



**Textile
Exchange**

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MATERIALS MATTER
STANDARD PILOT V1.0



SUMMARY PAPER CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Summary Paper – Chain of Custody

Materials Matter Standard Pilot Version 1.0

About Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit helping to drive beneficial outcomes for climate and nature across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry, right from the start of the supply system.

Our goal is to help the industry achieve a 45% reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions that come from producing fibers and raw materials by 2030 (from a 2019 baseline). To get there, we are keeping our focus holistic and interconnected, accelerating the adoption of practices that improve soil health, water, and biodiversity while respecting human livelihoods and animal welfare.

Over the last 20 years, our internationally recognized standards for the production of different fibers and raw materials have helped build integrity in the industry. As a member of [ISEAL](#), we comply with three credibility Codes of Good Practice which underpin our policies and procedures for organizational functions like standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These practices ensure we provide value, rigor, accessibility, and transparency in our standards.

All of our standards are anchored by an independent, third-party assurance model that supports organizations in consistently demonstrating and maintaining conformity while handling and trading their certified products, through an independently verifiable and impartial process.

About the Materials Matter Standard

The Materials Matter Standard is a voluntary sustainability standard for the production and initial processing of raw materials used in the fashion, textile, and apparel industry.

The standard sets out to incentivize a system in which the materials in our clothing and textiles support the climate, respect human rights and animal welfare, and drive beneficial outcomes for soil health, water, and biodiversity. It aligns the industry on a shared trajectory towards this vision by establishing what best practice looks like for different materials in various settings, from farms to recycling facilities.

By focusing specifically on the start of the supply chain, the Materials Matter Standard provides a global certification model that is connected to the unique contexts of producers and processors, as well as their local communities and landscapes. A blend of practice-based criteria and outcome-based indicators helps participating organizations get acknowledged for meeting core requirements and builds their capacity to measure results. At the same time, it gives brands and retailers that choose certified materials a way to speak confidently to customers about them.

In the long term, the Materials Matter Standard provides a foundation for producers and processors to understand how their activities impact the people and ecosystems around them, track their progress based on different practices, and learn where to improve over time to drive beneficial outcomes on the ground. Beyond getting certified, optional leadership criteria invite participating organizations to raise the bar through areas like regeneration, renewable energy, and textile-to-textile recycling.

Over time, the Materials Matter Standard will be improved and adapted using insights from the auditing process and outcome measurements. This will help make sure it brings more meaningful benefits to those producing materials for the industry, as well as those directly impacted by the practices they use.

Please note that the Materials Matter Standard was known as the “unified standard” during its development. With the release of the Pilot V1.0, Textile Exchange is pleased to share its official name with stakeholders.

Transitioning towards the Materials Matter Standard system

In 2021, Textile Exchange began a comprehensive revision of its existing standards framework to develop a more harmonized system across all of our material-specific standards. Our goal was to meaningfully embed our organizational climate and nature goals into the production of all raw materials included in the scope of our certification, as well as to facilitate simplified communication at the consumer level through more integrated and aligned claims and labeling.

After review and approval of the public project plan from an International Working Group (IWG), the first draft of the Materials Matter standard (then referred to as the “unified” standard) was made available for public consultation from May to July 2023, with the second draft open for public consultation from October to November 2023. Following invaluable feedback from stakeholders, the Materials Matter Standard Pilot Version V1.0 was released publicly in early June, 2024.

The rest of our progress in 2024 will then be focused on feasibility testing, the preparation of supplementary documentation, and outreach events to raise awareness among standard users. Learnings from these activities will be used to refine criteria and related policies for the final version of the standard which, following pilot testing and system updates, will be published in mid-2025.

The final published standard will state an effective date and a mandatory date. The effective date is planned for the first quarter of 2026 and means that auditing and certification may begin on a voluntary basis whereby organizations may request an audit to the Materials Matter Standard from licensed certification bodies. This will remain optional during a transitional period for organizations already certified to current standards superseded by the Materials Matter Standard, including the Global Recycled Standard (GRS), Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), Responsible Wool Standard (RWS), Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS), Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS), and Responsible Down Standard (RDS).

The mandatory date is planned for mid-2026, 12 months after the final standard publication date. This means that all applicable audits (for both sites that are already certified and new applicants) will be required to be to the new Materials Matter Standard from that date onwards.

Timeline

March 2024: Materials Matter Standard Pilot Version V1.0 is approved by IWG	Finalize core content to release for 2024 implementation planning and pilot testing
June 2024: Public release of the Materials Matter Standard Pilot V1.0	Unified standard released publicly with Materials Matter name, as well as supporting documentation to guide standards users
Apr–Oct 2024: Pilot test criteria and hold workshops for stakeholders	Pilot testing remotely and in the field; full standards system updates; promotion and education of new/revised content; progress on approach to recognition partnerships for external standards/tools
2025: Final Materials Matter Standard publication	Criteria and related policies are planned to be released on the publication date in mid-2025; a transitional period will follow publication to allow certification bodies and certified organizations to fully prepare for auditing
2026: Published standard will have an effective date followed by a mandatory date that begins during 2026	Standard becomes effective in the first quarter of 2026; organizations may request audits by approved certification bodies; standard becomes mandatory mid-2026: auditing and certification required for prior standard scopes superseded by the Materials Matter Standard

Scope

The Materials Matter Standard criteria cover practices and outcomes for the production and initial processing of raw materials, including primary/recycled feedstocks, and apply to farms, producers, and first processing facilities.

The main impact areas of the Materials Matter Standard focus on virgin raw material production (including land use practices in the raising of animals, as well as animal welfare, and treatment of workers), and the first processing stage of extracted raw materials and feedstocks (including processes such as wool scouring, dissolving pulp, chemical/mechanical recycling, down processing, and ginning).

The materials included in the scope of the pilot version of the Materials Matter Standard include:

- Animal fibers and materials: Sheep wool, Mohair, Alpaca, Down, and Skins
- Recycled: Synthetics, Natural materials, Recycled MMCF

Some of the materials proposed for inclusion within the scope of the standard will be added through a framework for recognition partnerships with organizations that own sustainability systems in an effort to focus on collaboration first and avoid duplication of standards systems. Partnerships for full recognition mean Textile Exchange would accept related certified raw material inputs into its standard system rather than through direct Textile Exchange raw material certification. Proposed materials that may be added over time are:

- Animal fibers and materials: Cashmere
- Fiber crops: Cotton
- Forest/plant-derived: MMCF, Biosynthetics

The standard is globally applicable, with no explicit geographic limitations except those that may occur due to legal restrictions.

Chain of custody

Principle 6 of the Materials Matter Standard contains fundamental chain of custody criteria to be met at the raw material production level. This section contains criteria for:

- **Material handling:** The physical segregation of certified materials from non-certified materials, maintaining an adequate identification system.
- **Volume reconciliation:** Maintaining records of volumes collected, produced, stored, and sold as certified.
- **Sale of certified materials:** The conditions to fulfill for making a certified transaction, including the application for a transaction certificate to be issued by the certification body for each shipment.
- **Logo use and claims:** The conditions for using the Materials Matter trademarks, including the Materials Matter name, the Materials Matter logo, and the Materials Matter Certified label. We will be releasing an updated version of our Logo Use and Claims Policy to align with the Materials Matter Standard in 2024/2025.

Under specific circumstances detailed in the preface of the Materials Matter Standard Pilot Version V1.0, organizations are required to implement the full Content Claim Standard (we will be releasing an updated version of this document to align with the Materials Matter Standard in 2024/2025), instead of Principle 6 of the Materials Matter Standard.

Structure of the standard

1. Organizational Management	1.1. General Requirements
	1.2. Shared Responsibilities
2. Human Rights and Livelihoods	2.1. Policies, Management Systems and Records
	2.2. Labor Rights
	2.3. Social Justice
	2.4. Livelihoods
	2.5. Management of Waste Collection for Recycled Inputs
3. Land Use	3.1. Management Plan
	3.2. Soil Health
	3.3. Soil Nutrients
	3.4. Pest Management
	3.5. Water Management
	3.6. Conservation of Biodiversity
4. Animal Welfare	4.1. Health and Welfare Plan
	4.2. Animal Nutrition
	4.3. Living Environment
	4.4. Husbandry Procedures
	4.5. Animal Shearing
	4.6. Herd Management
	4.7. Breeding, Birthing, and Caring for Young Animals
	4.8. Handling and Transport
	4.9. Handling and Transport Managed by the Organization
	4.10. Euthanasia and On-Farm Slaughter
	4.11. Slaughterhouse
5. Processing Facility	5.1. Environmental Management System
	5.2. Chemical Management and Restrictions
	5.3. Waste Management
	5.4. Water Use and Discharge
	5.5. Air Emissions
	5.6. Energy Use
6. Chain of Custody	6.1. Material Handling
	6.2. Volume Reconciliation
	6.3. Sale of Certified Materials
	6.4. Logo Use and Claims
7. Group Certification	7.1. Group Configuration
	7.2. Group Management System
	7.3. Group Member Requirements
	7.4. Inspection of Members
	7.5. Adding and Removing Members

Materials Matter and the Content Claim Standard (CCS)

The Materials Matter Standard will be underpinned by the same fundamental chain of custody requirements to track certified materials through the supply chain that were designed for our standards system today, using the Content Claim Standard (CCS).

The CCS has so far not been revised as part of the development of the Materials Matter Standard. It continues servicing our current standards, in addition to supporting the future implementation of the Materials Matter system. There are plans to review and revise the CCS and the standard will be open for feedback beginning in mid-2024, followed by the assurance documents in our standards system.

It is best practice for brands and supply chain sites to begin engaging with upstream partners in their supply networks to support their adoption of the Materials Matter Standard and ensure they are prepared for when it becomes effective in 2026. Although sites at the raw material production and first processing stages (Tier 4) are the ones applicable to meet the new requirements, proactive outreach and encouragement further downstream may facilitate the uptake and flow of Materials Matter certified materials during this shift.

Chain of custody applicability in the new standards system

Today, the CCS serves as a standalone chain of custody standard that can be applied to many different material types. This will not change in the new standards system.

The CCS is mandatory for all supply chain participants that take custody of certified material at the first processing stage, through to the brands making claims. Conformance with the CCS continues to be necessary to sell certified products and make claims about them.

Once the Materials Matter Standard is in use, it will operate together with the CCS in the same manner as the current Textile Exchange input standards, including the Global Recycled Standard (GRS), Global Recycled Standard (RCS), Organic Cotton Standard (OCS), Responsible Wool Standard (RWS), Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS), Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS), and Responsible Down Standard (RDS).

For supply chain sites and brands that are certified to the CCS, the Materials Matter Standard will not create significant changes to the certification process and sites will continue to be audited to the CCS.

Chain of custody for Tier 4

At the Tier 4 raw material level of the Materials Matter Standard, a chain of custody principle with related criteria has been added to cover core requirements for material handling, volume reconciliation, and selling of certified materials (including logo use and claims). This is to cover chain of custody requirements applicable to the initial handling of raw materials before processing, instead of requiring CCS certification.

Changes between the Materials Matter Standard and Global Recycled Standard (GRS) for Tier 1 to Tier 3

The planned changes in auditing scope for sites currently certified to the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) is where the greatest change will happen. An underlying principle for the Materials Matter Standard is to align with our climate and nature strategy that focuses on the reduction of emissions at Tier 4 for raw material production and the first processing.

Alignment and focus have resulted in impact-related criteria being developed in the Materials Matter Standard for Tier 4 only. Climate and nature impact criteria cover chemical management, waste management, water use, energy use, emissions, and human rights and livelihoods. They are designed to be implemented and evaluated only from the raw material level through pre-spinning processing.

The new standard does not cover impact-related requirements for supply chain sites in Tiers 1 to 3, nor for brands that require CCS certification. These tiers represent manufacturing stages covering the processing of materials into yarn and other intermediate products, fabric and trim production, final product manufacturing and assembly, as well as distribution and warehousing.

This is a shift from the scope of the GRS today which includes social, environmental, and chemical modules that are implemented and evaluated by all GRS-certified organizations in Tiers 1 to 4. Currently, it is envisioned that the social, environmental, and chemical modules will no longer be required in the supply chain once the GRS is fully replaced by the Materials Matter Standard, however, see following section.

Voluntary supply chain modules

Following the explanation in the previous section, the GRS will leave a gap in Tiers 1 to 3 when it comes to auditing environmental, chemical, and social modules. We are therefore currently considering how we can leverage partnerships with other verification systems as a way to offer voluntary modules in conjunction with the CCS. Connecting voluntary modules for different impact areas to the CCS will enable our shared management system to capture related verification data attributed to certified materials in an effort to offer a single source of truth for certification data.

Claims and labeling

The Materials Matter Standard will have a new standard logo and certification label. This is part of a larger, comprehensive update to the claims and labeling system. To support this shift, we are in the process of creating a transition plan that will allow adequate time for certified organizations to move to the new claims and labeling system while phasing out the current standards logos. The transition timeline is still to be determined.

Textile Exchange launched a labeling task force in 2021, composed of mainly brands and retailers. The goal was to obtain feedback from key stakeholder groups on the current claims and labeling system as we began the development of the Materials Matter Standard.

Once it was clear that we would need a new name and label for the standard, we embarked on a branding development project with an agency in early 2022. At the same time, emerging changes were being announced to EU legislation on green claims. As a result, Textile Exchange sought legal counsel on the possible name and logo options for the Materials Matter Standard to better align with the upcoming legislation. By the end of 2023, it was decided that the Materials Matter name and logo would encompass the various materials and scopes of the standard under one harmonized and clear visual presence. Please note that the consumer-facing label that will be used for certification claims is still under development.

During 2024, Textile Exchange will continue to work with the labeling task force to gather feedback on the consumer-facing certification label from an industry perspective. As we are conscious of the importance of consumer appeal, we plan to conduct consumer surveys and/or focus groups to gain insights. Finally, we are continuing our due diligence work related to legal compliance for claims and labeling. Further legal reviews and assessments of the new claims and labeling system will be undertaken as we work towards compliance.

While developing the new claims and labeling system, Textile Exchange will continue to actively monitor and align with legislation on green claims, including but not limited to the current efforts to address misleading claims and greenwashing in the European Union.

dTrackit

Our dTrackit traceability system was developed to supplement our standards in use today and it will be adapted to support the implementation of the future Materials Matter system.

This means materials certified to the Materials Matter Standard and traced via Transaction Certificates (TCs) will populate users' dTrackit dashboards in the same way material is certified to our existing standards today. Brands that are certified to one of our current standards will continue to have access to dTrackit once the Materials Matter Standard is adopted, assuming they continue to undergo recertification to the CCS. Brands that become CCS-certified after the implementation of the new standard will also be granted access upon registration.

TCs and Scope Certificates (SCs) issued by certification bodies for the Materials Matter Standard will be required to be uploaded to dTrackit as per our current policies and can be used to indicate conformance to the CCS during audits.

Human rights and livelihoods

As stated above, the CCS does not cover impact-related requirements for human rights and livelihoods for supply chain sites across Tiers 1, 2, and 3.

That said, industry actors should be aware of the approach and content in the Human Rights and Livelihoods section of the Materials Matter Standard. Successfully embedding these requirements all the way down to the first processing stage and raw material production level relies on the industry at large engaging their entire supply chains.

Textile Exchange aims to align the Materials Matter Standard with globally recognized human rights due diligence frameworks, namely the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD's Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector.

This is a strategic decision as these frameworks provide the basis for many existing standards, as well as the new and emerging due diligence laws and outline a common direction of travel. This enables organizations wishing to – or needing to – comply with numerous requirements to do so in a consistent manner.