

EMILCOTONI GREEN CHOICE



VOLUME 4

**GOTS e GRS
by ICEA**

Emilcottoni

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Up to us

When ancient Greeks used to talk about beauty, they meant a concept that was not only about appearance. Kalos kai agathos, they used to say: what is beautiful has also to be good. Form and substance are linked together so strongly that they form an unbreakable communion. There are still people who have not forgotten this lesson.

Thirty years ago our story began. At Emilcotoni we have always aimed to achieve a 360-degree excellence, which means that we are not concerned only about the qualitative side of our cotton but also the ethical one, as taught by ancient Greeks: we are 100% responsible for every choice we make.

As natural consequence of our long-term ethical need, over the years we have acquired many certifications that show concretely our commitment to constantly and accurately control the whole chain: from cotton cultivation to final product selling.

But there is something more: in 2016 at Emilcotoni we published a code of ethics where we put on paper all the values we believe in. These are the principles we want our company and all the people who work with us to respect.

It is hard work. Tough calls and sacrifices are our daily bread, but, with our eyes on the future, we keep going along the only path we know as true and fair. Aiming at a cotton product that could be qualitatively and ethically good.



Certified by ICEA [GOTS 2014-17]



GRS 2019-072 certified by Icea

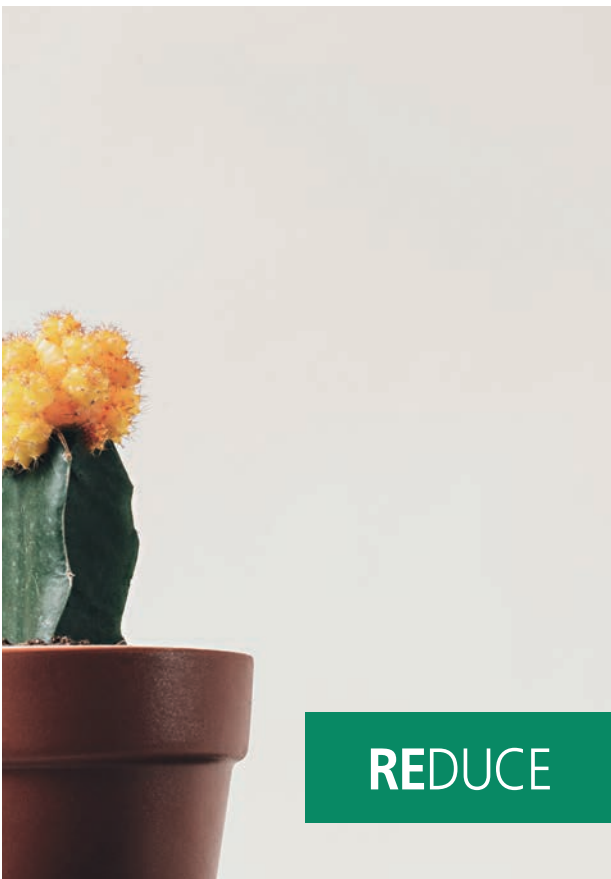


REUSE



RECYCLE

4 ways to make your own wardrobe more sustainable:



REDUCE



**BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR
CHOICES!**

Towards ethical consumption

To try to avoid this is pointless. If even an e-commerce, low-cost giant like ASOS has introduced the term “ethical” as a research filter for its products, it means that change is afoot. The whole world demands a more critical and conscious consumption model. Even more so in the apparel industry; an industry which, with its 1,3 trillion dollars and 300 million employees, if it were a country would end up being the seventh most important world economy. Dazzling numbers, were it not that they are often accompanied by other, deeply alarming ones.

The fashion industry is, in fact, one of the most polluting industries in the world. With its 20% of global waste water discharge and its 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions, it is second only to the petrochemical industry. What to do then? Buy less, buy better and, first of all, read the labels.

This is the direction where ICEA (Institute for an Ethical and Environmental-friendly Certification) is going. After being born from the experience of AIAB (Italian Association for Organic Farming), ICEA has gone even further and is nowadays aiming at something beyond this: an economy and lifestyles that are the result of a responsible conversion of methods, systems and practices. ICEA is responsible for two very important certifications in the textile industry: GOTS for organic products and GRS for recycled ones. Keep an eye on the labels, as we have mentioned before!



Countries or regions with the largest increase in GOTS certification in 2018.



Top ten countries in terms of total number of certified entities.

What does GOTS certify?

Let us start with GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard), the certification pertaining to organic textile products. To be certified as organic, a textile product has to meet two requirements. The first of these is that it has to be made out of natural plant or animal fibres, which have to be produced in compliance with organic farming national and international standards, such as the CE 834/2007 Regulation for Europe, the National Organic Program for the USA and so on. The second requirement is that the product in question has to respect GOTS ecological and social parameters.

An additional note: for a product to be labelled as organic, 95% or more of its weight has to be made up of certified natural and organic fibres; if, on the other hand, 70% or more of its fibres are natural and organic, then the product can be labelled as “made of x% organic fibres”.

However, as far as the fibre which interests us more closely is concerned, the matter is quite different: cotton can only be organic, regardless of its percentage. To be clear: if a product that contains 95% organic cotton and 5% conventional linen can be certified as organic, for a cotton product to be certified as organic, it has to be made of 100% organic cotton. A combination of 95% organic cotton and 5% conventional cotton cannot be accepted as organic. In other words, it is as safe as can be.



Traceability criteria

Everything said so far would end up being useless, if the monitoring did not extend itself to the labelling and transportation of the product. For this reason, GOTS has established that, whenever a property exchange takes place, an ICEA Transaction Certificate is emitted so as to guarantee that the batch of products which are being sold from one certified source to another is compliant to GOTS standards. To be clear: what comes out, goes in.

Moreover, it is standard procedure that every step of the supply chain is organized in such a way as to ensure that the organic fibres and the conventional fibres do not get mixed up one with the other and that the certified GOTS products do not become contaminated via contact with forbidden substances.

There are rules to be followed even for packaging. No PVC or chlorinate plastics allowed; also, the cartons used for this purpose have to be made out of recycled material or be certified in accordance with the standard on sustainable forest management.



All-round monitoring

But it does not end here. GOTS also takes into consideration many other spheres, one of which is the one concerning the chemical inputs used in the manufacturing process. Any chemical which could be used in the process must be approved by a GOTS certification body beforehand and has to be accompanied by its own material safety data sheet.

In addition, those companies who wish to have their products certified have to comply with local and national legal standards in regards to issues such as, for example, water supplies, waste production and management, chemical management, mixtures and harmful inputs.

To the ecological requirements we must then add the social ones. Indeed, every certified company has to abide by the local legal criteria on workers' rights, such as freedom of association, health and safety in the work place, child labor, fair hiring policies, and so on.



What does GRS certify?

Let us now complete our brief summary and talk about our second ICEA certification: GRS (Global Recycle Standard). Up until now we have talked about organic products, but now is the time to focus on another kind: recycled ones. To be certified as a GRS product, the product itself must be made of at least 20% recycled material, whereas in order to also be labelled as GRS, the percentage of recycled material which it must contain goes up to 50%.

Nowadays recycling is a hot topic: it is a major trend, but how many of us actually know exactly how it works? Let us take a step back and think about waste disposal: are we supposed to crumple the plastic bottles or simply flatten them? Used paper napkins are meant to be thrown away in the paper waste or in the organic waste?

It is not always easy to find an answer, particularly as each municipal authority has its own rules regarding waste disposal. However, there is at least one question to which we can give a reasonably clear answer. What do we mean when we talk about recycled material? The starting point is something which would have otherwise been disposed of as waste or used as a resource for energy. On the contrary, this material is reworked and transformed into a finished product or a product component.



Useable by-products

Talking now about cotton, not all of its by-products can be reused as recycled material. Let us see some examples:

REUSABLE

Carding scraps, spinning scraps, winding, weaving and sheets of fabric

NOT REUSABLE

Combing scraps, ironing scraps and slivers

This as regards specifically for cotton; however, regardless of each specific case, the criteria by which a by-product may be reused are the same for every fiber, and are as follows:

- ✓ The material cannot come from a production chain which has as its primary objective that very material. In other word: it cannot be the result of a deliberate choice of the producer.
- ✓ The material cannot be used directly without having been made to go through another production process beforehand.
- ✓ The material must not be ready for use in the same ongoing production process.



The necessary requirements

Just as GOTS, GRS as well pays a great deal of attention to traceability. Any company that wishes to apply for this certification must equip itself with a system for the monitoring of the mass balance of GRS products, which means that it has to keep a record of its input and output, so as to give proof of the balance existing between purchased raw material and sold GRS products.

GRS shares similarities with GOTS also in virtue of its social and ecological criteria. A profound respect for both people and the environment: this is the fundamental requirement which cannot be lacking.

There is also extremely rigid monitoring of the chemical inputs which may be used in the reworking of GRS products. The XIV attachment of REACH can be, within this field, an important benchmark when trying to decide what may be used and what may not, in addition to a compulsory evaluation by an approved certification body.

PURE

SU^{GOLD}IN
ORGANIC

BioDry

PIMA
NATURE

VIRT

Discover our GOTS and GRS certified yarns

The magical power of recycling

Maybe not everyone will know what this is. It is called kintsugi and it is the Japanese art which consists in repairing damaged objects with a golden resin.

If we happen to break a vase or a cup, most likely our first thought will be along the lines of: “What a shame! I will have to buy a new one”. But what if that vase was especially valuable? Or if that cup had been given to us by someone close to our heart? How could we bring ourselves to discard them? To save the day enter the ancient practice of kintsugi, the golden reparation.

A thin layer of golden resin is applied alongside the broken sides, so that it binds together the separated edges, and at the same time creates an extremely sophisticated collage effect. Because of the gold, the end result will be an object which will be even more valuable than the original, undamaged one.

It is difficult to practice the art of kintsugi at home, especially if one lives hundreds of miles away from Japan, and yet, maybe there is something we can learn from this faraway art form. Kintsugi teaches us that nothing is ever lost, that even out of something which appears worthless can emerge something extremely precious, if only one applies oneself to it with full awareness, care and passion.

At the end, can it not be said the same about recycling? No golden resin as added value – that is a given –, but what added value could be more important than the knowledge of having done something good for oneself and for others?

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