

Responsible Wool Standard 2.0 and the Responsible Mohair Standard Draft Terms of Reference

Updated, July 2019

Introduction

Textile Exchange has developed a set of standards addressing key preferred fibers and materials or key sustainability or animal welfare concerns for the textile industry. These are: Organic Content Standard, Recycled Claim Standard, Global Recycled Standard, Responsible Down Standard, and Responsible Wool Standard

Each standard has been developed in response to a particular need identified by the textile industry. They share a number of common overarching goals supporting the delivery of the Textile Exchange vision.

- Drive an increase in the adoption of preferred fibers.
- Enable collective impact and action across the industry.
- Increase integrity throughout the value chain via the adoption of standards and certifications.
- Raise awareness about the positive, meaningful changes accomplished.

Goal & Objectives

The goal of the Responsible Wool Standard is to ensure that wool comes from farms with a progressive approach to managing their land, and from sheep that have been treated responsibly.

The goal of the Responsible Mohair Standard is to ensure that mohair comes from farms with a progressive approach to managing their land, and from angora goats that have been treated responsibly.

The objectives of the Responsible Wool and the Responsible Mohair Standards are to:

- Reward and influence the wool industry to incentivize practices that respect the humane treatment of sheep and angora goats.
By recognizing and rewarding the best practices of farmers the aim is to broaden the adoption of these practices more broadly as well as to provide a mechanism to demonstrate the role that wool and mohair can play as preferred materials.
- Education and development of the supply chain in order to drive continuous improvement of best practices.
The RWS/RMS is a mechanism for disseminating information on new developments in the field of animal welfare. Through the revision process, new developments are incorporated into the standard. Recommendations are included in the standard to signal intent to the supply chain on likely new requirements.
- Provide companies with a tool to know what is in their products, and to make accurate claims.

Consumer demand for higher animal welfare products, both food and non-food, is an increasing global trend. By providing a system for identify preservation of certified material consumers are able to make informed choices and show their support for higher animal welfare products.

- Provide a tool for the industry to better understand animal welfare at the farm level.
As a global standard applicable to a range of different production systems standards and practices will vary. The RWS/RMS plays an important role as a tool to communicate animal welfare practices to relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure strong chain of custody for certified materials as they move through the supply chain.
Providing a chain of custody mechanism allows for a higher degree of confidence in claims.

Scope

Animal Welfare

Textile Exchange has developed an Animal Welfare Framework setting out desired outcomes and principles across a comprehensive set of animal welfare categories:

- Nutrition
- Living Environment
- Animal Management
- Transport and Handling
- Management, Plans and Procedures

This aligns with the Five Provisions framework for animal welfare. The intention is for this framework to be used as a tool to guide the development and revisions of Textile Exchange animal welfare focused standards. These Terms of Reference are focused on the revision of the RWS and the finalization of the RMS. The Animal Welfare Framework can be used to create new standards aligned with the RWS and the RMS.

Responsible Wool Standard

Breed: No restriction on breeds.

Geography: No restriction.

Farming system: The current version of the standard is applicable to farmed sheep only. There is a need to adapt the standard to be applicable to nomadic and semi nomadic herding systems. This will be developed and piloted as a separate project and the certification procedures will be determined by the standard scheme policies. Any variations on applicable requirements will be guided by the animal welfare framework to ensure that the desired outcomes are still met. The IWG will be requested to review and approve any adapted version for nomadic and semi nomadic farming systems.

Responsible Mohair Standard

Breed: Applicable to angora goats only

Geography: No restriction

Farming system: See RWS.

Land Management

The RWS and the RMS contain a basic set of Land Management requirements addressing:

- Soil
- Biodiversity
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers

Further work is needed to the certification procedures to enable recognition of other land management standards and initiatives.

Social

The RWS does not currently address social impact on farm or in the supply chain. Stakeholder feedback has requested that the standard also address social impact on farm.

Chain of Custody

Both RWS and the RMS provide chain of custody for the certified wool through to the final product using the Content Claim Standard.

Application

On Farm

- Animal Welfare
- Land Management
- Social (TBD)
- Chain of custody (where applicable)

Slaughter

The RWS and the RMS only address on farm activities. Whilst on farm slaughter and euthanasia is addressed off farm slaughter is outside of the scope of the standard. A stand-alone slaughter module has been developed which can be used in conjunction with the RWS and the CCS. The slaughter requirements and the certification procedures will be reviewed by the IWG.

Supply chain

1. Applies to all supply chain members from the first raw material processor through to the seller in the final business-to-business transaction.
2. Covers the input verification of the raw material and chain of custody (i.e. segregation, identification, and volume reconciliation) of the certified materials at each certified site.
3. Does NOT allow for blending of certified material and non-certified material of the same type.
 - a. The RWS / RMS logo may be used for products that contain at least 5% certified content.
4. The social and environmental issues of the supply chain will not be addressed through this standard.

Needs Justification

- There are animals used for the production of wool that are not being treated with respect to the Five Freedoms.
- A significant proportion of apparel wool comes from sheep that have been subjected to mulesing.
- Brands are feeling pressure from Animal Welfare and Animal Rights groups to address the issues.
- The environmental aspects of land use for fiber production is increasingly under scrutiny.
- Grazing land for wool production accounts for significant land use. Recent research offers evidence that properly managed grazing lands can have positive land use impacts through improved soil health and drainage and may actually mitigate GHG emissions through carbon sequestration.
- There is an industry need for a chain of custody tool that verifies whether wool have come from sheep that have been treated responsibly and raised on land that is managed sustainably.
- Wool is sourced from various regions in the world, with a range of practices. One common tool is needed to verify practices across this range.
- A global standard aligning the needs of many stakeholders can create a common language and establish a common set of expectations.
- Prior to the development of the RWS there had not been any global third party standards, applicable for the textile industry that fully address animal welfare issues and chain of custody.

Unintended consequences and assumptions

- The standard is only focused on animal welfare and land management at the farm level. Some processing activities may have significant environmental impacts. By not identifying or addressing these, a potential unintended consequence of the RWS is that consumers assume that the responsible practices also extend to the supply chain processing.
- The scope of the RWS is limited to farm level animal welfare and social impacts only in the first version based on the assumption that it would be easier to achieve initial uptake of the standard with a more narrow focus as well as the assumption that in many cases the supply chain impacts (social, environmental and chemical processing impacts) are addressed through other standards and initiatives (e.g. ZDHC, Bluesign, OekoTex, Social and Labour standards).
- The RWS strategy is based on the key assumption that brand demand for certified wool is a key mechanism for driving the adoption of the standard.
- Where the threshold of the standard is set can have big implications on adoption (as well as on the potential impact.) If the threshold is set to high, especially considering the limited influence the users of a by-product can have on the meat industry as is the case in the coarse wool industry, adoption would reduce. If the threshold is set too low, meaningful change is not likely to be achieved with the potential for repercussions for the credibility of the standard. To ensure that a consistent threshold is applied across Textile Exchange Animal Welfare standards an Animal Welfare Framework identifying the key desired outcomes and principles that have to be met across all species standards.

Risk Assessment/Risk Plan

To be completed

Risk assessment and the Risk Plan form part of the Textile Exchange Assurance and Certification Procedures. A summary will be provided here.