



# Global Organic Latex Standard (GOLS) and Interpretation Manual

Version 3.0

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## INTRODUCTION

The challenge for today's natural rubber industry is to find a reputable standard that truly addresses the concepts of green and organic. To meet this challenge, a few questions must be answered.

- Can organic claims be shown to be authentic, genuine and credible?
- Is there a standard/organic concept under which these products can be certified?
- Does a professional third party verify these organic claims?

Although there are natural rubber products with various claims concerning organic content, there previously was no standard for the processing and labeling of latex products. There are standards against which the raw rubber latex tree sap (as an unprocessed agricultural product) can be certified. The existing organic standards, however, have not sufficiently addressed the processing, handling, packing and labeling of natural rubber latex products.

The aim of the standard is to recognize products which may include, but are not limited to: mattresses, gloves, bands, shoe soles, toys, condoms and any other product made out of certified organic raw rubber latex. In addition to natural rubber latex, these products also may contain approved textile materials as well as other approved materials and accessories. In order to label the final product as organic, it is paramount that all the raw materials in the product, other than approved additional materials/accessories, comply with the requirements of organic origin.

The Global Organic Latex Standard (GOLS) recognizes the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) as a qualifying standard for textiles, which may be used in GOLS-certified products as covering materials. GOLS also recognizes the eco-INSTITUT-Label, which has the following test criteria: Mattresses and Test criteria: Bedding Goods. This will be accepted by this standard as complying with the chemical and finished product test criteria of GOLS-certified products. The eco-INSTITUT-Label standard also explains the requirements for other agricultural product that may be used in a GOLS-certified product.

The GOLS certification process starts with the unprocessed raw rubber latex originating from plant production. Each processing step (e.g. centrifugation, molding into latex core, and processing into a mattress) needs to be certified in order to label the final product as GOLS-certified. This ensures the implementation of standards throughout the value chain. Any intermediate product (e.g. latex core) and/or final product made from natural rubber latex can be certified and labeled as per the GOLS standard.

GOLS has been introduced to ensure a sound supervision procedure examining the route from the field level/farmer level to the certified organic latex product manufacturer.

Additionally, manufacturers that produce organic products covered under the GOLS logo must also follow social and environmental criteria as set forth by the standard. As a result, social and environmental responsibility is indirectly influenced by the end consumer.

Consistency of the quality of GOLS-certified products is one of the key focuses of this standard, which aims to prevent the introduction of "falsely certified" products into the market. The standard will protect the final consumer seeking to avoid bogus "green" products; while on the other hand, the standard also will safeguard certified organic latex-related manufacturers who follow acceptable procedures in their manufacturing processes.

GOLS enables manufacturers, exporters, and sellers to showcase natural latex products of organic origin, products that are socially responsible, environmentally friendly and traceable throughout their value chain.

## 1. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

This standard describes the minimum requirements to achieve GOLS certification for latex collection points, centrifuging, manufacturing and processing units, retailers and brand owners. The standard covers the requirements of processing, traceability, separation, identification, recordkeeping, quality control, environmental management, social compliance, labeling and distribution of semi-processed and processed final products made from certified natural rubber latex from organic origin, and approved additional materials/accessories. Sections 6 (Environmental Management), 7 (Social Compliance) and 8 (Registration and Audit Requirements) are compliance requirements for the entire facility where GOLS products are processed; the other criteria are relevant to specific products.

This standard can be applied to any product (semi-processed or processed final product), that contains certified natural rubber latex.

### **Interpretation**

Products produced with natural rubber latex are covered under this scope. The GOLS Standard does not cover products that are made out of synthetic latex. A company shall have valid certifications in place before starting the organic production to be labeled as GOLS. Any shipment made after expiration of the certificate cannot be considering as an organic product. Latex collection points, centrifuging, manufacturing & processing units, retailers and brand owners must undergo mandatory annual audits by the certification body.

## 2. PRODUCT REQUIREMENT

The product shall contain a minimum 95% certified natural rubber latex of its total weight of polymer content. A maximum 5% of processing chemicals and/or filler content can be found in the final product, not including approved additional materials/accessories. The product shall not contain synthetic latex and/or non-organic natural rubber latex. The status of the polymer and filler percentage must be verified via content analysis test(s).

The 95% of polymer content shall only include certified natural rubber latex. Natural rubber latex shall only derive from organic origin, as stated in sections 3.1 and 3.3 of this standard. Any other material of agricultural origin (other than natural latex) used for the product shall be in accordance with the requirements specified in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this standard. Any textile material used for the product, such as a covering material, shall be certified under GOTS. In such cases, the product shall label component-wise for easy identification by the end user. Any textile material and/or other agriculture material other than natural latex used in the product will be considered under the additional material/accessory category and excluded from the percentage calculation described above.

### **Interpretation**

A minimum requirement of the certified organic material is 95%, except for the rubberized coir products described under section 2.3 of the standard. It is mandatory to have content analysis reporting. The polymer percentage shall be equal to or greater than 95% and it shall only be natural polymer. Polyurethane foam or its derivatives are not acceptable. This includes memory foam, soybean foam, soy foam, bio-foam, eco foam, plant- derived foam, etc. Natural rubber latex shall comply with the requirement described under section 3.1 of the standard. Requirements for using additional materials and/or accessories shall comply with the requirements described under section 2.4 of the standard.

### **2.1 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT FOR CENTRIFUGED LATEX PROCESS**

Only natural rubber latex from certified rubber plantations shall be centrifuged. Natural rubber latex shall only be from organic origin, as stated in sections 3.1 and 3.3 of this standard. Processing chemicals for VFA control, accelerating agents and non-rubber precipitating agents can be added, and such records shall be maintained, along with the amount. Dry rubber content (DRC) of the received raw latex from certified plantations and dry rubber content after centrifuging shall be recorded, along with the waste percentage, and will be available for the auditor to review.

### **Interpretation**

The centrifuging unit shall comply with all requirements described in the scope. Annual audits and inspections shall take place at the centrifuging units. All records of latex collection, receiving to the unit, production, processing chemical, waste and dispatch details shall be maintained and made available for audit.

### **2.2 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT FOR LATEX PRODUCT**

Products made from natural rubber latex may include, but are not limited to: gloves, mattresses, pillows, sheets and toys. Products shall meet general product requirements of the standard described in section 2.0. Manufacturers producing only latex foam products as their final products are eligible to label them as GOLS-certified products. Any other operator applying physical changes to the certified product, which may include, but are not limited to: cutting, quilting, covering with textile products or adding other approved materials or accessories, shall meet the GOLS product requirement described in section 2.0 when adding additional materials/accessories.

Synthetic and man-made textile fibers only will be allowed as the lining of the product for supported gloves used for industrial purposes, and otherwise as approved additional material/accessories. In case of labeling, products need to be labelled component-wise for the end user.

Natural graphite is allowed, but limited to a maximum 30% of the total weight of the product. The status of the polymer and filler percentage has to be verified via content analysis test, and product needs to be labelled component-wise for clear identification to the end user.

When using steel coils or innersprings for mattresses, the steel coils/innersprings shall be properly covered or encased. Steel coils and innersprings, and their coverings or encasings, will be considered under the Additional Materials/Accessories category, and are excluded from the percentage calculations described in section 2.0 of the standard.

### **Interpretation**

A product that is produced with the use of natural rubber latex is covered under this scope. Any operator applying physical changes to the certified product, which may include, but are not limited to, cutting, quilting, covering with textile products or adding other approved materials or accessories, shall meet the GOLS product requirement described in the standard; and shall be verified via annual audit and inspection.

Synthetic and man-made fibers are allowable only for supported gloves used for industrial purposes. Products shall be labelled component-wise for clear identification to the end user.

Natural graphite is allowed, but limited to a maximum 30% of the total weight of the product. A content analysis test is mandatory. Product shall be labelled component-wise for clear identification to the end user.

Steel coils/innersprings shall be properly covered or encased. The weight of those materials will be excluded from the percentage calculation described in section 2.0 of the standard.

## **2.3 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT FOR RUBBERIZED COIR PRODUCT**

A minimum 50% of the total weight of the rubberized coir product shall contain certified natural rubber latex, which covers general requirements as stated in section 2.0 of this standard. Natural rubber latex used for rubberized coir products shall only be from organic origin, as stated in sections 3.1 and 3.3 of this standard. Coir fiber used for certified products shall meet sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this standard. In case of labeling, product needs to label component-wise for clear identification to the end user. If any rubberized coir product contains certified natural rubber of less than 50% of its total weight, it shall require special approval from the certifier, and the producer shall give a declaration for each product.

### **Interpretation**

Natural rubber latex used for the rubberized coir product shall comply with all requirements described under the standard. The polymer percentage shall be equal to or greater than 95%, and it shall only be natural polymer. Polyurethane foam, or its derivatives, is not acceptable. Natural rubber latex shall comply with the requirements described under section 3.1 of the standard. Coir fiber shall comply with exact requirements described under section 3.2 of the standard. Fiber source (ex: coconut husk for coir fiber) shall be of organic origin and shall be certified as per any recognized national or international standard at the origin and/or at the point of sale certified by an accredited certification body (as per ISO 65 or IFOAM.) Fabric used as exterior covering shall be GOTS- or OCS100-certified. Component-wise labeling is mandatory

## 2.4 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL MATERIAL/ACCESSORIES

Beyond latex, a product may use a variety of non-latex additional material/accessories including, but not limited to, steel coils, wood, supports, frames, borders, government-required flammability protection, cotton, cotton fiber products, synthetic fabric, fasteners and closing systems.

GOLS permits the following as approved additional materials/accessories:

1. Steel as a support material
2. Polyethylene as a support material
3. Polylactic fibers (PLA) and/or other natural or synthetic fibers as a flammability protection material
4. Synthetic and man-made fiber as a lining for supported gloves
5. Linings, interlinings, flanging, netting
6. Natural graphite as fire retardant
7. GOTS- or OCS100-certified fabric as covering material
8. Steel encasings

The weight of the accessories will be excluded from the percentage calculation described in section 2.0 of the standard, unless specially otherwise stated as being required; in which case they must be labeled component-wise. Any other material not listed above shall require prior approval from the certifier.

### **Interpretation**

Steel coils/innersprings shall be properly covered or encased. Fabric used as exterior covering shall be GOTS- or OCS100-certified. Synthetic fabrics or fibers may only be used for interior linings, interlinings, flanging, interior coils encasings, etc. All cotton, whether cotton fabric or cotton fills, must be GOTS- or OCS100-certified organic cotton. Natural or synthetic fibers used as a flammability protection material may not contain silica, boric acid, modacrylic or other flame-retardant chemicals. All polyethylene must meet USDA food-contact standards. Natural graphite is allowed, but limited to maximum 30% of the total weight of the product. A content analysis test is mandatory for analysis status.

## 3. REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIC RAW MATERIAL

- 3.1 Natural rubber latex for organic production shall be of organic origin, as per any recognized national or international standard at the origin and/or at the point of sale certified by an accredited certification body (as per ISO 65 or IFOAM.) Where country-specific standards are available at the point of final sale (e.g. NOP in the U.S.), the raw material shall comply with the standard applicable at the point of final sale and certified by an accredited certification body, as per a scheme recognized at the point of final sale. Products from in-conversion origin shall not be used for GOLS processing.

### **Interpretation**

Only certified natural rubber shall be used for GOLS products. The polymer percentage shall be equal or greater than 95%, and it shall only be natural polymer.

- 3.2 In the case of coir fiber, or any other fiber or any other agricultural raw material used, fiber source (ex: coconut husk for coir fiber, raw cotton for cotton fiber) shall be of organic origin and shall be certified as per any recognized national or international standard at the origin and/or at the point of sale certified by an accredited certification body (as per ISO 65 or IFOAM). Where country-specific standards are available at the point of final sale (e.g. NOP in the U.S.), the raw material shall comply with the standard applicable at the point of final sale and certified by an accredited certification body, as per a scheme recognized at the point of final sale. Products from conversion origin shall not be used for GOLS processing.

#### **Interpretation**

Any agriculture raw material used as fiber (e.g. cotton fiber and coir fiber) shall be from organic origin, as described in the standard. In the case of fabric foam, it shall comply with the requirement, as per sections 2.2 and 2.4 of the standard.

- 3.3 The product shall not contain any genetically modified organisms (GMO) material. This applies to the raw material, and not just the finished product.

## **4. PROCESSING**

### **4.1 TRACEABILITY**

At all processing stages, the operator shall introduce a traceability system that allows the organic components of the product to be traced back to its raw material supplier(s). The operator shall be able to demonstrate how the traceability system works, and how it is possible to trace a final product from the shelf to its original organic field latex/ organic raw material supplier, and vice versa.

The traceability system shall work from any point of manufacture. That is, in order for the final manufacturer to be allowed to pass on the label to the consumer, any entity also shall be able to trace the certified product to the field via the supplier, to ensure complete supply chain security.

Producer shall maintain records which clearly demonstrate input and output quantities, along with stock balance, at any given point of manufacture. That producer also shall be able to show explicitly the lot/batch numbers associated with those values.

#### **Interpretation**

Traceability records should be clear for the auditor to trace back materials. An overall summary record shall be maintained for received raw material and final production, including the waste. Records shall be in place for all locations that must maintain a mandatory scope certificate (e.g. latex collection points, centrifuging, manufacturing and processing units, retailers and brand owners).

## 4.2 SEPARATION/ COMMINGLING

- 4.2.1 Separation of organic products from products that are not certified as per this standard shall be maintained (in order to avoid commingling) at all stages of processing. Separation can be done either by time or space.
- 4.2.2 When the products are separated by space, a risk assessment (taking into account the possible threats of commingling) showing that the measures taken to separate organic product from non-organic product are sufficient to avoid any possible commingling or contamination, shall be carried out. Commingling requirements shall be indicated throughout the supply chain (including shipping) to maintain organic integrity from one facility to another.
- 4.2.3 A separation method shall be able to sufficiently demonstrate that risks identified during the risk assessment are corrected.
- 4.2.4 When separated by time, the operator shall demonstrate that a prescribed cleaning took place prior to processing and storage of organic rubber latex products.
- 4.2.5 The operator shall demonstrate that the production and storage areas are not treated with fumigants that are not allowed in applicable organic standards. The certification body must be informed of any deviation(s), and prior approval is required.

### Interpretation

Organic product shall be separate (space and/or time) from non-organic products. Organic latex shall be collected and stored separately, and transported to other units/locations without mixing with non-organic latex. Both centrifuging and manufacturing units shall have procedures to store organic latex separately with clear identification. If the production separates by time, then there shall be proper procedures to avoid contamination and commingling. Risk assessment shall be in place. Documented cleaning records shall be available for whenever the production is changed from conventional to organic. The company shall grant permission for the auditor to access documents and physical inspections at all locations.

## 4.3 IDENTIFICATION

Any processed product (semi-processed or processed final product) under the scope of this standard shall be identified throughout the processing chain with lot/batch number, product name and quantity.

When certified final products or certified partially-processed products change ownership, they shall be labeled in accordance with the indications stated under section 5.0 of the standard.

### Interpretation

Organic product (processed or semi-processed) shall be clearly identified throughout the processing chain. The company shall develop internal labeling system for easy identification. Separate locations shall be allocated with clear demarcations and labels/name boards. If processed or semi processed products are changed by ownership, then the product shall be labeled as per section 5.0 of the standard

#### 4.4 RECORDKEEPING

All procedures and practices related to latex production shall be supported by an effective document control system, in addition to accurate bookkeeping records (both of which shall be available for audit.)

- 4.4.1 The origin and quantities shall be documented for organic field latex and other related raw materials which have been delivered.
- 4.4.2 The quantities and consignees shall be documented for product produced in accordance with the standard, which have left the unit.
- 4.4.3 Documents required by this standard shall be kept for two years, and available for audit.
- 4.4.4 Any product of doubtful organic status may only be put into processing or packaging after any doubt is eliminated.  
  
A product's status of a product can be doubtful as a result of non-compliance to the standard at any stage of processing.
- 4.4.5 All of the unit's records shall be maintained in the premises. The records relevant to organic lots/ batches shall be complete, accurate, easily audited and shall carry reference to organic processing in order to separately identify organic records from the rest.
- 4.4.6 These records shall be able to demonstrate the received quantity, stock balance, in-process balance, completed products balance and waste percentage; as well as shipment documentation for each raw material.
- 4.4.7 Organic status of the raw/processed agricultural products used in processing must be clearly mentioned in records.
- 4.4.8 Reports on waste produced shall be available to the auditor, and must clearly show quantity balance.

#### **Interpretation**

Recordkeeping shall be clear enough to identify the overall organic production including, but not limited to, raw material receiving, production records, quality records, chemical usage including purchasing, technical parameters, ownership changes of the semi-processed products, shipments of finished products and transaction certificates. The company shall develop a procedure to identify the internal records related to organic products, such as a separate file system, document control procedure for organic product with different code system, etc.

#### 4.5 QUALITY SYSTEM

The following procedures and elements shall be covered either in the quality manual, or by means of standard operating procedure (SOP) maintained by the operator.

- Client number assigned by the certification body
- Organization chart showing responsibilities of those responsible for latex production and processing
- Flow charts of the operations pertaining to latex production and processing
- Complaints procedure explaining how actions are taken against complaints
- Documentation of procedures to handle situations when organic integrity is suspected of being compromised
- The unit's flow plan/factory layout
- Product specifications showing raw material composition, list of ingredients, processing aids, chemicals and recovery rate
- Documented procedures on how to prevent commingling/contaminations
- Traceability system
- Labels drafted with approval from the certification body
- Environmental policy

##### **Interpretation**

A written quality manual and/or standard operation procedure shall be in place.

#### 4.6 TRANSACTION CERTIFICATE

A Transaction Certificate shall be used for each transaction to capture the change of ownership of certified products. Transaction certificate for organic raw material shall be according to the organic standards applied at the field/farm level. When the raw material is certified as per EU Standards, this also may be referred to as an Import Certificate or a Certificate of Inspection.

Transaction Certificates shall include a statement on the standard against which the raw material is certified.

##### **Interpretation**

Transaction Certificates are mandatory for all shipments (export or local dispatch), whether the buyer demands them or not. Transaction Certificates are required whenever ownership is changed. This is applicable, but not limited to, natural rubber latex, centrifuged latex, finished or semi-processed product, coir or any other agriculture material, and textile fabrics which are covered under any organic standard. Samples of the GOLS product label shall be submitted for all Transaction Certificate applications.

#### 4.7 CHEMICALS USED IN PROCESSING

The company shall maintain a list of chemicals used to make the product.

The processor shall carry out a risk assessment in order to identify the potential health hazards caused by the chemicals used for GOLS production. The risk assessment shall list potential risks on the workers, users and the environment. The company shall be able to demonstrate in the risk assessment how these risks have been avoided or mitigated.

Any operator meeting the eco-INSTITUT-Label, Test criteria: Mattresses and Test criteria: Bedding goods will be accepted by this standard as complying with the chemical and finished product test criteria of GOLS-certified product.

Any operator that doesn't achieve above test reports shall meet the below test parameters described under sections 4.7.1, 4.7.2 and 4.7.3

##### 4.7.1 Test Parameters for Polymers and Filler percentage

| Filler Percentage                                                             | Weight % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Related to the total sample, the polymer portion shall be:                    | ≥ 95     |
| Related to the total sample, the ash portion (including zinc oxide) shall be: | ≤ 5      |
| Related to the total sample, the filler portion shall be:                     | ≤ 5      |
| Polymer Percentage                                                            | Weight % |
| Related to the polymer content, the natural latex portion shall be:           | 100      |
| Related to the polymer content, the synthetic latex portion shall be:         | Zero     |

(Source: eco-INSTITUT-Label Test Criteria:Mattress)

##### 4.7.2 Test Parameters for Emission Test

| Test Parameter                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Limit Value                                                | Test Method                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total volatile organic compounds                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ≤ 200 µg/m <sup>3</sup> (7days after test chamber loading) | DIN EN ISO 16000-6<br>DIN EN ISO 16000-9<br>DIN EN ISO 16000-11 |
| VOC (incl. VVOC and SVOC) with the following categorizations:<br><br>Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008: category carcinogenic 1A & 1B, Mutagenic 1A & 1B, Reproduction 1A & 1B; TRGS 905: K1, K2, M1, M2, R1, R2; IARC: Group 1 and 2A; DFG (MAK list): Categories III 1, III 2 | ≤ 1 µg/m <sup>3</sup> (2days after test chamber loading)   |                                                                 |

|                                              |                                                                      |                                            |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| TSVOC (total semi-volatile organic compound) | $\leq 40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (7days after test chamber loading)  |                                            |
| Nitrosamines (only latex product)            | $\leq 0.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2days after test chamber loading) | ISO 16000                                  |
| R value                                      | $\leq 1.0$ (7days after test chamber loading)                        |                                            |
| Formaldehyde                                 | $\leq 24 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2days after test chamber loading)  | Following DIN EN 717-1, DIN EN ISO 16000-3 |
| Acetaldehyde                                 | Following DIN EN 717-1, DIN EN ISO 16000-3                           |                                            |
| Disulphide (only latex product)              | $\leq 50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2days after test chamber loading)  |                                            |
| Odor                                         | $\leq \text{Grade 3}$ (24 hours after loading of desiccator)         | VDA 270; 40 °C                             |
|                                              |                                                                      |                                            |

(Source: eco-INSTITUT-Label Test Criteria:Mattress)

4.7.3 Any dyed textile material used as covering material shall comply with GOTS requirements. Exemptions are granted only for the textile product used as lining for supportive gloves.

### **Interpretation**

A written risk assessment shall be in place. The company shall identify the potential risk, and steps shall be taken to avoid or mitigate. Test parameters for the content and emission shall comply with the standard criteria defined under section 4.7 of the standard.

## **5.0 LABELING**

Packaging or the container of the final products or semi-processed products certified under GOLS shall be labeled with the minimum indications, as mentioned below.

- 5.1 Name and address of manufacturer (optional)
- 5.2 Traceability code (Batch Number or Lot Number, whichever enables to trace the product back to the field)
- 5.3 Client number (Issued by the certification body)
- 5.4 A reference to "Global Organic Latex Standard"/"GOLS"

5.5 Product name shall accompany the term “Made with ≥95% Certified Organic”. Component-wise label is acceptable with the prior approval of the certifier. For a situation in which a component-wise label is mandatory as per this standard, operator shall proceed according to that requirement.

5.6 GOLS Logo (optional)

If the GOLS logo is used, the certification body prior to its use shall approve the label.

### **Interpretation**

Each and every final or semi-processed product claimed under GOLS shall have a label as described in section 5.0 of the standard. When ownership of processed or semi-processed product changes, it is mandatory to have a label.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 WASTE AND POLLUTION MANAGEMENT**

6.1.1 The company shall maintain a written environmental policy indicating the following details:

- Person(s) responsible for waste and pollution management
- A waste management plan that includes strategies to reduce, reuse and recycle waste
- A waste management plan that includes strategies for reduction of burning of waste

6.1.2 There shall be visible actions and measures present confirming that the objectives of the waste and pollution management plan are being met.

### **Interpretation**

The company’s management shall maintain a written environmental policy or separate procedure.

### **6.2 WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

Wastewater, if discharged to surface waters from all wet processing units, shall be treated in an internal or external functional wastewater treatment plant before discharging. The operator shall meet the applicable national and local legal requirements for wastewater treatment before discharging to the environment.

6.2.1 Wastewater, if discharged to surface waters, shall be treated to bring the pH between 6 and 9 (unless the pH of receiving water is outside this range), temperature less than 40<sup>0</sup>C (unless the temperature of receiving water is above this range). COD and BOD values need to meet the local legal requirement for wastewater treatment.

6.2.2 Wastewater analyses for the above parameters shall be performed and documented periodically (at least once every three months) at normal operating capacity.

### **Interpretation**

Internal or external treatment plants shall be in place, or there will be a procedure in place to outsource the process. This is applicable for centrifuging and manufacturing units. Temperature and pH shall be checked on a daily basis before discharging. The company shall meet applicable national legal requirements, including COD and BOD.

## **6.3 ENERGY & WATER CONSERVATION**

- 6.3.1 Strategies for conservation of energy and water shall be implemented at the processing unit. Records of the staff training on energy and water conservation shall be maintained.
- 6.3.2 The company shall keep a full record of its energy and water consumption.

### **Interpretation**

Management shall have environmental policies or separate procedures in place and available. Documentary evidence shall be in place for staff training on energy and water conservation.

## **7 SOCIAL COMPLIANCE**

Employees are the key component of any organization, and when developed through education and training, contribute to the successful operation of a company.

Companies seeking GOLS certification shall meet the following social compliance criteria:

### **7.1 SAFE AND HYGIENIC WORKING CONDITIONS**

- 7.1.1 A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided by the company. Suitable steps shall be taken to prevent accidents and injuries.
- 7.1.2 The hygienic instructions shall be clearly displayed in relevant places, and provided by way of clear signs (pictures) or in the languages spoken by employees in the unit.
- 7.1.3 Protective clothing shall be used when it is legally required, or if it is required by the labeling instruction of the equipment or the material being used.
- 7.1.4 The company shall provide clean toilet facilities, clean food storage and restroom facilities that include a handwashing device, as well as a clean eating and rest area with potable water.

- 7.1.5 Accommodation, if provided, shall be clean, safe and meet employees' basic needs.

### **Interpretation**

Health and safety includes fire safety, safe use of machines and chemicals, provisions for protective equipment, sanitary facilities and first aid. Good health and safety standards are essential in the workplace, but maintenance of those standards only can be assured if adequate and ongoing training is given to all employees. A safe and hygienic work environment must be provided. Steps shall be taken to prevent accidents and injury by minimizing hazards. Regular health and safety training must be given to workers. Access to clean toilets and potable water, and if appropriate, sanitary food storage must be provided. Accommodation, where provided, shall be clean, safe and meet employees' basic needs. A senior employee shall be appointed as health and safety manager.

## **7.2 CHILD LABOR**

- 7.2.1 There shall be no new recruitment of child labor.
- 7.2.2 The company shall develop, take part in, or contribute to a program which provides for the transition of any child found to be performing child labor to enable her or him to attend and remain in compulsory education until no longer a child; "child" and "child labor" as being defined by International Labour Organization (ILO convention 138 and Recommendation 146-Minimum Age)
- 7.2.3 Children and young workers may not be employed at night.
- 7.2.4 Children and young workers may not be assigned any hazardous or unsafe work to their physical or mental health and development.

### **Interpretation**

There shall be no new recruitment of child labor, and companies shall have policies and programs in effect to permit any children found working to be in quality education until no longer a child. Children and young persons under 18 years old may not work at night, or in hazardous conditions. "Child" is defined by International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions as 15 years old or younger.

## **7.3 FORCED AND COMPULSORY LABOR**

- 7.3.1 There shall be no forced or bounded labor.
- 7.3.2 Workers are not required to lodge "deposits" or originals of their academic and professional qualification certificates, national identity cards or passports with their employer.
- 7.3.3 Workers shall have the right, as per their contract, to leave their employer after reasonable notice.

### **Interpretation**

For all suppliers, it is a minimum requirement to comply with all local and national laws. When employment is not voluntarily chosen, it is termed “forced labor.” This is defined as work being done carried out under the threat of penalty, so that workers do not have a choice about whether or not to work. Requiring workers to pay deposits when they first enter the workforce is similarly classified as forced labor. These deposits may include cash payments, or a deduction from the worker’s first pay packet. Preventing workers from leaving an employer when they wish to terminate their contract after the agreed notice period also is considered as not allowing the worker a choice of whether or not to work.

## **7.4 FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

- 7.4.1 Workers without distinction have the right to join or form trade unions of their own choice, and to bargain collectively.
- 7.4.2 The employer adopts an open attitude towards the activities of trade unions and their organizational activities.
- 7.4.3 Workers’ representatives are not discriminated against, and have access to carry out their representative functions in the workplace.
- 7.4.4 Where the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining is restricted under law, the employer facilitates and does not hinder the development of parallel means for independent and free-association bargaining.

### **Interpretation**

Freedom of association means allowing workers to form and join trade unions, workers’ associations, workers’ councils, or committees of their own choosing. The purpose is to promote good communication between management and workers. This communication can be an effective two-way process, where workers can raise their concerns with management, and vice versa. These groups need to be free to negotiate with management on behalf of workers on workplace issues, and to be able to “bargain collectively.” Effective communication can prevent issues in the workplace from escalating, thus minimizing the risk of workplace disruption.

## **7.5 LIVING WAGES**

- 7.5.1 Salary, wages and benefits paid for a standard working week or month shall meet, at a minimum, national legal standards or industry benchmark standards (whichever is higher.)
- 7.5.2 All workers shall be provided with written and understandable information regarding employment conditions, including wages, before they enter employment. They also shall receive a detailed breakdown of wage distribution each pay period.

- 7.5.3 Deductions from wages as a disciplinary measure are not permitted unless it is permitted by the national law, or such deductions freely have been negotiated with the employee, and a collective bargaining agreement is in force.
- 7.5.4 All disciplinary measures shall be recorded.

### Interpretation

The company must maintain and keep accurate records showing both standard and overtime hours for all workers (including piece rate workers). Companies must create a system to review pay records to ensure that all workers are being paid the relevant legal minimum wage. The calculation for minimum wage should cover standard hours only. Companies must ensure that the review process encompasses all wages, including overtime and all benefits, to verify that all workers are paid at least according to legal requirements. Workers should be made aware of wage rates in their contracts. Companies must ensure that workers understand their wages.

The law in most countries sets the minimum legal wages, sometimes by sector and by grade. Minimum wages, however, are often not adequately enforced by governments. Where this minimum wage is not enough to cover a worker's basic needs, an employer should be working towards implementing a living wage. This is usually calculated as a wage which will allow a worker to afford basic requirements such as food, water, shelter, education for children and an amount of discretionary income.

Basis for wages

**Minimum Wage:** Set by local law

**Industry Wage:** Current wages in the region depend on the designation/type of work

**Basic Need Wage (BNW):** Calculated based on standard basket of food

## 7.6 WORKING HOURS

- 7.6.1 Working hours shall comply with national laws and benchmark industry standards, whichever affords greater protection.
- 7.6.2 Workers shall not be required to work in excess of 48 hours per week on a regular basis, and shall be provided, on average, with at least one day off for every seven-day period.
- 7.6.3 Overtime shall be voluntary, shall not exceed 12 hours per week, shall not be demanded on a regular

### Interpretation

The law in most countries sets the number of hours of ordinary time and of overtime that a worker is permitted to work each week. However, it is common to find workers exceeding legal limits, especially during busy periods. Premium rates should always be greater than the normal rate of pay, even for piece rate workers. If any country's regulation does not demand for premium rate (e.g. Hong Kong), the company should implement an internal procedure to meet the standard. If buyers are demanding short time delivery, the company shall have a process working to redesign, outsource with partners, engage in production planning, offer flexible work forces, etc. to reduce overtime. If an auditor notices that excess overtime hours are gradually reducing, it is acceptable.

basis, and shall always be compensated at a premium rate. This rate shall meet the local law.

## **7.7 NO DISCRIMINATION**

There should be no discrimination in hiring, compensation, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.

### **Interpretation**

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated either favorably or unfavorably due to their personal circumstance, i.e. because of their religion, age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, or union or political membership/affiliation. Discrimination can be systemic in some countries/cultures, and can lead to an underclass of workers that lack opportunities to develop and improve. All workers should be given the same payment for the same work, and be given equal opportunities and benefits.

## **7.8 REGULAR EMPLOYMENT**

- 7.8.1 To the fullest extent possible, work performed shall be on the basis of a recognized employment relationship established through national law and practice.
- 7.8.2 Obligations to employees under labor or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship shall not be avoided through the use of labor-only contracting, sub-contracting or home-working arrangements, or through apprenticeship schemes where there is no real intent to impart skills or to provide regular employment; nor shall any such obligations be avoided through the use of fixed-term contracts of employment.

### **Interpretation**

Most countries have laws regarding the need for employment contracts, and the rights that workers have under that contract. It also is common for countries to have laws that cover the length of temporary employment contracts and probationary periods. Issues can occur when workers are unsure about their contractual arrangements with their employer. When there is no agreed contract, it is possible that workers are kept on temporary contract only, and for a longer time than that which is permitted by law. Probationary periods must not be extended for longer than the legally permitted maximum, which could lead to benefits being reduced and job security affected. In addition, illegally extended probationary periods could mean workers are not given entitled benefits, including work being terminated without legally required notice.

## 7.9 HARSH OR INHUMANE TREATMENT

Physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment, and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

### Interpretation

Most countries have laws that prohibit the mistreatment of workers, as well as laws covering harassment and the use of fines. It is important to know those laws and to follow them. Where there is a breach of those laws, disciplinary procedures should be implemented against any guilty parties. Examples of behavior that constitutes mistreatment include verbal abuse, shouting, threat of abuse, bullying and threats, illegal fines, sexual abuse, beatings, and humiliating punishment.

## 7.10 TRAINING PROGRAM

Workers shall receive training and/or instruction upon new recruitment, reassignment of work, or occurrence of accidents on:

- Global Organic Latex Standard
- Health and safety
- First aid
- Fire prevention and fire emergency procedure

### Interpretation

Annual training shall be provided, especially targeting new or reassigned workers. Fire drills shall be conducted in regular intervals (every six months at minimum.)

## 8 REGISTRATION AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

### 8.1 CERTIFICATION PREREQUISITES

The applicant company shall provide the following prior to initial inspection:

- Full description of the production unit/units, including:
  - Name and the address of the unit
  - Type of work performed
  - Quality System (as stated in section 4.5)

### 8.2 DESK STUDY

The certification body may call for a desk study in order to verify if the prerequisites are in order, so that the physical inspection can be planned. During the desk study, the certification body may:

- 8.2.1 Verify the presence and completeness of the relevant documents as stated under prerequisites.
- 8.2.2 Communicate identifiable risks to the client, with intent to minimize the risk on health and hygienic conditions of the end user and the employees.
- 8.2.3 Communicate, upon verification of prerequisites, with the client positive and/or negative findings in order to prepare the unit(s) for inspection.

### 8.3 PROVIDING ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND INFORMATION

The company seeking certification shall give the certification body, for inspection purposes, access to all units and premises, documents, personnel and administration that the auditor deems necessary.

### 8.4 ANNUAL AUDIT

Each latex collection point, centrifuging, manufacturing and processing units, retailers and brand owners shall be audited (onsite) according to the standard (GOLS) by third-party inspection/ certification body prior to the certification.

Each latex collection point, centrifuging, manufacturing and processing units, retailers and brand owners shall be audited (onsite) according to the standard (GOLS) annually in order to maintain GOLS Certification. The certification body reserves the right to carry out additional announced or unannounced audits, on- or off-site.

A latex collection point shall be audited during the initial audit, and the certifier can decide to conduct the follow-up audit as a desktop audit at this time. A mandatory physical inspection is conducted every two years for all latex collection points.

## 9. NORMATIVE ELEMENTS

01. Global Organic Textile Standard
02. Organic Content Standard
03. Social Accountability 8000

- 04. Fair Choice-Social and Fair Trade Standard
- 05. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions
- 06. Eco-INSTITUT-label Test Criteria: Mattress, Bedding Goods

## 10. DEFINITIONS

**Organic raw material:** Organic raw materials (or organically grown raw material) are grown without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides or fertilizers, genetic modifications, sewage sludge. These shall be certified from an accredited certification body.

**Organic in conversion:** Natural rubber latex or fiber shall be grown organically for between two and three years (depending on the organic standard) before receiving the organic certification. During this time, natural rubber latex or fiber is called “organic in conversion.”

**Latex:** This may be natural or synthetic, which is the stable dispersion of polymer microparticles in an aqueous medium.

**Certified organic raw latex:** Unprocessed rubber latex (tree sap) certified in accordance with organic standards, and applicable at the field level.

**Latex foam (or foam rubber):** Rubber that has been manufactured with a foaming agent.

**ISO:** International Organization for Standardization

**IFOAM:** International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

**NOP:** National Organic Program of USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)

**GOTS:** Global Organic Textile Standard

**ILO:** International Labour Organization

**GMO:** Genetically Modified Organism is an organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques. These techniques, generally known as recombinant DNA technology, use DNA molecules from different sources, which are combined into one molecule to create a new set of genes.

**Fumigants:** Fumigation is a method of pest control that completely fills an area with gaseous pesticides—or fumigants—to suffocate or poison the pests within.

**Accreditation:** A process used by third-party entities to evaluate, endorse and conduct certification activities in connection with a given standard.

**Final product/finished processed product:** A product that directly goes to the end user.

**Semi-processed/half-processed product:** A product that does not go to the end user. It may change ownership or processing steps.

**Transaction Certificate:** Certificate supplied by the certifier, confirming that the particular product has been produced as per the specific standard. Transaction certificate will be issued when ownership of organic raw material, partly finished products and/or finished products changes between different certified companies.

**Unit:** Any processing/storage/export and administration facility within the certified project or project applied for certification.

**Child:** Any person less than 15 years of age.

**Child labor:** Any work performed by a child younger than the age specified above.

**Young worker:** Any worker over the age of a child, as per above, and under the age of 18.

**Company:** An organization or business entity responsible for implementing the requirement of the standard.

**Salary:** Wages given to employees.

**Wage:** Financial compensation given to workers in exchange for their labor.

**Premium rate:** A rate of pay greater than the normal rate of pay.

**Collective bargaining:** A contract for labor negotiated between an employer and worker organization.

**Worker organization:** A voluntary association of workers organized for the purpose of maintaining and improving their terms of employment and workplace conditions.

**Discrimination:** Any preference based on color, religion, ethnic group, caste, political opinion, nationality or gender that causes inequality of opportunities or treatment of employees.

**Forced & compulsory labor:** All work or services that a person has not offered to do voluntarily, and is made to do under the threat of punishment.

**Contractor/ subcontractor:** An organization that provides the company with goods or services.

**Home worker:** A person that is contracted by the company, or by supplier or by contractor, but he or she does not work on their premises.