



# Standard-Setting Process

OEKO-TEX®

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**OEKO-TEX®**

**International Association for Research and Testing in  
the Field of Textile and Leather Ecology**  
Internationale Gemeinschaft für Forschung und Prüfung  
auf dem Gebiet der Textil- und Lederökologie

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# 1. Introduction

- Driven by sustainability and a dedication to transparency, the work of OEKO-TEX® is grounded in proven science. Therefore, our OEKO-TEX® standards are revised to ensure that new scientific findings, new regulations, or market requirements can be implemented and adapted at least on an annual base.
- Various OEKO-TEX® committees track global regulations, scientific data and industry technologies and discuss about future updates of the OEKO-TEX® standards. The committees consist of internal and external experts from various disciplines and countries. Textile engineers, technicians, chemists, toxicologists, lawyers, social scientists, marketers, etc. are represented so that as many perspectives as possible can be considered. Through this broad expertise and the collaborative negotiation process, we create industry-leading standards that meet the high demands for transparency and credibility. OEKO-TEX® inspires trust in the textile and leather industry.
- The development and revision of the OEKO-TEX® standards is based on expertise of the 17 international testing institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association. Furthermore, the concerns of stakeholders are highly important in the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process. The OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation as well as the International Advisory Board ensure that the interests of all relevant stakeholders are considered in the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process.
- This document lays down the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process to be followed for developing new standards and the revision of existing standards and its corresponding supporting documents.
- This document will be updated if a revision on the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process needs to be done.
- The purpose of the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process is to ensure that all OEKO-TEX® standards are and remain effective and credible. This aim is reached by incorporating transparency values and stakeholder engagement and to be in compliance with national and international laws as well as best practices for standards.

## 2. Framework

### 2.1 Guiding principles

The OEKO-TEX® Association defines the following guiding principles for the standard-setting:

- The revision of the OEKO-TEX® standards shall take place on an annual basis. In case of an urgent need, prompt revisions and amendments should be made during the year. Implementation manuals and implementation example documents may be continuously updated between the standard revisions.
- A consistent standard-setting process shall be ensured following the defined decision-making structures (ref. figure 1).
- The standard shall be structured allowing monitoring and progress evaluation towards achieving the standard objectives as set in the Theory of Change ([OEKO-TEX Theory of Change.pdf](#)).
- OEKO-TEX® should strive for simplicity and clarity in the structure, language, and content of the standards.
- Environmental, social and economic objectives of the standards shall be clearly specified in the standard document or the supporting documents.
- The process shall ensure that OEKO-TEX® maintains its global focus at all times. Therefore, OEKO-TEX® considers the most important international guidelines (e.g., EU, ECHA; Prop65) in standard-setting. Institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association should monitor changes in regional regulations and take them up for discussion in the Technical Committee if necessary.
- OEKO-TEX aims that the standards go beyond laws and regulations in order to enhance its impact on sustainability.
- OEKO-TEX® should make sure that the standards remains technically and economically feasible for a wide range of customers.
- The revision and development of standards shall prevent contradictions between the scopes of the standards.
- The standard shall not favor a particular technology or patented item.
- Developments of the standards should be based on the latest scientific findings and analysis to ensure that the standards reflect the most current and relevant scientific knowledge and practices.
- OEKO-TEX® should strive for the harmonization with globally recognized standards, systems and practices wherever relevant and possible in order to amplify recognition and adoption of the standards. OEKO-TEX® shall consider those standard systems acknowledged within OEKO-TREX® standards as well as similar standard systems in the further development of the OEKO-TEX® standard. A review shall be carried out.
- OEKO-TEX® shall keep details of all standard developments, revisions processes and records on file for minimum 5 years and make them available to stakeholders upon request.

This includes the following:

- OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process
- OEKO-TEX® organizational overview
- List of stakeholders contacted throughout the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation process
- OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation content
- OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation feedback and summaries
- Versions of the standards

## 2.2 Sustainability outcomes

- The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all people. OEKO-TEX® supports the industry and society on its path of transforming the world through actions. The OEKO-TEX® portfolio of independent certifications and product labels enables companies along the textile and leather supply chain and all consumers to make responsible decisions in favor of products that are harmless to health, environmentally friendly and manufactured in a socially responsible way.
- The sustainability outcomes are described in the OEKO-TEX® Theory of Change: [OEKO-TEX Theory of Change.pdf](#)

## 3. Definitions

<b>OEKO-TEX® Association</b>	Association consisting of the OEKO-TEX® secretariat and independent textile and leather testing institutes.
<b>OEKO-TEX® Executive Committee</b>	Group of managing directors of the OEKO-TEX® secretariat and the founding institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association, which makes strategic and tactical decisions based on internal findings and proposals from the Working Groups and Committees as well as the input from different stakeholders.
<b>OEKO-TEX® General Management</b>	Body of representatives of each of the OEKO-TEX® institutes, with the task of defining and expressing final positions and recommendations and to decide on the further development of the standards and to define the strategic orientation.
<b>OEKO-TEX® International Advisory Board</b>	Body of stakeholder representatives for the professional monitoring of the further development of standards.
<b>OEKO-TEX® International Marketing Meeting</b>	Group of responsible marketing persons of the institutes formed to exchange knowledge and experience as well as to discuss and decide on OEKO-TEX® marketing strategy and processes.
<b>OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation</b>	Public consultation taking place biannually to involve all stakeholders in the standard setting process and giving them the possibility feedback on the OEKO-TEX® standards and future developments.
<b>OEKO-TEX® standards</b>	The results of the joint research and development of the OEKO-TEX® institutes. The standards are publicly available on our website <a href="http://www.oeko-tex.com">www.oeko-tex.com</a> .



<b>OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process</b>	The procedure for development and revision of OEKO-TEX® standards defined in a document of the same name.
<b>OEKO-TEX® stakeholders</b>	Any organisation that can directly or indirectly influence and/or impact the vision and mission of OEKO-TEX®.
<b>OEKO-TEX® Steering Committee</b>	Body for the technical examination and evaluation of proposals made by the Technical Meetings, consisting of representatives of the institutes and the OEKO-TEX® secretary.
<b>OEKO-TEX® supporting documents</b>	Documents that define the unified interpretation of the standards such as the OEKO-TEX® MADE IN GREEN implementation examples or the OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100 testing methods.
<b>OEKO-TEX® Technical Committees</b>	Groups made up of experts from the testing institutes in various areas and countries who jointly discuss possible adjustments. Textile engineers, technicians, chemists, lawyers, social scientists, marketers, etc. are represented so that as many perspectives as possible can be considered.
<b>OEKO-TEX® Working Groups</b>	Bodies composed of experts from the OEKO-TEX® institutes, with the task of scientifically preparing and supporting analyses, studies and trials.
<b>Shall</b>	Indication of a mandatory requirement.
<b>Should</b>	Indication of a recommendation.

## 4. Overview organizational structure

Decision making within the OEKO-TEX® Association is conducted on operational, strategical, and political level within a defined organizational structure, which is shown in figure 1:

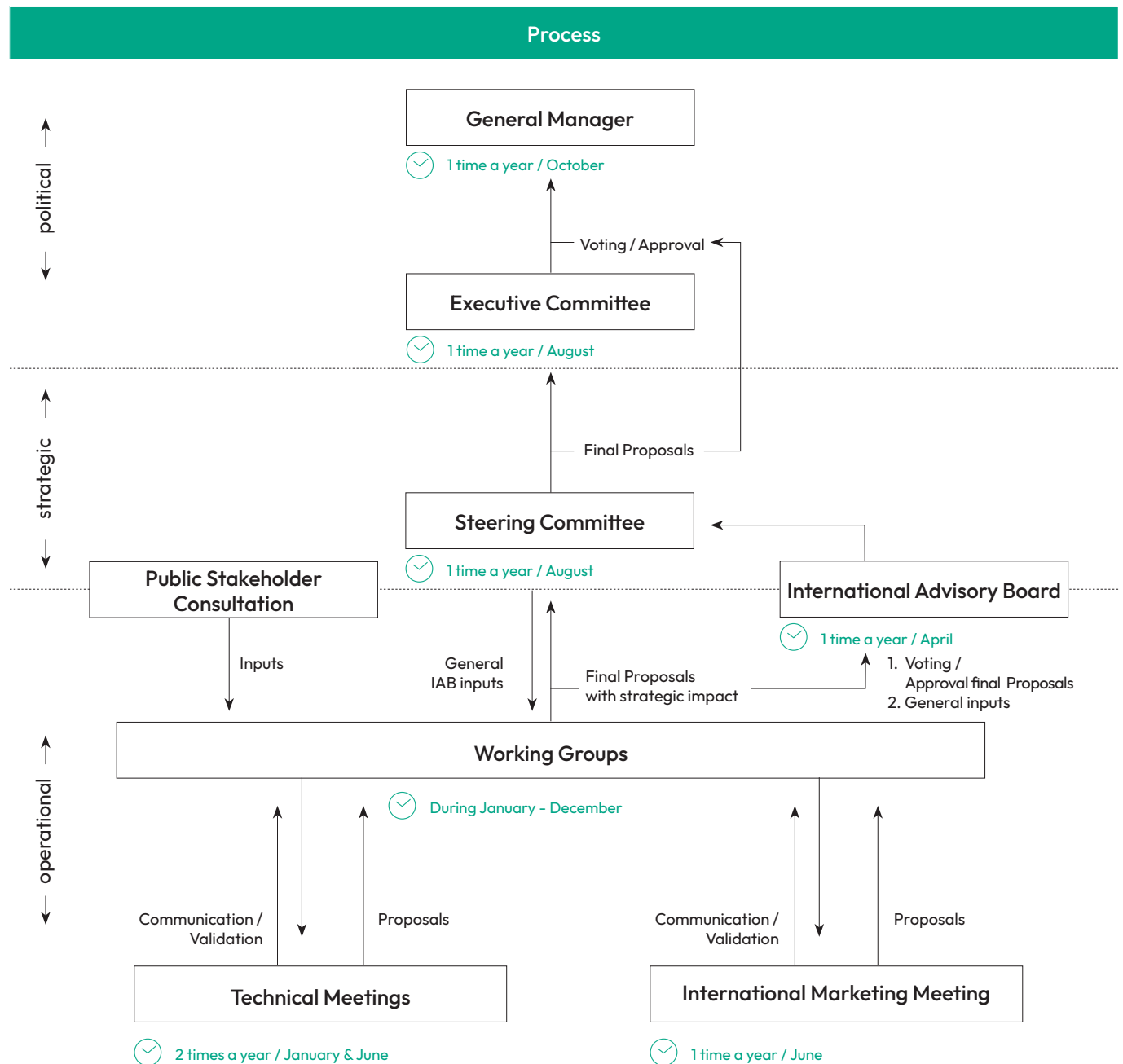


Figure 1: OEKO-TEX® organizational overview

## 5. Revision process

The OEKO-TEX® standards are revised and updated through continuous improvement, which involves a regular process for comprehensive revisions of the standards. The following steps shall be taken:

### 5.1 Public Stakeholder Consultation

- Every two years OEKO-TEX® shall conduct a Public Stakeholder Consultation available to all interest groups on the OEKO-TEX® website. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall inform about the Public Stakeholder Consultation on the OEKO-TEX® website, through newsletter, via email and social media prior to the start of the Public Stakeholder Consultation.
- Through a stakeholder mapping process, OEKO-TEX® shall identify interest groups that are likely to affect or be affected by the scope of the consultation. Those individuals or groups shall be proactively invited to the participation at the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation.
- Standard organisations whose standards have been benchmarked with the OEKO-TEX® standards shall be key stakeholders in the standards development and revision process. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat should engage with them directly in the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation process.
- Stakeholders are asked to provide feedback on the current standard versions as well as the future developments in at least one round of public consultation. The first round shall normally include a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments.
- The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall consolidate and organize the comments. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall present the consolidated feedback to the Working Groups in developing proposals to update the OEKO-TEX® standards.
- Where substantive issues persist after the consultation or where insufficient feedback was received, an additional feedback round should be carried out. The second round of consultation shall normally include a period of 30 days.
- After the consultation, first insights shall be prepared and published on the OEKO-TEX® website. The document shall highlight the number and type of stakeholders who participated in the consultation, the location of participants as well as summarized results.
- OEKO-TEX® shall publish detailed feedback in how far the individual comments received have been considered in the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat should sent the feedback directly to all parties that submitted comments.



## 5.2 Technical Committee meeting

- During the Technical Committee meetings information and experience are exchanged. The meetings serve as a discussion platform where proposals for OEKO-TEX® products regarding all important (standard, intranet, audit, test methods, guidebook) shall be made.
- External factors that potentially have an influence on the intended sustainability outcomes (ref. chapter 2.2) should be considered in the discussions and elaboration of proposals.
- Technical Committee is informed about the decisions taken by the Working Group or strategic committees.
- Technical Committee meetings shall take place twice a year, usually at the beginning and mid of a year.
- The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall be responsible for the organization and coordination.

## 5.3 Working Group meetings

- Working Groups should meet regularly for compilation and deepening of the proposals made in the Technical Committee meetings. Elaborations and discussions are presented in the Technical Committee meetings. Additionally, feedback from external stakeholders of the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation shall be discussed and considered for implementation. They shall work on document optimization, product developments and implementation across all standards. The implementation shall be coordinated by the respective OEKO-TEX® Working Group leader.
- The Working Group shall have the right to decide on technical or operational changes.
- In case of conceptual changes, an approval by a strategic committee shall be made. A conceptual change is characterized by the fact that it has a business impact on the OEKO-TEX® organization, its institutes or its products and services. Therefore, the Working Group shall prepare a management summary. The OEKO-TEX® Working Group leader shall be responsible for coordinating and forwarding the management summary to the higher-level committees.

## 5.4 Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee shall take place once a year after the first Working Group meetings. It is responsible to give technical expertise on the proposals and ensures that the OEKO-TEX® standards are developed without contradictions to each other.
- Advice on the proposals made shall be presented to the International Advisory Board, the Executive Committee and the General Manager meeting.

## 5.5 International Advisory Board

- The International Advisory Board should give advice and decides on proposals that have been developed by the OEKO-TEX® Working Groups and submitted by the Steering Committee. It shall inform the Steering Committee about priorities and strategies that are relevant to the goals of OEKO-TEX®.
- The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall be responsible for the coordination of the International Advisory Board.
- Ideas and proposals given by the International Advisory Board shall be discussed in the respective Working Group.
- Whether the respective proposal is followed up or not should be explained by the Working Group.
- Further information about the International Advisory Board can be found here:  
[OT\\_International\\_Advisory\\_Board\\_01.2021.pdf](#) (oeko-tex.com)

## 5.6 Executive Committee

- Based on advice from the Steering Committee and International Advisory Board, the Executive Committee shall discuss about strategical topics to follow the mission, vision, and values of the OEKO-TEX® Association.
- Advice shall be given to the Working Groups which are responsible for elaborating the proposals.

## 5.7 General Manager meeting

- During the annual General Manager Meeting final decisions shall be made ensuring the position in consensus with the complete OEKO-TEX® Association.
- In case of rejections of the proposals, the general managers shall seek to establish the reasons for rejections and forward those to the Working Group for consideration. The Working Group shall then reconvene. In case of further revision, the draft standard shall be re-submitted to the general managers for approval, with an explanation on the elaborations.

## 5.8 Publication of the final standard version

- The revised versions of the standards shall be published at the beginning of a calendar year. It shall be clearly identified with a version number and date.
- Generally, the new regulations shall come into force in the first quarter of the respective year of the respective year with exception for new or more severe requirements. Normally a transition period of implementation should be set up (ref. Chapter 5.9). Directly affected stakeholders shall be informed regarding the new documents. Others shall be informed via the media.
- All standards and supportive documents as well as an overview with new regulations shall be made publicly



available through the OEKO-TEX® secretariat on the OEKO-TEX® website.

## 5.9 Transition period

- For the new regulations released beginning of a year a transition period of 3 months should be provided. In case of substantial changes, transition periods of more than 3 months can be conducted.
- Verification shall take place during the next conducted audit.

## 5.10 Complaints

- All complaints on issues related to the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process can be submitted via the OEKO-TEX® complaint mechanism. It is publicly available on the OEKO-TEX® website:  
[Complaint form](#) (oeko-tex.com)

## 5.11 Alignment with benchmarked standards

- Once the standard has been revised, benchmarked standards shall carry out together with the OEKO-TEX® secretariat an updated benchmarking process to ensure alignment between OEKO-TEX® and partner standards.

## 6. Standard development process

OEKO-TEX® aims to support industry and society on its path of transforming the world through action. Therefore, a core task is the development of new standards. To ensure the creation of high-quality standards that meet high demands for transparency and credibility the following steps shall be taken:

### 6.1 Decision for a standard development

- Proposals for the development of a new standard can be raised by any stakeholder in the OEKO-TEX® Public Stakeholder Consultation or by members of the OEKO-TEX® Association in the Technical Committees.
- The proposal maker shall work out first details, the OEKO-TEX® secretariat can assist.
- Based on a demand assessment done by the OEKO-TEX® secretariat and institutes, the decision for the development of a standard is made by the general managers.

### 6.2 Development of a standard and related resources

- The development of a new standard shall be assigned by the general managers to an existing working group. If necessary, a new working group shall be initiated. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall define requirement criteria for the participation of institutes members and make it available to the institutes. The institutes shall announce participants and provide their contact information.
- Meetings of the working group should take place regularly and shall be organized by the OEKO-TEX® secretariat.
- The scope of the standard shall be defined. The mission of the standard shall follow intended sustainability outcomes of OEKO-TEX® defined in the Theory of Change: [OEKO-TEX Theory of Change.pdf](#)
- The Working Group shall elaborate a plan for the standard development based on the content of the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process document. It should include tasks, milestones, timelines and responsibilities. The general managers shall give approval to follow the plan.
- The Working Group shall conduct research on background information and a market analysis. Applicable international and national regulations as well as latest research findings shall be considered.
- The standards shall be elaborated and reviewed based on the guiding principles (ref. Chapter 2.1) and research findings.
- The requirements for the OEKO-TEX® institutes to certify according to the standard shall be defined. The Working Group shall analyze and define which institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association fulfill the criteria. If there are external criteria (legal requirements or international norms) for the requirement profile, this shall be included in the standard.

- The Working Group shall elaborate a process of certification (if applicable). The process should be at least similar to those processes already existing and shall ensure simplicity, transparency and credibility.
- The Working Group shall work together with the heads of the OEKO-TEX® secretariat departments to inform them about the implications and necessary resources. The OEKO-TEX® secretariat departments shall proceed all necessary steps and develop all required supporting documents and tools in exchange with the Working Group and other relevant Working Groups. Involved OEKO-TEX® secretariat departments are:
  - Business Development
  - IT & Digitalization
  - Legal
  - Marketing
  - Product Management
  - Quality
  - Stakeholder Engagement
- The working group shall elaborate the pricing based on the structure defined in the OEKO-TEX® Sources of Income document: OEKO-TEX Sources of Income. The approval to the price structure is made by the Executive Committee.
- OEKO-TEX® secretariat shall create and organize internal trainings for the institutes.

### 6.3 Pilot testing and stakeholder revision

- The draft standard should be tested or piloted for relevance and auditability. Insights into the results of the pilot testing shall be made available on request where there is justified interest.
- Based on a stakeholder mapping, the draft standard shall be sent to important stakeholders for review.
- Elaborations of the standard and related supporting documents and tools shall be done based on feedback received through pilot testing and stakeholder revision. In case of rejections of the proposals received through feedback OEKO-TEX® shall seek to establish the reasons for rejections and inform the stakeholders.

### 6.4 Final approval and launch

- The final approval to the launch of a new standard shall be made by the general managers.
- The new standard shall be made publicly available by the OEKO-TEX® secretariat on the OEKO-TEX® website. Based on a stakeholder analysis, potentially directly affecting, or being affected stakeholders should be informed directly. The standard shall come into force with launch.

### 6.5 Standard revision

- The revision of the new standard follows the OEKO-TEX® Standard-Setting Process defined in chapter 5.