

Code of conduct for management of used textiles

1. Introduction

This code of conduct is part of a voluntary commitment signed by actors in the textile value chain. It provides rules and guidelines for securing a sustainable and responsible collection, sorting, reuse and recycling of used textiles.

It is aimed at any organisation performing collection, sorting, reuse and recycling of used textiles.

All criteria that are checked in an audit are marked with (Cx.x) to allow for a clear connection between an audit result and the criteria in the code of conduct.

2. Information, transparency and reporting

All statements in the code of conduct stated as “shall” shall be verifiable during certification or recertification. (C2.1)

Traceability of textiles shall be possible up to the point of end users being either private customers, recycled products or final disposal. (C2.2)

- Signatories are responsible for gathering all downstream information. If cooperation is made with a downstream signatory, the combined activities shall fulfil the criteria. (C2.3)

Documentation shall include receipts of all transfer of textiles to and from signatories and sorters, resellers or recyclers. Sorters, resellers and recyclers shall be able to verify the fate of received textiles (overall or specific to signatory) either directly with receipts or via third party certification. (C2.4)

All collected textiles shall be documented with weight or volume and source of origin. (C2.5)

Additional information on reporting requirements are found in the Certification and system operation document.

3. Collection

It should be made clear to the person handing used textiles to collection actors where the textiles are going, what the purpose of the collection is, who is performing the collection and how to find more information about the certification system. (C3.1)

General

Collectors shall not knowingly accept textiles that originate from illegal collection or textiles with uncertain origin. (C3.2)

Collectors shall accept all other textiles that are clean and non hazardous. This includes torn, worn-out and incomplete textiles (e.g. single socks). This should be made clear to the consumer. (C3.3)

In-store collection

There shall be clear and correct information about the collection including name and contact information to the collector, reference to the system and the main purpose (see section 9 for details on social performance) of the textile collection. (C3.4)

Kerbside collection

The collector shall specify which day collection will take place. (C3.5)

There shall be clear and correct information about the collection including name and contact information to the collector, reference to the system and the main purpose (see section 9 for details on social performance) of the textile collection. (C3.6)

Information on which products are accepted in the collection shall be clearly stated to the consumer. This must be in agreement with the requirements under section 0 of this Code of Conduct. (C3.7)

If material is not collected, due to not being textile, being soiled or otherwise contaminated, written information shall be given to the consumer. (C3.8)

Container collection

Textile containers shall only be placed after having achieved a permit for doing so by the competent authority and/or land owner. (C3.9)

There shall be a clear and correct labelling of textile containers including name and contact information to the collector, reference to the system including logotype and the main purpose (see section 9 for details on social performance) of the textile collection.(C3.10)

Stickers or similar shall be placed on the lids of the bins stating which materials are accepted in the collection. This must be in agreement with the requirements under section 0 of this Code of Conduct. Information in several languages may be used when appropriate. (C3.11)

Container sites shall be well maintained and the immediate area around the container shall be kept free from waste or textiles. (C3.12)

The collector shall ensure that bins are emptied frequently and that they are clearly marked with contact details in the event of problems. (C3.13)

4. Sorting

Sorters shall not accept textiles that originate from illegal collection or textiles with uncertain origin. (C4.1)

Sorters shall report sorting performance in percentage byweight or volume of received textiles whose next stage is in:

- Reuse (C4.2)
- Recycling (C4.3)
- incineration with energy recovery (C4.4)
- landfill or incineration without energy recovery (C4.5)

Sorting performance as described above shall be given for each specific supplier or as the residual of received material not included in sorting performance for a specific supplier. (C4.6)

5. Recycling

Recyclers shall report the level of recycling in percentage weight or volume of received textiles and the distribution between categories of recycled products. (C5.1)

Recyclers shall report the fate of recycling residues. (C5.2)

6. Reuse (including sales)

Sales of textiles by a certified actor may only be associated with the certification system if all reused textiles are included in the certification system. Sales of certified textiles together with new textiles are allowed if it is clear that new textiles are not collected within the certification system. See also section 0 and 0. (C6.1)

The percentage of sold (or donated) used textiles as a share of received used textiles together with the fate of unsold textiles shall be reported. Only the sold or donated (actually reused by a final user) textiles may be included as reused. (C6.2)

7. Export

Collected used textiles shall only be sold to companies with the requested competence regarding handling of these material flows. (C7.1)

Equal rules as described in this code of conduct apply for export of textiles as for domestic sorting, reuse (sales) and recycling. Other existing third party certification ensuring compliance with the criteria of the certification may be used as documentation for international actors. (C7.2)

8. Environmental performance

Collected textiles shall be treated according to the Waste hierarchy stated in the waste framework directive (2008/98/EC). (C8.1)

At least 50% of collected textiles shall be reused (annually) either by charity reuse, domestic sales or by export to an organization guaranteeing the level of reuse . (C8.2)

At least 90% of collected textiles shall either be reused or used as input for recycling (annually). The recycling should have a material efficiency of at least 60%. Recycling of textiles not suitable for reuse shall be according to best available technique with priority given to closed loop recycling before low grade recycling. (C8.3)

Signatories comply with the criteria for environmental performance if they only reuse textiles and send the remaining textiles to another signatory that fulfils criteria C8.2 and C8.3. (C8.4)

Collected items that are not textiles should not be included in the calculation regardless of being waste or other products with the exception of shoes. If shoes are included, this should be clearly stated. (C8.5)

Overall environmental performance

All signatories shall in all stages of the textile life cycle actively work towards an efficient management of textiles. This includes transports, facilities and all other activities related to the collection, sales/reuse, sorting and recycling of textiles. (C8.6)

Chemicals

All signatories shall work towards the removal of used textiles known to contain hazardous or otherwise unwanted chemicals. (C8.7)

9. Social performance

Actors within the code of conduct with a purpose of social benefit¹ may use the expanded logotype including a text of “for social benefit”. Since social benefit can include a wide range of activities, six of the criteria² listed below shall be fulfilled to include the social benefit text. Either criteria 1 or 2 must be fulfilled for all actors claiming social benefit.

A socially beneficial actor shall (for at least six of the following criteria): (C9.1)

1. Mainly reinvest profits in own or similar enterprises
2. Be non-profit
3. Have as main purpose to integrate people with significant difficulties getting employment and/or staying employed
4. Create partnership for coworkers through ownership, contracts or in other documented ways (e.g. membership)
5. Be structurally independent from the public sector
6. Be certified as having charity status³
7. Mainly be operated by volunteers
8. Have clear and transparent economic accounting
9. Protect human equity and equal rights
10. Have as main purpose to improve living conditions for humans living under particularly difficult conditions

¹ The reason for having a separate mark for social beneficial actors is due to the historic reasons for collecting used textile and the need to make it clear whether the donator of textile is supporting a socially beneficial actor or not.

² The criteria are partly based on the criteria for social enterprise used by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)

³ Examples are being the holder of a “90-konto”, being approved for tax deductions for charitable donations, etc.

10. Communication

All communication about the certification and collection, reuse/sales, sorting and recycling of textiles not elsewhere addressed shall be clear and with reference to the certification system website. Use of logotypes is only allowed if in compliance with the conditions specified in the certification system operation document. (C10.1)

