Certifications are a useful way to determine the standards that companies adhere to, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability and responsibility, and labour rights. This is a general overview of some of the most prominent certifications, especially for companies based in the UK/Europe. There are issues with certifications, and some are better than others, as they don't always catch issues present in supply chains, however, they are one of the most helpful tools we currently have available to us. Similarly, just because a company isn't certified doesn't mean that they aren't ethical as many certifications require a payment and/or significant amount of time which is inaccessible to smaller businesses.

Created by Jemima Elliott on behalf of Goodstrangevibes. This information is accurate as of July 2021.

B-Corp
- Measures a company's overall social and environmental performance/impact
    - Supply chain, input materials, charitable giving and employee benefits
- Includes many different brands, including Patagonia who are a renowned ethical/sustainable business and are one of highest scoring in Remake's brand directory (see below)
- Brands do own self-assessment which is then tested and reviewed
    - Example questionnaire https://blab-mktg-bcorporation-production.s3.amazonaws.com/B_Corp_DisclosureQuestionnaire-blank.pdf
    - 'In rare cases the company's Certification will be denied or revoked'
    - 'Companies are asked to provide information and/or documentation to support six to fifteen answers on their B Impact Assessment'
    - Several calls, interviews and background checks
    - Every year 10% of all recertifying Certified B Corps selected for an in-depth Site Review
    - Update every 3 years for recertification
- Newer emphasis on climate justice https://bcorporation.net/climate?_ga=2.93796443.771445994.1623063577-1715138206.1623063577
- https://bcorporation.uk/certification

FairWear Foundation
- Run programmes on a variety of issues
    - Worker empowerment
    - Ending gender-based violence
    - Change on the factory floor
    - Remediating worker issues
    - Pushing for living wages
    - Taking action in production countries
- Member brands sign up to FairWear's Code of Labour Practices
    - https://www.fairwear.org/about-us/labour-standards
    - Derived from ILO Conventions and UN Declaration of Human Rights
    - Employment freely chosen (i.e. not forced)
    - Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (i.e. unions)
    - No discrimination in employment

- No exploitation of child labour
- Payment of living wage
- Reasonable hours of work
    - No more than 48, at least one day off a week, not more than 12 hours overtime and no regular overtime
- Safe and healthy working conditions
    - Abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, COVID, chemicals, etc.)
- Legally binding employment relationship
- Factory names their member brands source from https://www.fairwear.org/resources-and-tools/factories
    - Don't audit, member brands are responsible for this
- Living Wage tool to compare factories
    - https://www.fairwear.org/resources-and-tools/wage-ladder
- I have personally seen them cited various times by other slow fashion advocates/labour rights campaigners/groups I trust
- https://www.fairwear.org/

Worldwide Responsible Accredited (previously Apparel) Production (WRAP)
- Launched 2000
    - 'The world's largest independent certification program focused on the apparel, footwear, and sewn products sectors.'
- Pre-Audit self-assessment, monitored, notified of any corrections needed to be made
- 3 levels of certification https://wrapcompliance.org/certification/
    - Platinum (2 years, full compliance on 3 consecutive audits, no corrective actions needed), Gold (1 year, full compliance), Silver (6 months, issues but doing part of it)
- Zero Tolerance Policy
    - Automaticlly decertified if found to be participating in/associated with issues such as forced labour, child labour, inumane treatment, false portrayal of production services etc.
- 12 guiding principles
    - Compliance with local laws
    - Prohibition of forced labour
    - Prohibition of child labour
        - 'Faculties will not hire any employee under the age of 15 (14 in less-developed countries) or under the minimum age established by law for employment, whichever is greater, or any employee whose employment would interfere with compulsory schooling.'
            - In UK, compulsory schooling until 16, compulsory education (i.e. A levels, BTECs or Apprenticeships) until 18
            - If working in the UK under 18 should be part time and limited hours
    - Prohibition of harassment and abuse
    - Compensation and benefits
    - Hours of work
    - Prohibition of discrimination
    - Health and safety
    - Freedom of association and collective bargaining (i.e. trade unions)

- Environment
    - Waste management, monitoring disposal of waste materials safely, principles of reduce, reuse, recycle through operations
    - 'Consistent with all relevant laws'
- Customs compliance
- Security
- https://wrapcompliance.org/12-principles/
- References to conventions of International Labour Organisation (ILO), UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD)
- 'The WRAP Certification Program's objective is to independently monitor and certify compliance with these standards, to ensure that sewn products are being produced under safe, lawful, humane, and ethical conditions. Participating facilities voluntarily commit to ensuring that their manufacturing practices will meet these standards, and further commit to passing along, on their part, the expectation that their contractors and suppliers likewise comply with these standards.'
- Legal compliance of country of manufacturing
    - Employment and labour laws
    - Incl. standards of ethics relating to corruption, transparency, and environmental laws

Living Wage Employer
- Launched 2011 by Citizens UK
- Pay real living wage to all directly employed staff (£9.50/hr or £10.85/hr London)
    - Applies to everyone +18, currently voluntary as the Government has different minimum wage rates
- Plan to pay contractors living wage
- https://www.livingwage.org.uk/faqs#t138n1747
- Application by brands to prove they pay these rates

Organic Soil Association
- Certify on 2 standards
    - GOTS and OCS
- Members take part in campaigns, free marketing materials, access to global reports, new market routes
- Application forms followed by inspections
- https://www.soilassociation.org/

Sedex
- Launched 2005
- 'One of the world's leading ethical trade membership organisations, working with businesses to improve working conditions in global supply chains.'
- Forced Labour Indicator Tool
  https://www.sedex.com/sedex-releases-new-forced-labour-indicators-tool/
    - Indicators based on ILO research to help brands/suppliers identify where forced labour is taking place
- Can join as a supplier and buyer

- Ethical Trade Co-ordinators to help support buyers
https://www.sedex.com/our-services/sedex-ethical-trade-coordinator-service/
  - Can't find any criteria to become a member? Basically you join up and have access to lots of learning materials/supported to ensure supply chain is more ethical and sustainable
    - Focus on guidance and achieving aims
      - https://www.sedex.com/our-services/smeta-audit/smeta-documents/
  - https://www.sedex.com/

No Sweat
  - Launched 2000
  - More of a campaign group than certification but their logo is sometimes used by brands (presumably with permission and with certain criteria)
  - Can buy wholesale from them but think just blank t shirts w/o printing
https://nosweat.org.uk/t-shirts/
  - https://nosweat.org.uk/campaigns/our-story/

Fairtrade
  - Launched 1992 by a number of nonprofits
  - Working with cotton farmers since 2010
  - Probs one of the most famous names in this area
  - All factories using Fairtrade cotton comply with ILO conventions
  - Requirements
    - 'All operators taking ownership of Fairtrade certified products and/or handling the Fairtrade Price and Premium are audited and certified. This chapter applies to the certificate holder.'
    - 'Purchase and sale of seed cotton'.
    - If insufficient material, allowed to contain up to 20% non-Fairtrade cotton
    - Suppliers must demonstrate that they comply with ILO conventions
      - Hours of work
      - Forced Labour
      - Freedom of Association and right to organise
      - Equal remuneration
      - Abolition of Forced Labour
      - Discrimination
      - Minimum wage fixing
      - Minimum age
      - Occupational safety and health
      - Elimination of the worst forms of child labour
      - Demonstrate all subcontractors comply too
  - https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/farmers-and-workers/cotton/
  - https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traceability-of-Fairtrade-Cotton.pdf
  - https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/buying-fairtrade/clothes/

Remake Seal of Approval/Brand Directory
  - Mostly a ranking system rather than 'certification' per se. Many brands are included and are being added all the time. Remake do not receive any funding from brands or

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from brands/corporate foundations. Points are given based on a variety of factors (see below). 50/100 is enough to pass and receive the Remake Seal of Approval.
- https://vimeo.com/458837945
- Categories
    - Traceability & Transparency
    - Maker Wellbeing
    - Environmental Sustainability
    - Sustainable Raw Materials
    - Leadership, Diversity & Inclusion
    - Full report: https://remake.world/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-Remake-Transparency-Report.pdf
- Self-assessment followed by testing by Remake
- Extensive criteria https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1z8oDutghxwmqWNSbdz_md0oZwb4-ls0jvj-gkLWCRwM/edit?usp=sharing
- Currently undertaking new shift considering the events of the past couple of years, look for the 2021 Transparency Report at remake.world

Good On You
- https://directory.goodonyou.eco/
- Similar to Remake Brand Directory in the sense that it is more of ranking than a certification.
- Provides a general overview of brands' ethics in 3 key areas: People, Planet and Animals
- Ratings range from 1 'We Avoid' to 5 'Great'
- Useful to have as a reference point, however many brands are not included in this. Most brands on Good On You are larger brands, but it's still worth checking on there!
- More detailed info on rating system https://goodonyou.eco/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Good-On-You-Brand-Rating-System-August-2020-1.pdf

Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)
- Founded in 2006 by Organic Trade Association (OTA, USA), International Verband de Naturtextilwirtschaft (IVN, Germany), The Soil Association (UK), and Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA, Japan)
- 'The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) was developed by leading standard setters to define world-wide recognised requirements for organic textiles. From the harvesting of the raw materials, environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing to labelling, textiles certified to GOTS provide a credible assurance to the consumer.'
- 'Ensure compliance with each of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and actively cooperating with all relevant stakeholders.'
- Certification criteria
    - Ecological and social criteria backed up by independent third-party certification of the entire textile supply chain
    - Organic fibres

- 70% certified organic fibres to be certified, to be labelled as 'organic' minimum 95% certified organic
- No synthetic pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and GMOs
- Standards not set by GOTS but by organic farming standards mostly defined by national governments (issues)
- IFOAM Family of Standards https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/organic-guarantee-system/ifoam-family-standards
  - Environmental criteria
    - Separation of conventional organic fibres
    - GOTS approved colourants and auxiliaries in wet-processing only
    - Demonstrate environmental management e.g. wastewater treatment
    - Technical quality parameters for colour fastness and shrinkage for finished goods
    - Restrictions on accessories
    - Restrictions on additional fibre materials
    - Prohibition of hazardous substances in chemical inputs
    - Evaluation of toxicity and biodegradability for chemical inputs
  - Social
    - Based on ILO Conventions, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and OECD
    - Members must have a social compliance management system
    - Very long document but key areas include:
      - Freely chosen employment
      - Freedom of association and collective bargaining
      - No child labour
      - No discrimination (sex, gender, religion, sexuality, race, ability, etc)
      - Occupational health and safety
      - No harassment or violence
      - Remuneration and assessment of living wage gap
      - Working time
      - No precarious employment
      - Migrant workers treated equal to local workers, should ensure complete access to travel documents, not charged extra than market rate if need food, accommodation etc. provided for them.

Bluesign
- Legal compliance in relation to environmental health safety
- Combines consumer safety, water and air emissions and occupational health, focus on reduction of harmful substance usage at early stages of production
- 'People are the focal point'
- https://www.bluesign.com/en

Better Cotton Initiative
- Launched 2009

- Supported by people like Gap and H&M so am sceptical, but that applies to basically every certification let's be real
- Principles and criteria
    - Minimise harmful impact of crop protection practises
    - Promote water stewardship
    - Care for the health of the soil
    - Enhance biodiversity and use land responsibly
    - Care for and preserve fibre quality
    - Promote decent work
    - Effective management system
- <u>https://bettercotton.org/</u>

Fair Labour Association
- Launched 1999
- Standards
    - <u>https://www.fairlabor.org/our-work/principles</u>
- Regular follow ups, conferring with local orgs/civil society so not just what the factory wants to show them
- Seems to mostly be focussed on labour rights but also does a bit on sustainability
- <u>https://www.fairlabor.org/</u>

Cradle to Cradle Certified
- 'Globally recognised measure of safer, more sustainable products made for the circular economy'
- '5 critical sustainability categories'
    - Material health
    - Material reuse
    - Renewable energy
    - Carbon management
    - Water stewardship
    - Social fairness
- <u>https://www.c2ccertified.org/get-certified/product-certification</u>
- <u>https://mbdc.com/</u>
- Companies with this certification include Amazon and Walmart, and they have historical and current bad records on these issues.

Climate Beneficial
- No-kill wool
- <u>https://fibershed.org/programs/fiber-systems-research/climate-beneficial-wool/</u>

Nest Seal of Ethical Handicraft
- Launched at UN, December 2019
- Matrix of +100 standards
    - <u>https://www.buildanest.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Nest-Ethical-Compliance-Standards-JULY-2019.pdf</u>
- Tailored to address decentralised supply chains, focus on handworker ownership and cultural sensitivity
- Audits of existing factories

- https://www.buildanest.org/the-nest-seal/ethicalhandcraft/

Oeko-Tex Standard 100
- Launched 1992, focuses on harmful substances
- Independent audits, regular and positive quality assurance measures demonstrated, Oeko-Tex do their own tests (fabrics, chemicals etc.)
- Criteria
    - Regulations regarding prohibited azo dyes, formaldehyde, nickel etc. incl in test catalogue
    - Chemicals harmful to health are also tested if they have not yet been statutorily regulated
    - Tests include 100 test parameters, take into account intended use of textilem more intensive and direct contact with skin and stricter limit for each product class
    - Test method covers Annexes IVII and XIV of REACH Directive and ECHA-SVHC Candidate List
        - ECHA Candidate list = chemicals of high concern
        - https://echa.europa.eu/substances-restricted-under-reach
- https://www.oeko-tex.com/en/our-standards/standard-100-by-oeko-tex

Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC)
- 'Food, textiles, and personal care ingredients. ROC farms and products meet the highest standards in the world for soil health, animal welfare, and farmworker fairness.'
- Overseen by Regenerative Organic Alliance
- Criteria
    - Bronze, Silver and Gold levels for farms and producers
    - https://regenorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ROC_Processor-Criteria.pdf
        - Mentions of ILO conventions, no forced labour, child labour, minimum wage, etc., social certifications at least 1 level of supply chain
        - Discussions of processing, incl. synthetic materials, harmful waste, proper disposal, water protection.
- https://regenorganic.org/

CMiA (Cotton Made in Africa)
- Launched by Aid by Trade Foundation 2005
- Campaigns for environmental protections, better working and living conditions for small farmers and cotton workers
- https://cottonmadeinafrica.org/

EU Eco Label
- Voluntary scheme launched 1992
- Criteria based on an analysis of the impact of the product or service on the environment throughout its lifecycle
    - Raw material extraction, production, distribution, disposal
- Promotes circular economy, generate less waste and CO2, as well as encourages development of products that are durable, easy to repair and recycle

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- https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/

Global Recycle Standard (GRS)
- 2008 developed by Control Union Certifications, ownership to Textile Exchange 2011
- 'Third-party certification of recycled content, chain of custody, social and environmental practices and chemical restrictions.'
- https://certifications.controlunion.com/en/certification-programs/certification-programs/grs-global-recycle-standard
- Look to Textile Exchange for more.

Made in Green
- Part of Oeko-Tex, see above
- https://www.oeko-tex.com/en/our-standards/made-in-green-by-oeko-tex

Nordic Swan EcoLabel
- Launched 1989 by Nordic Council of Ministers
- Focus on products sold in Nordic countries
- One of the founders of Global Ecolabelling Network in 1994 https://www.globalecolabelling.net/
- https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/the-nordic-swan-ecolabel/
- Aims
    - Sets strict environmental requirements in all relevant phases of a product's life cycle
    - Sets strict requirements for chemicals used in eco labelled products
    - Tightens requirements for goods and services continuously to create sustainable development
    - Certifies and verifies that all requirements are met before a product is approved.'
- Criteria development process https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/the-nordic-swan-ecolabel/criteria-process/
- 60 different product groups https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/product-groups/

Textile Exchange
- Launched 2002
- Preferred materials
    - Organic cotton
    - Recycled polyester
    - Biosynthetics
    - Man-made cellulosic fibers
    - Animal fibers and materials
- Standards for certification
    - Certification conducted through third parties https://textileexchange.org/standards/certification-bodies/
    - https://textileexchange.org/standards/
    - Organic Content Standard
    - Global Recycled Standard
    - Recycled Claim Standard
    - Responsible Down, Wool, Mohair and Alpaca Standards

- Content Claim Standard
- Aims to reduce CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030
- https://textileexchange.org/

Social Accountability 8000 Standard (SA8000)
- https://sa-intl.org/programs/sa8000/
- Launched 1997 by SAI (Social Accountability International), 'first credible social certification'
- Based on ILO and Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 'SA8000 applies a management-systems approach to social performance and emphasizes continual improvement—**not checklist-style auditing**'
- Includes brands such as
    - Lidl, Estee Lauder, Disney, Woolworths, Gucci (each have ongoing issues)
- Contact: info@sa-intl.org
- Revision process every 5 years
- Emphasis on living wage
- Key Elements of the Standard:
    - Child labour
    - Forced or compulsory labour
    - Health and safety
    - Freedom of Association & Right to Collective Bargaining
    - Discrimination
    - Disciplinary Practices
    - Working Hours
    - Remuneration
    - Management System
- Social Fingerprint program https://sa-intl.org/services/social-fingerprint/
- Resources https://sa-intl.org/resource-library/
- Stats 2020 http://www.saasaccreditation.org/?q=node/23

PETA
- Launched
- Products by PETA companies are vegan and cruelty-free (i.e. do not contain animal products and do not test on animals).
- 'Companies listed either signed PETA's statement of assurance or provided a statement verifying that they do not conduct or commission any animal tests on ingredients, formulations, or finished products and that they pledge not to do so in the future'
    - Unclear how rigorous this process is, mostly an email BeautyWithoutBunnies@peta.org
- To be called vegan, their 'entire product line is free of animal-derived ingredients.'

ISO14001
- Regularly updated, most recent version was created 2015 and reviewed and confirmed again in 2021
- https://www.iso.org/standard/60857.html

- 'ISO 14001:2015 specifies the requirements for an environmental management system that an organization can use to enhance its environmental performance.'
- Based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Details are unavailable for general viewing, have to buy to view standards.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- Launched in 1994 in response to the Rio Earth Summit 1992
- https://fsc.org/en
- 'As the original pioneers of forest certification, we have 25 years of experience in sustainable forest management. We use our expertise to promote the responsible management of the world's forests, bringing together experts from the environmental, economic and social spheres.'
- 10 Principles https://fsc.org/en/about-us#we-are-fsc
    - 1. Compliance with laws
        - Laws, regulations, as well as nationally-ratified international treaties
    - 2. Workers' rights and employment conditions
        - Social and economic wellbeing
    - 3. Indigenous peoples' rights
        - 'Identify and uphold idigenous peoples' legal and customary rights of ownership, use and management of land, territories and resources affected by management activities'
    - 4. Community relations
        - Social and economic wellbeing
    - 5. Benefits from the forest
        - 'Maintain or enhance long term viability and the range of environmental social benefits.'
    - 6. Environmental values and impact
        - 'Maintain, conserve and/or restore ecosystem services and environmental values'
        - 'Shall avoid, repair or mitigate negative environmental impacts'
    - 7. Management planning
        - 'Management plan consistent with it policies and objectives'
    - 8. Monitoring and assessment
        - 'shall demonstrate that progress towards achieving the management objectives, the impacts of management activities and the condition of the Management Unit, are monitored and evaluated proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of management activities, in order to implement adaptive management.'
    - 9. High conservation values
        - 'Shall maintain and/or enhance the high conservation values'
    - 10. Implementation of management activities
        - Consistency and compliance in management activities
- 70 criteria https://fsc.org/en/about-us#we-are-fsc
- FSC labels has information which provides details of the product's origins.