received and delivered.

3.3. The certified company is obliged to keep records of the GRS claims made on shipments, as well as copies of these GRS claims. In case of the producer this includes the claims and any applicable transaction certificates.

3.4 The certified company is obliged to perform and keep records of a mass balance calculation (as described under criteria 5).

Criteria related to quality control

4.1. Certified companies are obliged to maintain a documented GRS system plan that describes the processes, including the points of risks and the flow diagram.

4.2. A system ensuring product quality is developed and implemented by which all raw materials, all half-made products and all products, before, during and after the processing and preparing can be traced and identified. All points of risk where contamination with foreign material or mixing with products contaminated with foreign materials can occur during the process of storage and processing are identified and documented. Preventive measures are documented and taken accordingly.

4.3. Transport used for outgoing GRS products shall be clean to avoid mixture or contamination with products that have not been obtained in accordance with the provisions. When dedicated transport is used, a written declaration from the transport company is sufficient. The declaration shall state that the trucks and vessels are thoroughly cleaned. The trucks have to be checked randomly by the supplier. Reports of the check must be available on request.

4.4. Specifications of raw materials, (*half-finished*) products shall be recorded and available to the relevant personnel.

4.5 Any external storage shall be considered a part of the facility, and rules applicable to the facility shall be applicable to the storage.

Criteria related to the calculation amount of GRS material vs non-GRS material with the use of the mass balance calculation

5.1. In order to become certified to the GRS, by volume or weight, 5% of the material produced has to be from a GRS approved or certified² origin and 100% free from pollutants. The total annual amount of GRS material is derived from a mass balance calculation.

$$\{(\sum X) - (\sum Y + \sum Z)\} + \{(\sum A + \sum B) - (\sum C + \sum D + \sum E)\} = 0$$

$\sum X$ = Annual Sum total of GRS claimed recycled material received

$\sum Y$ = Annual Sum total of claimed GRS materials issued from stock (production, direct export, testing).

$\sum Z$ = Annual sum total GRS claimed stock materials available after utilisation

$\sum A$ = Annual Sum total GRS claimed materials issued for production

$\sum B$ = Sum total non GRS raw materials added for production (accessories+ additional fibres+ embroidery etc)

$\sum C$ = Sum total of process loss during production

² see paragraph 2.3 for permitted standards..

$\sum D$ =Sum total of rejected materials stock available or sold after quality audit
 $\sum E$ =Sum total of end products exported or available at stock

Data will be checked during the annual audit and must be in conformity with the contract. Deviations of > 5% will result in a non-conformity and may lead to exclusion from the GRS Program. Waste percentages should be included into this mass balance calculation. The company shall specify the percentages of pre- and post-consumer waste within the total amount of GRS material.

B) ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Criteria related to the environmental management

6.1 Certified companies must have an environmental policy manual. This manual must name the responsible person within the certified company, as well as list documented procedures to minimise and monitor waste and discharges, including procedures on how the certified company shall act in the event of incidents regarding waste water contamination. It must also contain procedures for training staff on environmental issues regarding waste water and chemical use and disposal. The manual must furthermore contain a program for improvement of aforementioned issues.

6.2 Certified companies must keep full records of the use of chemicals, energy, water consumption and waste water treatment, including the disposal of wastewater.

6.3 Wastewater shall not be disposed without a wastewater treatment system in place. Permitted treatments are:

- Wastewater treatment within the company
- Wastewater treatment by the local authorities

6.4 Wastewater shall not contain any additives and shall be cooled down until a temperature below 40 degrees Celsius/ 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

6.5 Wastewater which has an acidity pH <6 or >9 shall be neutralized until the acidity is between these borders.

C) SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

Social principles are applicable in every part of the certified chain, which starts at the collecting stations. This means that the supply of raw material is not included in this standard. Efforts are being made to have social principles made applicable to (often informal) ways of supplying the collecting stations with used materials destined for recycling.

Criteria related to workers' health and safety

7.1 The certified company must have an up-to-date written risk assessment for safe and healthy working conditions.

7.2 The certified company must have an up-to-date written health, safety and hygiene quality manual including issues of the afore-mentioned risk assessment, e.g. accident and emergency procedures, hygiene procedures, dealing with any identified risks in the working situation.

7.3 The certified company must have a senior member of staff assigned with the responsibility of all health, safety and training issues.

7.4 All workers must wear appropriate protective clothing (protective masks, shoes, gloves) and this clothing must have been bought or rented at the expense of the certified company.

Criteria related to workers' rights

8.1 Forced or bonded labor is not permitted in the certified company.

8.2 Identity papers or (monthly) deposits shall not be held by the certified company.

8.3 Workers have the right to leave the certified company after reasonable notice.

8.4 The certified company shall grant all workers the right to freely join or form trade unions and establish collective bargaining initiatives. Alternatives to trade unions and collective bargaining, such as forming local committees with local government, shall be actively facilitated by the certified company. This is permitted only in countries where trade unions are prohibited.

8.5 Procedures shall be in place, and actions shall be taken where appropriate, to ensure that there is no discrimination against workers' representatives. These representatives shall have access to persons and facilities in order to carry out their representative positions.

8.6 GRS certified companies may not contract children for work. GRS certified companies that have previously employed children shall have developed and / or be actively engaged in initiatives pertaining to educational programs for these children. In practice, this means that the certified company shall provide schooling to children engaged in child labour until the age of 16. Definitions, as defined by the ILO, of a "child" and "child labor", shall be used in this context.

8.7 Persons aged between 16 and 18 shall not be employed at night or operate in hazardous conditions. This conforms to ILO conventions C138 and C182.

8.8 Wages paid for a standard working week shall meet, at a minimum, national legal standards or industry benchmark standards, whichever is higher.

8.9 All workers shall be provided with written and understandable information about their employment conditions (i.e. an employment contract). This information shall include wages and social benefits and insurances that are deducted by the certified company. This information shall be presented to the workers upon starting work. Workers shall also be informed about the details of their wages for the pay period concerned each time that they are paid (i.e. pay slip or registration). Employment must be founded on the basis of a recognised employment relationship established through national law and practice.

8.10 The certified company shall not deduct from wages in any way, except for those deductions permitted or required by national law.

8.11 Working hours shall comply with national laws and benchmark industry standards, whichever affords greater protection.

8.12 The certified company shall apply a 48-hour working week as a maximum, with as a minimum one day of rest per 7-day period.

8.13 The certified company shall apply an overtime policy, in which overtime is voluntary and shall have a maximum of 12 hours per week. Overtime shall be paid at a premium rate.

8.14 The certified company shall apply a recruiting policy that actively prohibits termination or retirement based on race, caste, nationality, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.

8.15 Regulations pertaining to worker rights and obligations, as well as social security laws, policies and regulations shall be upheld, as part of the employment contract. The above shall not be avoided by excessive short-term contract, sub-contracting or any other alternative labor arrangements.

8.16 Abuse, or the threat of abuse, of any form, as well as physical and psychological discipline is prohibited.

Criteria related to training

9.1 Records are kept for health, hygiene and safety training activities and attendees, including topics discussed. These records must be available for all those working in the certified process.

9.2 All workers in the certified company must have gone through health and safety training. Records must be available for this.

Criteria related to hygiene, hazards and first aid

10.1 The certified company must have documented hygienic instructions displayed clearly.

10.2 Emergency procedures must be clearly displayed and be understandable to all workers.

10.3 Warning signs must be used with each potential hazard.

10.4 First aid kits must be readily available when necessary.

10.5 Workers must have access to washing facilities, clean drinking water and dining area.

10.6 Dormitories or on-site living facilities must have running water and hygienic sanitation.

D) LABEL GRADING AND LOGO USE

Criteria related to label grades and logo use³

11.1 Finished or half-finished products containing recycled raw material may label products as "Global Recycle Standard" product. The product shall be categorized based on the amount of pre- and/or post-consumer recycled raw material the product contains. This amount shall be expressed in a percentage (%) with a minimum of 5%. Furthermore a product specification shall indicate the percentages of pre- and post-consumer content.

Labelling of the product shall always contain the following wording:

³ Annex A shows examples of correct product labels.

"Made with recycled -raw material- X% pre-consumer and X% post-consumer"

Where:

- a. Raw material: the raw material used shall be specified.
- b. Pre-consumer and post-consumer percentages shall be specified.

11.2 Certified products shall be additionally labelled with "Certification Body+project number", whereby the project number is a number issued by the Certification Body to certified companies.

11.3 Products may additionally be labelled with the logo of the Global Recycle Standard (shown below) as well as reference to www.TextileExchange.org. Reference to the logo in informational material such as, but not limited to, brochures and presentations must be approved by Textile Exchange in writing.



E) GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Criteria related to inspections

12.1 The company seeking certification must give the certification body, for inspection purposes, access to all parts of the unit and all premises, as well as to the accounts and relevant supporting documents. They must provide the certification body with any information deemed necessary for the purposes of the inspection.

When requested by the certification body, the company seeking certification shall submit the results of its own voluntary inspection and sampling programs.

12.2 The certification body must make a full physical inspection of the production/preparation units or other premises at least once a year. Moreover, the certification body has the right to carry out unannounced inspection visits. The visits shall cover in particular those holdings or situations where specific risk or exchange of products may exist.

F) GLOSSARY

Foreign material:	Any adherent matter that is not parent material of the raw material used in the recycling process.
Pre-Consumer Waste:	Material diverted from the waste stream during the manufacturing process. Excluded is the reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable to being reclaimed within the same process.
Post-Consumer Waste:	Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product that can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of materials from the distribution chain.
Raw material:	Pre- or post-consumer waste/used product destined to be recycled in a recycling process.

Annex A

In this Annex you will find a set of examples of product labels. These are intended as examples only. For logos on informational material, the logo use and reference to be approved by Textile Exchange in writing.

Product labels

With logo:



Product labels without logo:

