

Circular Design Standard Certification Fact Sheet

Purpose - why the Circular Design Standard?

The Circular Design Standard (CDS) empowers brands to design, certify and label circular products – made with circular inputs, designed for recyclability and longevity and enabled for circulation. With increasing regulatory pressure and environmental urgency, the CDS offers a clear opportunity to drive readiness to meet – and exceed – compliance requirements, and to lead in advanced product circularity. Developed over five years and tested by leading brands, the standard is now ready to scale across the industry. The CDS currently applies to apparel, with accessories, footwear and home textiles considered to be next in line.

Key benefits

Holistic Circularity

Driving impact on product and system level, leading to end-to-end circularity.

Design-Driven

Actionable fiber- and product-specific criteria for real-world implementation.

Digital & Scalable

CDS platform seamlessly integrates with brand's IT systems and Digital Product Passports ensuring cost efficient and scalable implementation.

Regulatory Ready

Aligned with - and exceeding - evolving EU regulations, driving readiness for compliance and credible labelling for consumer trust.

The CDS four pillars of circular design

01 Circular Inputs

Using safe, recycled and/or renewable materials.

02 Design for Recyclability

Enabling fiber-to-fiber recycling through compatible fibre compositions and minimising recycling disruptors.

03 Design for Longevity

Fostering durability, repairability and extended use.

04 Enable Circulation

Embedding products in systems for transparency, reuse, repair, sorting and recycling.

Circular Product					Circular System					
01			02			03			04	
Circular Inputs			Design for Recyclability			Design for Longevity			Enable Circulation	
Safe Inputs			Conventional Recycling		Innovative Recycling	Physical Durability			Data for Circulation	
									and	
and						and			Customer Engagement	
Recycled Inputs		or				Repairability		or	Increased Use	and
		Renewable Inputs								System for Circulation

CDS Certification System & Process

The CDS can be certified through a lean and independent third-party certification system built for credibility, scalability and industry alignment. Designed to be economically viable for standard users and efficiently implementable at scale, it enables a digital verification process with the CDS platform that seamlessly integrates with the brand's existing IT landscape, Digital Product Passports (DPPs) and sustainability reporting. This significantly reduces manual effort and complexity, ensuring a future proof and cost efficient process and scalable impact.

Certification in 5 steps

01 Onboarding

Introduction to the Circular Design Standard and CDS platform.

02 Self-Assessment

Brand completes a self-assessment and submits product data on the CDS platform.

Optional Product Enhancement — Access to training, resources, and expert guidance to ensure successful compliance.

03 Pre-Verification

Initial assessment by certification body based on available documentation.

04 Final Certification

Final review of provided evidence and issuing of certification with results for reporting and labelling.

05 Seal & Labelling

Certified products receive the CDS seal and can share results digitally with retail and DPP partners ensuring consistent claims.



How it evolved & what's next?

circular.fashion, Standard Holder of the Circular Design Standard (CDS), is a catalyst for circular transformation in fashion through defining, enabling and scaling circular products. The organisation brings over 8 years of experience guiding 400+ companies and 3000+ professionals in applying circular principles to products and businesses. Initiated in **2020**, the CDS has evolved in close collaboration with leading brands, experts, and key policy initiatives. By 2025, **hundreds of products** from more than 10 front-running brands have been verified against the CDS. Its further development is overseen by a multistakeholder **Governance Board**, representing the entire value chain including recyclers, sorters, retailers and fashion brands such as **Marc O' Polo, Otto, Zalando, Hugo Boss, Peak Performance, Tchibo, H&M Group, and Intersport**. The independent certification system is completed through collaboration with established certification bodies to accelerate industry progress and greater impact.

Get in touch – Let's shape the future of circularity together
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