

I was so pleased! I had found a great Indian business with a shiny new GOTS certificate. I shelled out a lot of money, adapted the design to GOTS requirements, and had everything manufactured.

Only then did I learn that as the final link in the GOTS chain, I had to have everything checked. It's called an audit. You get visited by a GOTS team who look at your whole business under the microscope: your materials, your processing, your waste products, your recycling, personnel policy, building, ... Everything needs to meet the strong GOTS standards. I think that's wonderful. Only an audit like that costs thousands of euros. Great for huge cotton cooperatives and manufacturers in India, but for me in my small office in the Netherlands?

As an importer/brand you don't actually make any changes to your products yourself; your products arrive in the country and are sent straight to your warehouse. So, what is there to inspect in my little workspace for a shedload of money? It's simply not doable for a small business.

So, I decided not to 'buy into' this chain. Although the tea towels were fully produced according to GOTS standards, I chose to leave the official 'green' label out.

In a nutshell, GOTS turns out to be not just a good certificate, but also a very nice green 'revenue model'...