



## Public information overview for Textile Exchange program

The generic rules outlined below ensure that the public can access relevant information to instill confidence in CTI certification activities.

Following information is available on CTI website:

- Audit process;
- Processes for granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring or withdrawing certification as well as expanding and reducing the scope of certification;
- List of certification activities (certification schemes);
- A description of the means by which CTI obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to clients;

CTI obtains financial support by providing inspection, audit, assessment and certification services. The fees charged to applicants and to clients for Textile Exchange Certification mainly include certification audit fee, travel fee for auditors and Transaction Certificate Issuance fee.

- A description of the rights and duties of applicants and clients, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the CTI's name and certification mark and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;  
Please refer to 3. Obligations, 4. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality and 5. Limitation of Liability of Service Agreement.
- Processes for handling requests for information;
- Processes for handling complaints and appeals.

To maintain fair competition, CTI does not advise publishing the list of certified clients on its website. However, interested parties can obtain this information, as well as details regarding suspensions and withdrawals, by contacting the local certification entity.

Each local certification entity provides instructions on how interested parties can verify the authenticity of a certificate. The primary method is to contact the specific local certification entity that issued the certificate.



## GRS&RCS Certification Process

### Section 1: Introduction

Textile Exchange collaborates with its members on a global scale to facilitate industry transformation in preferred fibers, integrity and standards, and responsible supply networks. The organization identifies and disseminates best practices related to farming, materials, processing, traceability, and product end-of-life to minimize the textile industry's impact on the world's water, soil, air, and human population. Additionally, Textile Exchange is the owner and administrator of several standards including the Content Claim Standard (CCS), Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), Organic Content Standard (OCS), Responsible Down Standard (RDS), and Responsible Wool Standard (RWS). These standards ensure chain of custody for preferred materials and provide labeling tools for final product claims.

### Section 2: Applicable Scope

Different standard will have different product requirements as defined below:

Standard	Product Requirement
Recycled Claim Standard (RCS)	Any product that contains at least 5% Recycled Material
Global Recycled Standard (GRS)	Any product that contains at least 20% Recycled Material

Please consult the table below to identify the parties within the supply chain that are eligible to apply for certification.

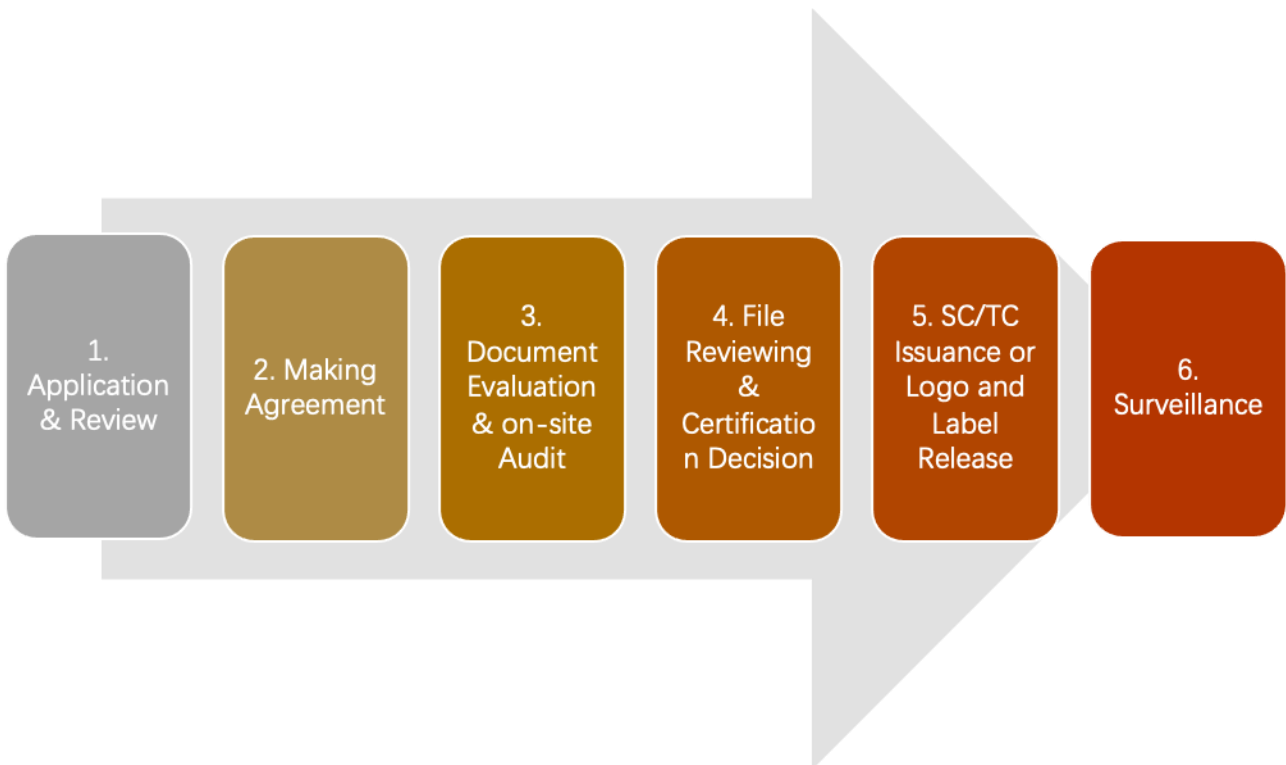
Applicable Standard	Role in the Supply Chain	Applicable to apply?
RCS, GRS	Manufacturer	Yes
RCS, GRS	Recycled Collector/ Concentrator	Applying for RCS/GRS certification is optional and may require further verification.
RCS, GRS	Subcontractor	Subcontractors deemed high risk based on a CTI risk assessment will undergo an audit, while those classified as low risk may be excluded from the audit. However, core production operations are not exempt from on-site audits.
	Handler	Individuals classified as high risk handlers via a CTI risk assessment are required to undergo an audit.
	Warehouse with finished products	Warehouses that are contracted to perform only shipping or repacking tasks do not need to undergo on-site audits.
	Trader	If traders engage solely in post-production activities with OCS

		product and their annual turnover is below 10,000 USD, they are not required to obtain Certification. If traders do not (re-) pack or (re-) label RCS/GRS products, they are exempt from the certification obligation as long as their annual turnover is less than 10,000 USD.
	Distributor/ brand owner	There is no need to apply if the distributor or brand owner sells directly to the end consumer without any relabeling or repacking.
	Complex or special case such as superstore, supermarket	Please contact CTI to obtain information on applicability.

### 3. Certification Steps

The certification service is based on an annual cycle. When the certification requirements are fulfilled, the certification can be issued or renewed and the applicable logo or label can be used according to Textile Exchange Standard Claims Policy.

The certification steps are as below:



#### Step 1: Application & Review

To enhance your comprehension of the certification process and standard prerequisites, CTI will dispatch the subsequent documents. Kindly peruse them carefully and feel free to reach out to CTI for any clarifications. Ensure that you truthfully complete the Application Form to enable CTI to comprehend your situation better and offer a fitting service proposal.



- The latest version of the applicable standard
- Standard Claims Policy
- Standard Logo Use Specifications
- Application Form
- Certification Process
- Frequently Asked Questions

After receiving your application details, CTI will assess the possibility of certifying your products. If certification is possible, CTI will offer a service agreement. However, if certification is not feasible, CTI will provide clear feedback on the reasons why your application cannot be fulfilled. The reasons may include but are not limited to the following:

- Certification ban from Textile Exchange
- Geographical location or risk reason to make certification impossible
- Lack of qualified personnel to meet your specific requirement of the certification request

### **Step 2: Making Agreement**

CTI will provide a quote based on your role in the supply chain and the information you have provided. The quote will cover document evaluation, on-site audit, report review, and certification decision. Any additional expenses for imperative audit time, sampling, analysis, Transaction Certificate or Scope Certificate renewal that are not included in the evaluation plan will not be covered in the initial quotation. If you agree to the quote, CTI will send you a Service Agreement along with other documents such as Standard Claims Policy, Standard Logo Use Specifications, Certification Process and Application Form. By signing the Service Agreement, you agree to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in it and in the aforementioned documents. These documents together form a set of documents for the certification contract.

### **Step 3: Document Evaluation & On-site Audit**

In the first assessment, all activities falling under the certification's purview will be scrutinized to verify your adherence to the standard's criteria.

- 1) Upon completion of the Service Agreement, CTI will provide you with activity-specific forms. It is imperative that you truthfully complete these forms based on your current situation. The audit team will be assigned to your file and will gather all necessary information for the on-site audit. Once your application has been processed, CTI will notify you of the scheduled on-site audit. A document checklist will be sent to you as a reminder to have all relevant documents available during the audit.
- 2) Your system plan will serve as the basis for conducting an on-site audit that encompasses all operational activities related to your certified products. The audit will entail the following steps:
  - Opening meeting
  - Document evaluation



- On-site facility tour
- Management and employee interviews
- Closing meeting

If an analysis is required, your representative must be present during any sampling. CTI will determine the nature of the analysis and select the laboratory to conduct it. If necessary, CTI may leave a sample at your facility for counter-analysis. In this case, you must send the sample to a third-party laboratory designated by CTI and pay for the analysis-related fees directly.

During the closing meeting, all non-conformities discovered will be documented in the on-site report. To maintain certification, all non-conformities must be fully corrected within the specified timeframe according to standard requirements. The severity of non-conformities will be categorized as follows:

- **Critical non-conformity:** it represents serious failures to meet the fundamental principles of the Standard
- **Major non-conformity:** it occurs if either alone or in combination with further non-conformities relating to other requirements, they result in, or are likely to result in, a fundamental or systematic failure to achieve the objectives of the standards system.
- **Minor non-conformity:** it occurs when a single observed lapse has been identified in a procedure required as part of your management system.

To ensure certification, a plan for correcting non-conformities must be created, outlining the root cause, corrective and preventive actions taken, and evidence of correction. Failure to correct non-conformities within the allotted time will result in consequences for certification. The severity and nature of the non-conformity, as well as its frequency and risk of fraud, will determine the specific consequences.

- Continuation of certification under conditions
- Reduction of the scope of certification
- Suspension of the certification
- Withdrawal of the certification

Once the correction plan and evidence have been submitted to CTI, the organization may need to undertake additional activities to confirm that the non-conformities have been corrected:

- An on-site follow-up audit
- Further sampling
- Additional document evaluation

#### **Step 4: File Reviewing & Certification Decision**

After reviewing the audit report and correction evidences, CTI will provide certification results within 2 months. If the outcome is favorable, you will receive a Scope Certificate. However, if the result is negative, CTI will notify you via email and explain the reason. In such an event, you can reapply for certification by returning to step 1.

#### **Step 5: SC/TC Issuance or Logo and Label Release**

Certification documents will only be issued after, or concurrent with, the following:



- Certification requirements have been fulfilled
- The decision to grant the certification has been made

Once you have a valid scope certificate, you may request transaction certificates for your shipments. If your buyer consents, you can apply for either a single TC per shipment or a single TC for multiple shipments. Only those with a valid scope certificate are authorized to mention the certification on their certified products. Before using logos and label claims, they must be evaluated and approved by CTI.

### **Step 6: Surveillance**

Typically, Scope certificates are valid for up to one year, unless stated otherwise in the relevant standard's procedures. CTI will send a reminder to renew your certificate three months before it expires, taking into account the certification renewal lead time. Your annual certification fee will be adjusted by CTI based on the information you provided or collected. During the annual surveillance period of your certified activity, we carry out a surveillance plan that includes:

- On-Site audit(s) surveillance
- Remote audit(s) surveillance
- Document evaluation, if modifications are implemented on documents that were checked during initial evaluation, or in case of new products to be certified.
- Annual analysis plan (when applicable)
- Unannounced On-Site audit(s) (notice of no more than 48 hours may be given in advance of an unannounced audit)
- In the special case of Collectors/Concentrators of Reclaimed Material, CTI will undertake an additional verification or physical inspection in order to check the authenticity of Reclaimed Material.

To ensure compliance, surveillance is carried out according to the certification scope. Therefore, if there are any modifications to the details provided on the application form or the scope certificate, please inform CTI promptly. These alterations may comprise, but are not restricted to, the following:

- the legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership,
- organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision-making or technical staff),
- modifications to the product or the production method,
- contact address and production sites,
- scope of operations,
- major changes to the quality management system and processes; and the environment and social impact of the certified organization caused by incidents or events (if applicable to the audit scope)

### **Section 4: Certification Renewal**

In the event that no non-conformity is detected during surveillance, CTI will provide you with updated certification documents upon granting the certification decision. However, if a non-conformity arises through surveillance or any other means, CTI will assess and address it accordingly. Depending on the correction plan and severity of the identified non-conformities, CTI may take appropriate measures:

1. Continuation of certification under conditions
- Increased surveillance through new audit or additional analysis



- A deadline to allow you to implement corrective actions
- If the necessary requirements are not met within the specified timeframe, CTI will initiate the suspension or revocation process of certification and revise the certification paperwork accordingly.

## 2. Suspension certification or certification on hold

Certification will be interrupted for a certain period or until the product is compliant, which may result in the suspension of your certificate if the product is not yet certified. The suspension may apply to one or more products or batches. To resolve any non-conformity, you must submit the required documentation within the given timeframe.

During the suspension period, the product(s) affected cannot be referred to as certified until the non-conformity is resolved. Additionally, these products will be excluded from your certification document.

## 3. Reduction of the certification scope

This means that the certification for a portion of the products or batch will be immediately and permanently revoked. The affected products will no longer be able to reference the certification and will be downgraded in the traditional circuit. This decision may be made due to non-compliance identified during an on-site audit or at your request if you choose not to use the certification for certain products (cancellation). In any case, the products will be removed from the certificate without prior notification.

## 4. Withdrawal of certification

Your products' certification will be cancelled immediately, and you are no longer permitted to refer to it. Additionally, your Service Agreement with CTI will be terminated. Any product lacking a certificate or whose certificate has been suspended/withdrawn cannot make any mention of certification in any communication materials. The suspension or withdrawal of your conformity documents renders them invalid, and it is your responsibility to inform clients that your products are no longer certified and to cease using certification documents.

## **Section 5: Complaints and Appeals**

If you have any grievances about our services or wish to challenge a certification decision made by CTI, you may file a complaint. CTI assures you that we will promptly acknowledge receipt of your complaints and appeals and handle them in accordance with our internal procedure. We guarantee the confidentiality of any non-public information related to your complaint or appeal.

### 1. Complaint

The CTI Impartiality Committee requires all complaints to be submitted in writing, along with supporting materials, and signed and sealed by the person in charge of the complainant party. Anonymous complaints are generally not accepted. Once received, the committee will confirm whether the complaint pertains to certification activities and, if so, will address it accordingly. The complainant party will receive confirmation of receipt of their formal complaint. For complaints related to certification activities, an investigation will be initiated by the CTI Impartiality Committee. Upon completion of the investigation, any findings and actions taken will be communicated to the complainant party as appropriate.

### 2. Appeal

The complainant party's authorized representative must sign and seal the written appeal, which should be submitted to CTI within 10 working days of receiving the certification decision. Once received, CTI's



Impartiality Committee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing. The committee may convene a hearing, gather statements from both parties, conduct on-site investigations, and consult with experts to make a judgment. CTI will follow its established procedures for handling appeals and communicate the outcome in writing to the appellant.

3. Channels for Complaints and Appeals

E-mail: [iverson.lee@cti-cert.com](mailto:iverson.lee@cti-cert.com)

### **Section 6 Mark and Logo**

To comply with your certification, the CTI mark may be utilized. If there are any changes in the scope, suspension, or withdrawal of certification, references to it must be updated. Any incorrect references or deceptive use of marks will result in actions taken, including but not limited to addressing the issue:

- Corrective actions,
- Withdrawal of certificate,
- Publication of the transgression,
- Legal action.

The regulations pertaining to marks and logos can be accessed on the CTI website or obtained upon request.





## Audit Agenda

### 1. Opening Meeting

The auditor(s) will arrange a meeting with facility management or the designated contact person mentioned in the Application Form to discuss and go over the audit agenda and procedures. During this meeting, we will provide you with an overview of the audit scope, the parties involved, and the estimated duration of the audit. It is important to note that we will emphasize the expectations regarding transparency and anti-bribery as well.

### 2. Facility Tour

The auditor(s) will conduct a comprehensive site visit that encompasses all areas covered by the organization's business license. The assessment will include evaluating procedures, sampling certified products, and examining the processing activities related to certified products. The certification requirements that apply to each relevant process will be assessed during the audit. In cases where multiple sites or geographic locations are involved in the manufacturing processes, visits will be made to these sites or locations to gather objective evidence.

### 3. Document Review

Please ensure that all the necessary documents listed in the Document Checklist are present on-site. The auditor(s) will choose a selection of documents for review as samples.

### 4. Management & Worker Interview

To assess the effective implementation of the Standard, interviews will be conducted with both management and workers. These interviews aim to gain insights into the implementation process.

### 5. Closing Meeting

All audit findings will be communicated directly to the facility management. Any identified non-compliance(s) discovered during the audit must be addressed within the specified timeframe. Failure to rectify these non-compliance(s) may result in the suspension or withdrawal of the scope certificate. For new applicants, a scope certificate will not be issued until the necessary corrective actions are taken. Certification to the Standard can only be granted after a new audit has been conducted and deemed satisfactory.

**Important Note:** It is crucial to ensure that all the necessary documents listed in the Document Checklist are readily available on-site. Additionally, it is required that all relevant personnel, including the Production Manager and Shipping Manager, be present on the scheduled audit date.



## **Certification information sharing procedure**

- 1) All requests for sharing certification information should be forwarded to the Textile Exchange Certification Scheme Manager at CTI for review and coordination.
  
- 2) Upon receiving a request for certification information sharing, the Coordinator will assist the requester by providing guidance on completing the "Approval Form to Obtain Certification Information".
  
- 3) Upon receiving the fully completed "Application Form to Obtain Certification Information," the Coordinator will automatically approve requests from Textile Exchange, accredited certification bodies, authorized accreditation bodies (the lists of which can be found on <http://textileexchange.org/>), brands, and retailers to obtain the requested information. However, for other requestors, they must not only fill out the "Application Form to Obtain Certification Information" but also obtain written approval from the certified organization. Once the necessary documentation requirements are met, the Coordinator will share the certification information with the requestors within 2 working days and update the "Tracking Log for Information Sharing" accordingly.



## **Appeal and complaint handling**

### **1. Scope**

- 1.1 Complaints: Any written expression of dissatisfaction directed to CTI or the organization certified by CTI (excluding appeals) by an organization or individual, seeking a response. (Note: Dissatisfaction may encompass various issues such as product quality problems, safety incidents, environmental pollution incidents within the certified organization, incorrect usage of scope certificates and certification marks by certified organizations, as well as violations of relevant regulations by CTI or its staff regarding the certification body or management system.)
- 1.2 Appeals: A formal written appeal submitted by the organization undergoing the certification audit, requesting CTI to review an unfavorable decision made by CTI regarding the desired certification status of the organization. (Note: An unfavorable decision may include, but is not limited to, rejection of an application, discontinuation of an audit, issuance of a corrective action request, termination, reduction, suspension, or withdrawal of certification.)

### **2. Handling of Complaints and Appeals**

#### **2.1 Basic Requirements**

- 2.1.1 CTI handles complaints and appeals based on facts, CTI certification procedures and certification standards.
- 2.1.2 The personnel responsible for handling complaints and appeals are obligated to maintain confidentiality regarding any non-public information pertaining to the complaint or appeal.
- 2.1.3 All staff involved in the handling of complaints and appeals shall be objective and impartial.
- 2.1.4 Any individual who has had a direct association with the organization or any other relevant party involved in the complaint or appeal within the past two years shall not be involved in the investigation of said complaint or appeal.
- 2.1.5 CTI Impartiality Committee is the key unit to manage complaints, appeals and their handling.

#### **2.2 Complaint Handling Procedures**

- 2.2.1 The complaint must be submitted in written form to the CTI Impartiality Committee. The complainant party's authorized person, after signing and sealing the complaint, should provide all relevant details and supporting documents to CTI. It is generally not accepted by CTI to receive anonymous complaints.



- 2.2.2 Upon receipt of a complaint, CTI Impartiality Committee shall confirm whether the complaint relates to certification activities, if so, shall address it. Then confirmation for receiving a formal complaint shall be sent to the complainant party.
- 2.2.3 In the case of complaints concerning certification activities, the CTI Impartiality Committee will initiate an investigation. A dedicated team, in collaboration with relevant departments, will gather and verify all essential information. If necessary, an on-site investigation may be conducted. The team will present the complete investigation report, along with proposed corrective and preventive actions, to the CTI Impartiality Committee within 30 days of receiving the complaint. The Impartiality Committee will review the findings and recommendations within 30 days of receipt and reach a final decision. The Impartiality Committee Lead will communicate the findings and any feasible actions to the complainant party.
- 2.2.4 Regarding complaints concerning certified organizations, the CTI Impartiality Committee will initiate an investigation following a structured process. This involves collecting and verifying all necessary information, including notifying the certified organization in a timely manner and requesting them to provide a written statement supported by evidence. If required, an on-site investigation may be conducted. The investigation should be completed, and recommendations raised within 60 days of receiving the complaint. If corrective action is deemed necessary, the certified organization will be informed and given a specified timeframe to implement the required corrections. On-site verification may be conducted if deemed necessary. In cases where the complaint has an impact on the certification status, CTI will make a certification decision based on the investigation's findings. The outcome of the complaint handling process will be communicated to the complainant party, whenever feasible.

### 2.3 Appeal Handling Procedure

- 2.3.1 An appeal must be submitted in written form to CTI within 10 working days after the certified organization receives the certification decision. The appeal should be signed and sealed by the authorized representative of the appellant party.
- 2.3.2 Once the CTI Impartiality Committee receives the appeals, a written confirmation will be sent to the appellant. The Committee may evaluate the appeal by convening a hearing, considering statements from both parties, conducting on-site investigations, and seeking expert consultations as necessary. The handling of the appeal will adhere to CTI's established procedures, and the outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the appellant in written form.

## 3. Channels for Complaints and Appeals

### Service Complaint



In order to provide higher-quality service for the customers, CTI always takes the customers' feelings as the basis of improving. If you have any complaint during the co-operation with CTI Audit Department, please contact us through the following ways, we will try our best to solve your problem.

verbal appeal/complaint during daily contacts

verbal appeal/complaint through telephone: 0755-3368 1700 or 0755- 8256 1911

written appeal/complaint through e-mail: [complaint@cti-cert.com](mailto:complaint@cti-cert.com) or [helen.dong@cti-cert.com](mailto:helen.dong@cti-cert.com)

#### Complaint on Ethics & Integrity

There are multiple channels to forward appeal/complaint to Audit Department:

- verbal appeal/complaint during daily contacts,
- verbal appeal/complaint through telephone: 0755-3368 1636 (the number is listed in the home page of web site, [www.cti-cert.com](http://www.cti-cert.com))
- written appeal/complaint through e-mail: [cti-audit@cti-cert.com](mailto:cti-audit@cti-cert.com) (the home page of the web site provide a direct link, [www.cti-cert.com](http://www.cti-cert.com))
- written complaints by fax: 0755-3368 3727

#### **4. Records**

All records shall be kept for 2 copies for at least 5 years, one copy in the FTP, another copy in the respective local office.