1. Introduction
These Scheme Rules have been written in accordance with the requirements of the applicable IAF Member Accreditation Bodies such as IOAS under Accredited Certification Schemes and GOTS and Textile Exchange (TE). GCL INTERNATIONAL LTD, hereafter known as ‘GCL’ also comply with all conditions. These Scheme Rules form a part of the contract with each applicant as stated on the quotation.

2. Scope
GCL provides independent third party audits and registration services for companies who have implemented management systems against the following standards/codes of practice:
- Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)
- Textile Exchange (TE) Standards such as
  - Content Claim Standard (CCS)
  - Recycled Claim Standard (RCS)
  - Global Recycled Standard (GRS)
  - Organic Content Standard (OCS)

3. Confidentiality
a) GCL agrees not to disclose any information relating to the operator’s business or affairs except information, which is in their possession before the date of acceptance of the GCL quotation/contract.

b) Where information is required to be disclosed to a third party either by law or as required under maintenance of certification by an Accreditation Body, the applicant shall be informed of the information as required by law.

c) GCL has right to exchange operators’ information with other Certification Bodies, accreditation bodies, TE (as specified in TE-501 Textile Exchange Standards Data Policy) and the Global Standard gGmbH to verify the authenticity of the information.

d) For the purposes of registration verification, information contained on all issued certificates can be verified using the registration number shown on the certificate from the certification check on the GCL web site which is located from the following URL www.gcl-intl.com

g) Operator shall ensure that any non-certified applicant of the certified (its) entity is made aware about the applicable licensing conditions for using the applied on-product GOTS labelling (according to chapter 5.1 if the non-certified applicant is a processor, manufacturer or B2B trader and according to chapter 5.2 if it is a retailer).

h) Operator agree that Textile Exchange is given access to client data. Access is offered on the premise that Textile Exchange personnel have each signed a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest declarations, and both required and used in a manner consistent with TE-501 Textile Exchange Standards Data Policy.

i) agree to adhere to the data policy specified in TE 501 Textile Exchange Standards Data Policy and to obtain the same agreement from all sites to be included in the scope of certification.

4. General Conditions
GCL basic conditions for gaining and maintaining registration with are that all applicants agree to and comply with the following rules:

a) All information deemed necessary by GCL in order to complete the registration process shall be made available to the applicant company.

b) If GCL are not satisfied that all requirements for registration have been met it shall inform the applicant in writing stating which requirements.

c) When the applicant can demonstrate that effective corrective action has been taken within a specified time limit, then GCL will arrange only to repeat the audit in full at additional cost.

d) If the applicant fails to take effective corrective action within the time limit then GCL may repeat the audit full at additional cost.

e) The applicant informs the GCL if they do not want their certification information that is reported monthly to TE to be made publicly available. In this case, the GCL will inform TE.

f) If the applicant provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the certification scheme.

g) Failure to return all certificates of registration shall result in legal action being taken against the operator for unauthorised use or registration and inaccurate claims of registration.

h) The applicant must allow GCL to conduct annual/re-audit visits at the times stated within the individual quotation.

i) GCL offices which hold accreditation directly with an accreditation body or hold “critical location” status are responsible for, and retain authority for, decisions relating to accredited certification, including the granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing of certification.

j) Provide to GCL and IOAS the right of access to all units of the inspected facilities, including to units where no GOTS products are processed, stored or administrated, if applicable, and to all relevant documentation and records, including financial records.

k) The applicant confirms that they are not currently engaged, nor will they engage, with another Certification Body to certify them against the same GOTS and TE standard(s) at the same time.
Specific objectives for GOTS Audits

I. Audit of the chemical inputs (dyes and auxiliaries) and accessories used and assessment of their compliance with the applicable criteria of the GOTS.

II. Audit of the waste water (pre)treatment system of wet processors.

III. Verification of the operator's risk assessment of contamination and residue testing policy potentially including sample drawing for residue testing either as random sampling or in case of suspicion of contamination or non-compliance.

IV. Verification of adherence to the defined minimum social criteria. In particular the audit protocol must include:
   - Audit of processing and storage units, toilet facilities, rest areas and other sites of the company with access for workers
   - Interview with management and confidential interviews with workers and worker's representatives
   - Review of personnel files, such as list of workers employed, workers' contracts, pay rolls, shift and working time protocols, age verification, social insurance docs.

8. Certification

a) On completion of the on-site evaluation the lead auditor reports back to GCL. The Standard Manager of GCL shall review the report and supporting information, including the recommendations made by the lead auditor and decide whether to grant certification.

b) For any non-conformities raised, the applicant shall conduct root cause analysis and send details of corrections, corrective action and preventive action to GCL. This information shall be reviewed by a qualified lead auditor and the applicant shall be informed of the result via email.
c) Upon acceptance of the corrective actions the Standard Manager shall review the full report and make a decision. Should the Standard Manager not accept the report the impartiality committee shall be informed for the purpose of holding an internal appeal.

d) For any non-conformity or other situation that may lead to suspension the lead auditor shall report to GCL and the suspension process shall take effect as defined within these rules.

e) The certification applies to ongoing production, the certified product continues to fulfill the product requirements

f) the applicant makes claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification

g) If it is found that the applicant is knowingly and/or repeatedly operating with non-conformities or purposely violates the requirements of the standard, the GCL must suspend the applicant's certification status and inform the TE. The applicant will be allowed to re-apply for certification two years after the date of the suspension.

9. Re-Evaluation/Audit

a) The GCL shall regularly re-evaluate operators annually (Prior to the end of the previous certification period a re-evaluation/audit application should be made) in order to verify whether they continue to comply with GOTS and TE Standards, the Manual for the Implementation of GOTS, TE and GOTS the Labelling and Licensing Guidelines. Mechanisms shall be in place to effectively monitor whether corrective actions have been implemented.

b) The GCL shall report and document its annual activities and shall keep operators informed about their certification status.

c) Re-evaluation/surveillance is a full audit and generally follows procedures outlined in ‘Evaluation’ Section 7 Evaluation in this document.

d) GCL shall control the use and display of licenses, certificates and logos.

e) Communicate to the Operator to plan the re-audit/surveillance and find out if there are any changes such as change of production units, subcontractors, recipes or new suppliers. Operator needs to complete audit checklist, list of suppliers, list of subcontractors... GCL will send audit report to client by mail and after fill up client will send back the audit report to GCL for review. Normally, the re-evaluation after initial certification is to be within 12 months of the last day of the initial audit. However, providing that sufficient evidence has been collected as above, to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective consideration may be given to postpone the first surveillance for a period not normally exceeding 2 months (14 months from date of initial certification). Otherwise the certificate has to be suspended or the scope reduced.

f) Recertification audits should be completed no later than 60 days prior to the expiry of a scope certificate.

10. Use & Mis-Use of Certificates, Logos & Certification

Once a Certificate has been issued, then the applicant has the right to publish the fact and to apply the logo on their stationery and promotional material without label grade.

The GOTS and TE marks can only be used as specified GOTS Licensing and Labelling Guide and TE standards Logo Use and Claims Guideline. Other conditions are as follows related to certification:

a) That no misleading statements are implied or made regarding certification.

b) That no certification document is used in a manner that would mislead applicants or registered companies or the public in general.

c) Upon suspension, withdrawal or cancellation cease with immediate effect to use of the marks on advertising, such as brochures, letterheads, business cards, web sites, etc, and return the certificate to GCL

d) Should a scope of registration be reduced, amend all advertising materials where details of the scope have been published. For all reductions or increases in scope the original certificate to be returned to GCL prior to any updated certificate being issued.

e) That nothing is implied or an impression is given that certification activities are outside of the scope of certification.

f) Not to use certification in any way as to bring into disrepute the credibility of GCL or of Accredited Certification that could affect public trust and confidence.

g) in making reference to its product certification in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, the applicant complies with the requirements of the GCL or as specified by the certification scheme;

11. Termination, Reduction, Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

When a non-conformity with certification requirements is substantiated, either as a result of annual audit or otherwise such as announced audit, GCL shall consider and decide upon the appropriate action.

a) Suspension

i. as a result of continued mis-use of a certificate or logo.

ii. failure to implement corrective action within the specified timescale as a result of concern identified at Evaluation/Audit.

iii. any other breach of the GCL quotation and/or Scheme Rules.

iv. when a critical or major non-conformity is raised during any visit, after the initial evaluation.

v. under suspension it is not permitted to use any logos on any advertising materials until the suspension has been lifted.
vi. the Standard Manager of GCL shall write to the registered applicant outlining the suspension conditions and how the suspension can be lifted.

b) Scope Reduction
Reduction in the scope of certification to remove non-conforming product variants. Should a reduction in scope be recommended by a GCL Lead Auditor at a re-evaluation visit this has to be noted in the report and the Standard Manager informed.

c) Withdrawal
Such withdrawals could be as a result of:

i. failure to respond to requests/time scales made by GCL after suspension of Certification.
ii. failure of an applicant to settle an account with GCL within 1 month of formal notification of a failure to settle an account.
iii. voluntary withdrawal, in such a case GCL require this in writing.
iv. the certificate of registration shall be returned to GCL when GCL has informed the applicant that withdrawal has been complete. No copies of certificates shall be used or logos displayed after withdrawal has taken place.

12. Appeals
If the applicant is not in agreement with the Lead Auditor’s recommendation after an Initial and/or annual audit then they are at liberty to lodge an appeal with the CEO of GCL. The Applicant shall support his/her reasons by objective evidence.

All appeals will be heard by an Appeal-Committee of the GCL Impartiality Committee. The Appeal-Committee may hear evidence from the applicant’s representative and the Lead Auditor. The decision of the Appeal-Committee is final and binding on both the Applicant and GCL. No counter claim will be allowed by either party. No costs, for whatever reason, will be allowed for either party as a result of an appeal.

13. Complaints

a) General Requirements
All applicants are required to maintain a log of all customer complaints raised against them. This log must be available for review during all Initial and/or annual audit. This log shall also be available to GCL Staff, Global Standard gGmbH, Textile Exchange and IOAS upon request. Also, the applicant agrees to allow representatives from accreditation bodies and scheme owners such as IOAS and Textile Exchange to witness GCL conducting their audit duties. The fact that an Accreditation Body representative attends an audit will not affect the audit. Also, from time to time GCL may have to have trainee auditors or internal audits on an audit team.

b) Complaints from Applicants Regarding Auditor
If a applicant has a complaint about the conduct of any GCL Auditor then this should be sent in writing to the GCL CEO. If the complaint involves the CEO or Standard Manager then the complaint is to be addressed to the Chairman of the Impartiality Committee of GCL. If complainant not satisfied with the result then it can be addressed to IOAS, GOTS and TE.

c) Complaints from Users of Applicants Products & Services
For complaints received from users of applicants products and/or services shall be lodged and then acknowledged to the complainant. Follow-up shall then be taken with the registered company in question.

Note: If fraud or other misrepresentation is found to exist, the GCL will take appropriate action as specified at this Point 1: also Point:22 (including extra audit) in this document.

The operator shall take appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in products that affect compliance with the requirements for certification;

Note: accept that the accreditation body and Textile Exchange may become engaged in the case that a complaint or appeal escalates GCL’s authority, and agrees to cooperate with investigations.

14. Witnessed Visits
As part of the on-going surveillance of GCL the applicant agrees to allow representatives from accreditation bodies and scheme owners such as IOAS and Textile Exchange the right to witness GCL conducting their audit duties. The fact that an Accreditation Body representative attends an audit will not affect the audit. Also, from time to time GCL may have to have trainee auditors or internal audits on an audit team.

15. Short Notice Audits
For applicants that have been suspended or where GCL has received complaints then a short notice audit may be required for follow-up and verification/validation of the implementation of corrective and preventative measures. In such cases the applicant agrees to co-operate with GCL audit team members and allow the required access.

16. Terms of Payment
Payment shall be made in accordance with the individual invoice and the quotation/contract document.

17. Indemnification
In respect of any claim, loss, damage or expense however arising, GCL’s liability to the applicant shall in no circumstances exceed the amount of GCL’s fees paid by the applicant. Under no circumstance shall GCL be liable for any consequential loss.

18. Impartiality
GCL or any GCL representative shall NOT

a) provide management system consultancy which includes: preparation or production of manuals or procedures, or give specific advice, instructions or solutions towards the development, structure and implementation of a product management system.

b) allocate auditor(s) for a applicant in where provided management systems consultancy poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality. Provide an internal audit service to any certified applicants.
d) outsource any audits to a management consultancy company involved in management systems as described with the scope of these rules.

e) have within any marketing materials any linkage to management system consultancy.

For any threats to impartiality that are discovered or reported, then the impartiality committee shall be informed and responses shall be made and communicated.

19. Intellectual Property

The ownership of all issued audit reports remains the property of GCL.

20. Notification of changes made by the operator

a) Should there be any significant changes cited in the application and with the applicant organisation such as change of address, ownership, organization and management such as management representative, scope or product related changes, major changes to the management system and processes and the environmental and social impact of the certified organization caused by incidents or events (if applicable to the audit scope) then GCL should be informed by operator within five working days of occurrence.

b) GCL shall determine whether the announced changes require further investigations. If such is the case, the operator shall not be allowed to release certified products produced under the changed conditions until GCL has notified the operator accordingly.

c) In response to an application for amendment to the scope of a certificate already granted, GCL shall decide what evaluation procedure, if any, is appropriate, in order to determine whether or not the amendment should be made, and shall act accordingly.

d) Operator shall inform GCL immediately of any planned changes that could affect product conformity to the relevant standard(s) such as change of production units, subcontractors, recipes or new suppliers and not market products under the respective label before receiving GCL approval.

e) To notify GCL immediately of any application of prohibited substances or any differing residue analysis in any part of the operation.

21. Amendments to Scheme Rules

a) GCL reserves the right to amend these Scheme Rules without prior notification. Should the Scheme Rules be updated the latest version shall be put on the web site and all applicants informed about the changes.

b) Applicant should record the Scheme Rules as an "external document" within their management system for document control.

c) New information or changes with regards to the certification procedure and requirements in the TE and GOTS will communicate to third parties through GCL website and emailing operators directly.

d) In the event that the organization becomes aware of legal proceedings with respect to product or legality and there is evidence or suspicion of nonconformity within the certified organization GCL can carry out an extra audit to assess the issues.

e) In serious cases, when certification shall be denied or withdrawn, TE and Global Standard gGmbH are to be notified immediately.

Unannounced audit program

Organization accept that GCL may conduct semi-announced audits, unannounced audits and/or confirmation visits, for the purpose of monitoring the organization's conformity.

Organization accept that the accreditation body also has the right to conduct audits of the client, including semi-announced audits, unannounced audits, and confirmation visits, for the purpose of monitoring GCL conformity with Textile Exchange requirements.

Explain and confirmed that an unannounced Audit program is part of the certification. Participation in the unannounced Audit program is mandatory. Notice of no more than 48 hours may be given in advance of an unannounced audit.

Note: Unannounced audit is not a full audit and GCL auditors checks the following (but are not limited to):

- verification of NCN which raised at previous visit
- Traceability of product (when a certification done without any production in place and just based on operator's management system then during the unannounced audit GCL auditors check and verify whether the organic/recycled material production done as stated in the operator's management system or not)
- Total quantity balance of the raw material and TCs
- Total quantity balance of the raw material and TCs
- If applicant has wet processing, GOTS Chemical list, recipes and letter of approval needs to be checked randomly.
- The risky areas will be more emphasized. The risky areas are identified during the announced visit.
- Identification and segregation will be checked if production running during audit

Extra Audit

1) An extraordinary event affecting a certified organization or GCL may temporarily prevent the GCL from carrying out planned audit on-site. When such a situation occurs, GCL operating under the Scheme need to establish (in consultation with certified organizations) a reasonable planned course
2) Particular requirements to address high-risk situations
GCL shall perform an Additional/Extra including unannounced audit if any following issues raised during any audit.

3) Samples for GOTS and Textile Exchange standards (such as residue testing for GOTS and GRS) may be taken by the auditor during the audit, either as back-up to the audit process or in case of suspicion of contamination or non-compliance. Additional samples of goods may be taken from the supply chain for testing such as wastewater or chemical residue tests at any time without advance notice.

GCL has decided to perform an Additional/Extra including unannounced audit if any following issues raised during any audit. Potential high-risk situations and related measures include:

   a) Parallel processing of certified and non-certified products: in order to prevent conmingling or confusion of certified products with other products that do not meet the standards,

   b) Where an operator is certified by other Certification Bodies for a standard that shares the same scope (e.g.: organic cotton for the Global Organic Textile Standard and OCS), the GCL should seek information exchange with the other Certification Bodies involved to prevent misuse of certificates.

   c) High demand and low supply for certain products.

   d) If any critical or Many Minor or Major non-conformities found during the regular audit

   e) Very high price difference between organic and conventional products (the GCL should seek information on the price difference between allowed and illicit inputs)

   f) Where an operator has been granted 30% reduction on audit man days

23. Closing-Out of NCN

Textile Exchange

a) Initial Audit
   Critical NCN: Must be corrected and closed out before initial certification

   Major NCN: Must be corrected and closed out before initial certification

   Minor NCN: Minor Must be corrected and closed out 60 days from the audit (closing meeting)

b) Re-certification Audit
   Critical NCN: Scope certificate shall be suspended immediately

   Major NCN: In case of major non-conformities, the scope certificate shall be suspended until implementation of corrective actions can be demonstrated. If a scope certificate is suspended for 180 days or until its expiry date - whichever is sooner - the scope certificate shall be withdrawn.

   Minor NCN: Minor Must be corrected and closed out 60 days from the audit (closing meeting), if not is upgraded to become a major non-conformity.

24. Labelling Release and Transaction Certificate

Operator shall be informed on how to use GOTS and Textile Exchange standards logo and to get Transaction Certificate (once they are certified) by the Lead auditor at closing meeting.

Operator shall send all the artwork and Labelling Release form to the GCL for approval prior to use.

Note: CCS product can not be labeled with the CCS logo or make reference to the CCS.

Labelling Release
- Operator gets the related standard’s Labelling Release form from the GCL
- Operator submit the artwork together with completed related Labelling Release form
- GCL to review the Labelling release form and Artworks for the compliance with related guideline(s) (GOTS Licensing and Labelling Guide or Textile Exchange standards Logo Use and Claims Guidelines) and give approval through the Label Release Form

Transaction Certificate
Transaction Certificate (TC) is issued by the GOTS/Textile Exchange approved/accredited Certification Companies. The Operator who certified by GCL can email GCL and ask to provide a Transaction Certificate. The Transaction Certificates confirm that the products have been produced and certified against the respective standards such as GOTS or Textile Exchange standards (OCS, RCS...).
Operator complete and the Transaction Certificate Form and send it to GCL together with all required documents.

25. Change of Certifier (GCL) - Migration, Closure of business or withdrawal of Approval/Accreditation

GCL accept certificates and letters of approval issued in accordance with the Global Organic Textile Standard/Textile Exchange by other Certifiers approved by the Global Standard gGmbH/Textile Exchange, in order to conclude final certification.

Upon termination GCL transfer documentation on all operations certified by GCL under the GOTS/TE to another Approved Certifier.

In the event of a GCL closing operations or withdrawal of approval/Accreditation, Operator will be nurtured through the process of moving to another CB-Approved Certifier.

26. Privacy Notice

We take the privacy and the protection of personal information seriously. Our Privacy Notice sets out details about how we gather, use and share personal information and about individual privacy rights. How we use personal information depends upon the context in which it is made available to us. Our Privacy Notice is available from our website: [http://gcl-intl.com/privacy-policy-cookies/](http://gcl-intl.com/privacy-policy-cookies/)

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