

GRS (Version 4.0)

- GRS is a private standard, was originally developed by Control Union Certifications (CU) in 2008, and ownership was passed to Textile Exchange on January 1, 2011. The current version is 4.0 and it will be revised for the next version in 2021.
- The goal of the GRS is to increase the use of recycled materials in products and reduce/eliminate the harm caused by its production.
- Aims to verify the presence and amount of recycling claimed material in a final product and tracks the flow of the raw material from supplier to B2B transaction.
- Uses chain of custody requirements as per Content Claim Standard (CCS V2.0)
- Also, cover the certification of the raw material itself, address other inputs or accessories, environmental aspects of processing, social or legal compliance issues.


Who can be certified –

- The full supply chain of the recycled fiber from material recycling to traders of finished products can be certified. Retailers can be certified voluntarily.
- Certifiable products must contain at least 20% recycled material. For example, fiber, yarns, fabrics, garments, fashion textile accessories (carried or worn), toys, home textiles, mattresses, bedding products, etc.

Origin of Raw Materials –

- GRS does not establish additional or own criteria for the reclaimed material.
- Recycle fibers can be obtained from sources certified according to GRS.
- All kinds of fibers can be used, as e. g. Cotton, Mod-acrylic, Poly-amide (nylon), Polyester, Polyethylene, Polyethylene terephthalate (PET), Poly-lactic acid (PLA), Polypropylene, Polystyrene, Polyurethane, etc.
- Blending is allowed as per GRS requirements.
- Labelling options according to logo and labelling guideline:

Labelling and Claim Guide -

GRS	50% Recycle Material	Recycle Material Type
Recycle Raw Material Percentage	For any kind of GRS labeling, 50% recycle claimed must be contained in the product.	Pre-Consumer or Post-Consumer
Label to be used		
Restrictions	For using the logo must have to take permission from the respected certification body by the label release form.	

Segregation & Identification in case of companies which produce both recycle and conventional –

- The operator applying for GRS certification needs to set up a good system for separating and properly identifying recycle products from other products. This applies to the reception of the raw material, as well as all steps of processing, storage rooms, etc. up to the sale.
- The best separation, of course, is in space: separate warehouses and production lines of recycled product.
- However, this may often not be possible; in this case, you can separate in time: GRS goods will be processed at the same machines for any other claim but at different times. It then has to be assured that relevant equipment needs to be cleaned systematically before processing GRS goods. The company has to take adequate measures to prevent contamination during transport, storage, and production.
- GRS products must be identified and tracked as they move through production. This may include, but is not limited to, direct labelling of GRS products, machines, storage vessels, or storage areas.
- Labels and signs must be visible and understandable by all workers operating in the area.

Traceability –

- As a minimum, traceability must be assured one step back and one step forth at each

stage of the supply chain.

Training of Staff –

- Workers need to be trained regarding the requirements of the standard.
- The facility must appoint a responsible person for the certification.

Record keeping of GRS Goods –

- GRS units need a functioning and comprehensible system for documenting and identifying GRS goods.
- Written procedures and working instructions must be in place to ensure the integrity and identity of GRS products.
- The operator has to keep full documentation of quantity, origin, and flow of goods, Supplier certificates, waybills, reception notes, processing records, storage books, TCs, annual volume reconciliation, and invoices have to be kept. All these records have to refer to the GRS condition of the product. All records need to be retained for a minimum of at least 5 years.
- GRS units need a good bookkeeping system, allowing for evaluation of quantities purchased (raw material vs. quantities of the finished product sold) to check mass balance calculations. For each production step, the records must demonstrate the balance between the inputs and the outputs containing the declared final amount of Claimed Material. All calculations are done based on the weight of the materials and must also take into account stock levels and rejected goods.
- Transport routes and transport means must be documented.

Social Requirements –

- Certified organizations must have a clear set of policies to ensure compliance with the social requirements of the GRS including records of commitment for those policies and procedures including -
 1. Forced labor, Bonded labor, Indentured and prison labor
 2. Child labor,
 3. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining,
 4. Discrimination, Harassment, and abuse,
 5. Health and safety,
 6. Wages, benefits, and terms of employment and
 7. Working hours.
- The certified organization must have practice and written records of all policies and procedures.

Environmental Requirements –

- The certified organizations must have an EMS manual (Environmental Management System) in place also must have a management representative for monitoring the EMS manual related issues.
- Must have a mechanism to remain up-to-date with applicable local legal requirements.
- Must have a plan to target and reach meaningful environmental improvements across all indicators.
- Must have the procedures and records for the training of relevant staff in environmental issues.
- Energy uses related requirements:
 1. Must monitor and meet all relevant legal requirements related to energy use,
 2. Must have the relevant, up-to-date permits shall be held and compliance maintained,
 3. Must have tracking and record-keeping of energy consumption and on a monthly basis,
 4. Must set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in energy use and review progress annually.
- Water uses related requirements:
 1. The Certified Organization Must monitor and meet all relevant legal requirements related to water use,
 2. Must have Relevant, up-to-date permits and compliance maintained,
 3. Must have Measurement and record-keeping of water usage undertaken on a monthly basis,
 4. Must set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in water use and review progress annually.
- Wastewater or Effluent related requirements:
 1. The Certified Organization must monitor and meet all relevant legal requirements related to wastewater/effluent, with corresponding record keeping.
 2. Must have relevant, up-to-date permits shall be held and compliance maintained.
 3. Must have a drainage plan in place with a general understanding of wastewater flow direction and discharge points.
 4. Must have identification of the contaminants and wastewater quality parameters

(listed in Appendix 4) and their flow direction.

5. Must have a system in place to ensure that wastewater receives proper treatment, either on or off-site, to meet minimum requirements before entering the water stream, see Appendix D including - The test report must not be older than 6 months, must be conducted by trained personnel using equipment as directed by the test guidelines and the report must cover all legal requirements and those set out in Appendix D.
6. If a company elects to treat wastewater in an off-site facility, the facility shall meet the following requirements: - the facility has Water leaving the off-site facility shall meet minimum requirements before entering the water stream, see Appendix D. Where national and local requirements are more stringent, these limit values supersede the requirements listed in Appendix D. The facility must have a capacity adequate for the volume of wastewater sent from the Certified Organization.

→ Air emission-related requirements:

1. The Certified Organization must meet all relevant legal requirements (including monitoring) related to air emissions, with corresponding record keeping.
2. Must have Relevant, up-to-date permits shall be held and compliance maintained.
3. Must have an inventory of main point source emissions to air is maintained and potential for fugitive emissions shall be addressed.
4. Must be regular maintenance of any equipment containing Ozone Depleting Substances or any other potential air pollutants.
5. Must set and meet targets for meaningful improvements in emissions to air and review progress annually.

→ Waste management related requirements:

1. The certified organization must meet all the relevant legal requirements related to waste management.
2. Must have relevant, up-to-date permits shall be held and compliance maintained.
3. Waste contractors must have appropriate permits.
4. Must have Hazardous and non-hazardous waste must be segregated and employee awareness and training provided on handling and segregation of wastes.
5. Must have Inventory, management, storage, and transportation procedures for all waste streams must be in place, including minimizing safety concerns to the environment and health.

Certification Widget – GRS

6. No on-site waste burning or uncontrolled waste landfilling may be undertaken.
7. Must look for and implement ways to minimize waste production, and increase re-use or recycling.
8. Must measure the amount of waste produced and keep corresponding records.
9. Must set and meet targets for meaningful reductions in waste production, improvements in waste management, and review progress annually.

Chemical Requirements –

- The certified organization must have a Mechanism to monitor and meet all relevant legal requirements related to chemical management.
- Must have a dedicated and competent staff person responsible for managing the Certified Organization's use of chemicals.
- Must have procedures and records for the training of relevant staff in chemical management, and where necessary, training to properly manage the CMS.
- Must have complete information on all input suppliers, including the address and key contacts.
- Must have Accurate lists of all chemical inputs used in all products; each input shall have a complete Safety Data Sheet (SDS) available in the language(s) used by workers in the facility and English. The validity is not more than 3 years. Information shall be available for a minimum of 5 years.
- Must submit a signed document that confirms their commitment to comply with the GRS Environmental Requirements outlined.
- Must submit all relevant policy documents and training records referencing the procedures in place to ensure environmental management.

Labelling –

- When a GRS logo is used, a reference to the Certification Body that has certified the goods (e.g., Certification Body's name and/or logo) and a reference to the certified organization (e.g., organization's name and/or certification number).
- Brands and retailers may only have logos applied to goods that have been certified to the end of the supply chain (incl. last step of ownership).
- Individual components of a product may be identified as certified to the GRS only in a manner that makes it completely clear that it is only the identified component that contains recycled material, and not the whole product. For example, only the upper of a shoe is made with 100% recycled cotton.

Procedure –

→ Please check the GSCS website (<https://gscsintl.com/>) for all relevant standards, procedures, and manuals.

Transaction Certificates –

→ Transaction certificate verifies the goods being shipped from one organization to the next conforming to a given standard.

→ Certified entities purchasing recycle fibers, as well as such which purchase GRS goods must receive and maintain transaction certificates (=TCs, certificates of inspection), for the whole quantity purchased (per GRS criteria). As long as goods will be labelled and sold as GRS, TCs are also obliged for the wholesale (excluded are retailers).

→ TCs are issued by the certification body which is in charge of the suppliers' product, based on copies of invoices, packing lists, and shipping documents, as well as TCs from previous suppliers. In special cases, TCs can cover several deliveries. The maximum amount of time a single TC may cover is 3 months.