

TEXTILE EXCHANGE ORGANIC CONTENT STANDARD QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Q: What entities in a supply chain must be certified to the Organic Content Standard (OCS)?

A: The OCS requires all organizations in a supply chain to be certified beginning with post-harvest processing sites through to the seller in the final business-to-business transaction. The retailer of a finished organic content product does not need to be certified. Examples of the first post-harvest processing sites can include:

- > Ginning for cotton
- > Retting for bast fibres
- > Boiling and washing cocoons for silk
- > Scouring for wools and other animal fibres (respective grading if this step is undertaken before scouring and not already covered by the organic farming certification)



Q: Does the OCS include criteria to define organic content?

A: The OCS does not define organic content. It provides third-party verification of organic material content in a product. It does recognize the output of organic farms that have been certified by an independent third party to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), Regulation (EC) 834/2007, or other organic standards as approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards. Buyers of the OCS product are responsible to set any requirements on the specific organic standards to which the input material should be certified.

Q: What types of products can be certified to the OCS?

A: The OCS may be used with any product that contains non-food organic material. The OCS applies to products that contain from 5% to 100% organic material.

Q: The Content Claim Standard (CCS) is referenced in the OCS. What is the relationship of the two standards?

A: Certification to OCS includes compliance with the requirements of the CCS. The CCS is the chain of custody foundation for all Textile Exchange standards. The standard defines, among other things, the operational content of a management system to maintain full transparency of materials as they flow through the supply chain. This includes record keeping of inputs and outputs of each production step, labeling and identification and segregation of materials.



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Q: Do retailers need to be certified to sell OCS certified products?

A: No, the OCS requires certification from post-harvest operations to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction. Since the final sale by the retailer is a business-to-consumer sale, the retailer is exempt.

Q: The standard mentions transaction certificates. What are these and why are they required?

A: All Organic Materials entering the supply chain shall have a Transaction Certificate (TC) issued by the certification body. TCs are required to document each time that OCS/CCS product changes ownership. The seller must apply for a TC with the certification body. NSF, as the certification body, is responsible to ensure the seller has met all the certification requirements prior to that sale.

It is the responsibility of the consignee of any claimed material and CCS product to inspect the packaging and verify the appropriate information is included in the product marking and corresponding documentation (e.g. invoice, bill of lading, TC) upon receipt of the certified product.

Q: Are their special procedures for storage of organic materials as they move through the supply chain?

A: Storage must be segregated for organic materials and CCS products and lots must be easily identified. Procedures must be in place to prevent commingling or substitution of the organic materials and CCS products with other materials or products.

Q: When is an organization recognized as certified to the CCS?

A: An Organization is considered certified after they have undergone an assessment by NSF International (e.g. document review and On-Site Audit) and is determined by the NSF to operate in accordance with the CCS. Certified organizations are issued a CCS Scope Certificate (SC) once a certification decision is made. This certification is renewed on an annual basis. An organization producing CCS product must have a valid SC at the time of production for products to be considered certified.

More questions? Contact us at sustainability@nsf.org.

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