

How an Indian Textile Factory Gets GOTS, OEKO-TEX and GRS Certified

Yash Khatri

Founder, SourcingFrom

Published 17 Oct 2026 10 min read

GOTS, OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 and GRS are earned by the factory, not bought by the brand, and each works differently. GOTS and GRS certify a site and its chain of custody through an approved certification body, while OEKO-TEX tests a product sample and certifies the article for a year. This guide tells importers what to ask for at each stage of an order and gives Indian mills and garment units the steps, timings and common failure points.

The Short Version

- GOTS needs every processor in the chain certified, so a certified garment unit buying uncertified fabric cannot sell GOTS goods.
- Fourteen GOTS approved certification bodies work in India (17 Oct 2026). Pick one with a local auditor for your scope.
- OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 certifies an article and its components for one year, by product class. It says nothing about organic fibre.
- Ask for the scope certificate before you order and the transaction certificate with the shipment, never only a logo on a hangtag.
- Most delays come from missing input paperwork and chemical lists, not from the audit day itself.

A brand can't buy a GOTS certificate for its T-shirts. Every mill, dye house and stitching unit that touches the cloth has to earn its own, and that is where most organic programmes from India go wrong.



This guide is the practical side. Our [textile certifications guide](#) explains what each label proves and how to read a scope or transaction certificate, so I won't repeat that here. What you'll find below is how a factory in Tiruppur, Panipat or Surat actually gets certified, how long it takes, and what you as the buyer should ask for and when. It sits in our [certifications hub](#) alongside [social audits](#), which most of the same buyers ask for next.

1. Three Schemes That Certify Different Things

Here's the short version of how the three differ -

- **GOTS** certifies a site and its process. Each company in the chain gets a scope certificate from an approved certification body after an on-site audit, and GOTS requires those audits every year ([Global Standards](#)). Goods move between certified sites with transaction certificates.

- **OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100** certifies an article. A lab tests a sample against limits for harmful substances set by product class, and the certificate is issued for one year ([OEKO-TEX](#)).
- **GRS** (Global Recycled Standard, owned by Textile Exchange) certifies recycled content and the chain of custody, plus social, environmental and chemical rules at each site. We couldn't read Textile Exchange's pages at source (its site blocks automated readers), so treat our GRS detail as reported and check the current rule on textileexchange.org.

So a buyer who wants "organic and safe" is asking for two things. GOTS covers the fibre and the process, and OEKO-TEX covers residues in the finished article. Plenty of Indian mills hold both, and plenty hold one and show it as if it were the other.

The scale is worth knowing. Trade press reporting the Global Standard 2025 annual report puts GOTS-certified facilities at 17,800 worldwide, with India holding the largest share at 27.8% ([Apparel Insider](#), not read at source). That's thousands of certified sites, which means a certified supplier is easy to find and the real question is whether the whole chain behind your order is covered.

2. The Chain Rule That Catches Buyers Out

GOTS says it plainly - "each company involved in the processing of the product must be certified" ([Global Standards](#)). Traders who take legal ownership need it too.

In practice an Indian T-shirt order passes through a ginner, a spinner, a knitter, a dyer and processor, a printer perhaps and the garment unit. Indian knitwear runs on job work, which is a normal and efficient way to do business, and it means your garment maker may send fabric out to two or three other firms. Every one of those firms must be on a GOTS scope

certificate, either its own or as a listed subcontractor on the main unit's certificate.

I'd ask about this before price. If the dye house a supplier uses isn't on anyone's certificate then the order can't carry GOTS, however good the garment unit's own paperwork looks.

3. What an Importer Should Ask For and When

The order of documents matters more than the documents. Here's the sequence I'd follow –

1. **At enquiry** – ask for the scope certificate of the company you're buying from, plus the names of its subcontractors for your product. Look it up in the Global Standards public database (the certificate holder appears there once certified) and check the products and processes listed match your order.
2. **At sampling** – for OEKO-TEX, ask for the certificate number and check it on OEKO-TEX Label Check. Check the product class too. Babywear needs Class 1, the strictest one.
3. **At the purchase order** – write the certificate requirement into the PO. Name the standard, the label grade if GOTS, and say that a transaction certificate must cover the shipment.
4. **At shipment** – the transaction certificate is issued by the seller's certification body and names the goods, quantities and buyer. From 1 January 2027 the GOTS TC rules change (our [textile certifications guide](#) covers the new procedure), so check your seller's certifier is ready.

Red flags are mostly simple. A certificate in a parent group's name that doesn't list the site making your goods, an OEKO-TEX number that doesn't come up in Label Check, or a supplier who sends a PDF but can't name its

certification body. None of them proves fraud on its own. All of them deserve a polite question.

Your market rarely makes these certificates law. They're customer requirements, set by retailers and by your own claims. The legal risk comes when you put "organic" on a label and can't back it, which in the EU and UK falls under green-claims and consumer law. Our [eco-labels and green claims guide](#) covers that side.

4. Which Certification Bodies Work in India

GOTS doesn't certify anyone itself. Approved certification bodies do. On 17 October 2026 the GOTS list filtered to India showed 14 bodies ([Global Standards](#)) -

Certification body	GOTS scopes approved
Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services	1, 2, 3, 4
CCPB	1, 2, 3, 4
Clean Globe International	1, 2, 3
Control Union Certifications	1, 2, 3
CU Inspections and Certifications India	1, 2, 3, 4
Ecocert Greenlife	1, 2, 3, 4
Eurofins Assurance India	1, 2, 3
GCL International	1, 2, 3, 4
GSCS International	1, 2, 3
ICEA	1, 2, 3, 4
IDFL Laboratory and Institute	1, 2, 3, 4
Intertek Testing Services NA	1, 2, 3
NimkarTek Technical Services	4 only
USB Certification	1, 2, 3, 4

This is a list of facts, not a recommendation. GOTS itself warns that not every office has a local GOTS auditor, so ask each body whether it has one for your scope and region before you sign. The scope numbers refer to what the body is approved to certify (scope 4, for instance, covers chemical input approval), and the current definitions are on the GOTS site.

5. How an Indian Exporter Gets GOTS

This half is for the mill, processor or garment unit. GOTS publishes six steps (Global Standards), and here they are with what they mean on the ground.

Step 1 – Read the standard. Download the current GOTS standard and its implementation manual from the GOTS resources page. Version 8.1 has an implementation deadline of 1 March 2027, so read that version, not the one your consultant used in 2022. Allow a week or two to map each clause to your unit.

Step 2 – Talk to GOTS first if you're unsure. GOTS has a regional representative for South Asia and a list of approved consultants. A conversation costs you nothing but time and saves you from hiring help you don't need.

Step 3 – Choose a certification body. Pick one from the list in section 4 with an auditor who covers your region and process. Ask for its current fee on its quote, since GOTS doesn't set one.

Step 4 – Apply. The body asks for your location, scope of operations and the goods you make. Have ready your GST and IEC details, a site plan, a process flow chart, a list of every subcontractor you use for the products you want certified, and your chemical inventory.

Step 5 – Prepare for the on-site audit. The body schedules it and tells you which records to have. Expect them to look at purchase records for certified inputs, stock registers that show organic and conventional goods kept apart, chemical approvals, wastewater treatment records for any wet processing, and the social criteria (wages, hours, contracts). Non-conformities come with a deadline to fix.

Step 6 – Get the scope certificate. Once issued, your company appears in the Global Standards public database. From then on you need the annual

on-site audit to keep it, and a transaction certificate for each certified shipment you sell.



How long does it take? GOTS doesn't publish a timeline. A well-run garment unit with certified fabric suppliers can often move from application to certificate within a few months, while a dye house that has to fix effluent records or replace chemicals takes longer. Check the realistic date with your certification body before you promise a buyer a launch season.

Where Indian Applications Usually Stall

- **Chemicals.** Every dye and auxiliary used on GOTS goods must be approved for GOTS use. A dye house running one unapproved softener on its organic line will fail.
- **Inputs without paper.** Organic yarn bought from a trader without a transaction certificate can't count as organic, however honest the trader.

- **Mixed stock.** Organic and conventional yarn in one unlabelled heap is a finding every time.
- **Unlisted job workers.** If you send fabric out for printing then that printer must be covered.

If you'd rather not chase a dozen subcontractors through this yourself, [SourcingSync](#) can manage the supplier side of a certified programme for a buyer.

6. How an Indian Exporter Gets OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100

OEKO-TEX works through its member institutes, and the application runs through the OEKO-TEX Connect portal. The published sequence is ([OEKO-TEX](#)) -

Step 1 – Apply on OEKO-TEX Connect and send a material sample with the application.

Step 2 – Verification. The institute checks the application and the sample.

Step 3 – Test plan and testing. The institute sets the test criteria and an individual measurement plan, then tests.

Step 4 – On-site visit. The institute inspects and evaluates the company.

Step 5 – Test report. You get a detailed report.

Step 6 – Certificate. It's issued for one year, and you renew it to keep it.

The product class is the choice that matters most. Class 1 covers articles for babies and children up to 3, Class 2 direct skin contact (bed linen, for example), Class 3 no direct skin contact (jackets) and Class 4 home textiles and decoration. If you make babywear and adult tees then certify for Class 1

and both are covered by the stricter limits. Certifying only Class 2 and then shipping babywear is a mistake buyers spot.

What to send the buyer – the certificate number (they will check it on Label Check), the product class and the list of articles covered. Fees are set by the institute, so check the current fee with yours.

7. How an Indian Exporter Gets GRS

GRS follows the same shape as GOTS. You choose a certification body accredited for Textile Exchange standards, apply, pass a site audit covering recycled content claims, chain of custody, and the social, environmental and chemical rules, and then issue transaction certificates per shipment. Many of the bodies in section 4 also certify GRS. The recycled input must come with its own paperwork back to the recycler, and for post-consumer or pre-consumer waste that paperwork is where most Indian applications get questioned.

We couldn't read Textile Exchange's own pages at source. Check the current GRS version, the minimum recycled content and the claim rules on textileexchange.org before you apply.

8. A Worked Example With Organic Tees From Tiruppur

This example is an illustration built from the rules above, not a real firm.

Say a UK brand wants organic cotton T-shirts for adults and kids, with a GOTS "organic" label and OEKO-TEX for the kids' line.

The garment unit in Tiruppur holds a GOTS scope certificate. It buys certified organic yarn from a spinner in Coimbatore, knits in-house, and sends fabric to a dye house in the same district under job work. The buyer's first email

asks for all three companies' certificates, and the dye house turns out to be certified too, with the garment unit listing it. Good.

For OEKO-TEX the garment unit holds STANDARD 100 Class 1 for its knitted fabrics and finished garments, which covers kids and adults in one go. The buyer checks both numbers in the public databases, writes "GOTS, label grade organic, TC per shipment" into the PO, and gets the TC from the unit's certification body with the shipment. If the dye house had been uncertified, the fix would have been a certified dye house or a different product claim, and that's a conversation to have in week one, not at shipment.



FAQ

Can a buying agent or trader hold GOTS for me? ^

Traders who take ownership of the goods need their own certification. An agent

who never owns the goods doesn't, but every factory behind the order still does.

Is OEKO-TEX enough to call a product organic? 

How long is a GOTS certificate valid? 

Do I need a consultant to get certified? 

Can I get all three at once? 

9. Next Steps

- What each certificate proves and how to read a TC: [textile certifications explained](#).
- Proving where the cotton was grown: [cotton traceability](#).
- The social side buyers ask for next: [social audits](#).
- Chemical limits beyond OEKO-TEX: [restricted substances](#).
- Where to find certified knitwear makers: [Tiruppur knitwear cluster and cotton T-shirts from India](#).

A certificate is only as strong as the weakest unit in the chain, so start your checks there.