

International Working Group on Global Organic Textile Standard

# Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies

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## 1. Objective of this manual

This document specifies the approval and monitoring procedures and sets out the requirements for Certification Bodies to achieve and maintain approval to perform certification according to Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and to implement its related quality assurance system.

## 2. Principles

Organisations performing professional and objective auditing of manufacturing facilities and operating product certification systems can apply for approval as GOTS certifier to the International Working Group (IWG) on Global Organic Textile Standard. These Organisations are referred to as 'Certification Bodies' in the following document.

For this approval process as well as for continuous monitoring of the approved Certification Bodies the IWG is cooperating with accreditation bodies that agree with the IWG to follow the approval and monitoring procedure and the requirements as specified in this document in their accreditation process for GOTS. The main cooperating partner for this process is the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS), since it specialises in organic accreditation and operates worldwide. The cooperation is based on a corresponding agreement concluded between IOAS and the IWG.

However the applying Certification Body may assign its actual / preferred accreditation body, as long as the chosen accreditation body is a recognised national or international accreditation body (s.a. IAF member), has the necessary competence and follows the given procedures to accredit to the GOTS scope(s).

The requirements for Certification Bodies set out in this manual are based upon the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems". It further especially refers to the International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)<sup>1</sup> as released in October 2008. However, given that certification according to GOTS has certain features that differ from certification of products and services covered by ISO/IEC Guide 65 (e.g. inclusion on assessment of management systems s.a. environmental management and minimum social criteria) and IROCB (which is mainly developed for organic food products) it also includes sector- and GOTS-specific requirements.

## 3. Scope

The procedures and requirements as specified in this manual are applicable for all applying Certification Bodies as well as for already approved Certification Bodies. However if any procedures and/or requirements contradict with agreements and obligations of the current contract of approved Certification Bodies conducted with the IWG, these particular procedures and/or requirements become binding after termination of this current contract (which is 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 the latest).

## 4. Approval and monitoring procedure

### 4.1. Prerequisite for Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies applying for approval as GOTS certifier must already have a valid accreditation to perform certification for at least one standard according to ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems".

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<sup>1</sup> IROCB was developed as a public document by the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture (ITF) convened by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The requirements are intended to represent a consensus on good practices in organic conformity assessment among private and public institutions. IROCB can be adopted by governments and private sector organizations at their convenience, without need to request permission for use. Governments and private stakeholders may use all or portions of these requirements as they see fit for non-commercial publication as a separate document.

## **4.2. Application procedure**

1. Applications for approval shall be addressed to the Global Standard Technical Director by e-mail (mail@global-standard.org) using the corresponding application form.
2. Applications are being considered only if they contain the following information / declarations:
  - a. Legal name, legal status, address and legal representative of applicant
  - b. List of all offices and branches of the applicant
  - c. Scope(s) according to which the applicant seeks GOTS accreditation  
Accreditation can be applied according to one of, a combination of or all of the following scopes:
    - ① Certification of mechanical textile processing and manufacturing operations and their products
    - ② Certification of wet processing and finishing operations and their products
    - ③ Certification of trading operations and related products
    - ④ Approval of textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists
  - d. A copy of the applicant's accreditation certificate(s) and a list of ISO 65 accredited scopes
  - e. Announcement of the accreditation body which the Certification Body wants to assign with performance of the GOTS accreditation procedure
  - f. Declaration that the applicant agrees to the procedure and all requirements of this manual and that he agrees to enter into a formal contract ('Certifier's contract') accordingly if approved
  - g. A summary presentation of the relevant (textile) professional qualification and experience including a Curriculum Vitae for all designated personnel.
3. Applications must be accompanied by a payment of 2000 EURO plus tax if applicable ("Application Fee") to be transferred to the bank account of the Global Standard GmbH (currently: Kreissparkasse Reutlingen/Germany; Account No: 12902; IBAN: DE81640500000000012902; BIC: SOLADES1 REU; SWIFT: SOLADEST)
4. After acceptance of the application by the IWG the Certification Body must apply to the agreed accreditation body which conducts the further accreditation procedure.

## **4.3. Inspection and evaluation requirements for accreditation bodies**

Accreditation bodies must comply with the procedures of ISO/IEC Guide 17011: 2004 "Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies" and must agree to follow the GOTS approval and monitoring procedure as provided for in this document.

The IWG requests that the assigned accreditation body include the following specific minimum inspection and evaluation elements in its respective accreditation and monitoring procedure:

- a. Accreditation audit to the headquarter / main office of the initially applying Certification Body
- b. Witness audit performed at a textile manufacturing mill (preferably vertical mill including wet-processing unit, provided that the Certification Body has applied for this scope) for the initially applying Certification Body
- c. Continuous monitoring of approved GOTS Certification Bodies, including performing at least one up-date accreditation visit every second year to the/an office conducting GOTS certifications and at least one witness or review audit<sup>2</sup> every second year of granted accreditation.
- d. A minimum of 5 operator files respective 1,5% of the files of operators contracted by the Certification Body should be checked on each up-date accreditation visit.
- e. Assignment of an expert in quality assurance of organic/environmental friendly textile processing, who is notified to the IWG, in the accreditation procedure. This expert should accompany the initial accreditation audit and witness audit and maintain further involvement in the continuous monitoring procedure.

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<sup>2</sup> Witness and review audits are specific audit tools of accreditation bodies. In a witness audit the accreditation body is accompanying an inspector / inspection team to an on-site inspection and assesses the performance. In a review audit the accreditation body is auditing an inspected/certified entity with the previous inspection report at hand without the inspector / inspection team being present to assess the performance.

#### **4.4. Approval decision**

The accreditation body decides if accreditation according to the applied scope(s) (see 4.2.2.c) based on the procedures and requirements of this document (= 'GOTS accreditation') will be granted to the Certification Body.

The accreditation body may decide to grant accreditation only for one or several of the applied scopes and to refuse accreditation for other applied scopes.

Once accreditation is given, the IWG concludes the 'Certifiers Contract'. The IWG reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the contract and to call on the accreditation body to investigate problems. Details for this procedure are provided for in the 'Certifiers Contract'.

#### **4.5. Publication of approved Certification Bodies and their conditions**

The GOTS Certification Bodies and their approved scope(s) shall be published on the GOTS web site. Further this manual shall be published on the GOTS web side in order to enable companies concerned to report to the IWG any violations thereof.

### **5. Requirements for Certification Bodies**

#### **5.1. General requirements**

##### **5.1.1. Responsibility**

###### **5.1.1.1. Legal structure**

The structure of the Certification Body shall foster confidence in its certification operations. In particular, the Certification Body shall

- a. Have documents attesting to its status as a legal entity;
- b. Have documented the rights and responsibilities relevant to its certification activities; and
- c. Identify the management (body, group or person) that has overall responsibility for the functioning of the Certification Body, including its finances.

###### **5.1.1.2. Certification agreement**

The Certification Body shall provide its certification service based on an agreement (contract) signed by the applicants and operators. In particular, the agreement shall

- a. Include a description of the rights and duties of the applicants and operators offering certified products, including a commitment to comply with the relevant criteria of the GOTS, the Labelling and Licensing Guide and other provisions of the GOTS certification program as provided by the IWG;
- b. Contain provisions to allow the Certification Body to exchange information with other GOTS approved Certification Bodies and authorities (approval bodies or accreditation bodies) including the IWG to verify information, especially the certification status of certified products, as part of its ongoing evaluation;
- c. Provide to both the Certification Body and the responsible authorities the right of access to all appropriate facilities, including to non-organic production in the unit or related units, and all relevant documentation and records, including financial records.

###### **5.1.1.3. Responsibility for certification decisions**

- a. The Certification Body shall have final responsibility for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending and withdrawing certification.

###### **5.1.1.4. Acceptance of prior certification**

Where products in the production chain have been certified by other GOTS approved Certification Bodies, the Certification Body shall accept certificates issued in accordance with the GOTS. Further the Certification Body shall accept certificates as well as residue analysis reports issued by other Certifiers and Laboratories in accordance with the provisions of the GOTS (items 2.1, 4.2).

## **5.1.2. Personnel**

### **5.1.2.1. General**

- a. The Certification Body shall employ sufficient personnel competent to perform certification functions and operate its system.
- b. The Certification Body shall ensure that personnel have knowledge relevant to the location and type of processing facilities for which the certification is issued.
- c. The Certification Body shall maintain up-to-date records on personnel.

### **5.1.2.2. Qualification criteria and documentation**

- a. The Certification Body shall define minimum criteria for the competence of personnel. Criteria should specify minimum education, training, technical knowledge and work experience relevant to the scope of certification issued. The Certification Body should ensure for each GOTS certification decision that at least one of its personnel involved must have a university or bachelor degree in the field of textile or clothing engineering plus expertise in quality management issues, or 3 years professional experience as technician in the textile industry plus expertise in quality management issues or 2 years professional experience in inspection and certification of textile processors. Further the Certification Body must assure that personnel familiar with the situation and specifics of the local textile industry and competent for inspection and evaluation of the GOTS social criteria are assigned.
- b. The Certification Body shall maintain up-to-date documents describing the respective responsibilities of assigned personnel.

### **5.1.2.3. Capacity-building**

The Certification Body shall ensure that personnel involved in certification (i.e. inspectors and other certification personnel, including members of certification committees) have and continue to have up-to-date technical knowledge in their respective fields of activity to enable them to conduct evaluation and certification effectively and uniformly.

In particular, the Certification Body shall

- a. Review the competence of its personnel in light of their performance in order to identify training needs; and
- b. Ensure that new personnel have sufficient competence. New inspectors should receive qualified training courses of on-site inspection for the GOTS certification or undergo an on-site apprenticeship period accompanying at least 5 inspections carried out according to the GOTS certification system.
- c. Ensure that GOTS training system (e.g. courses and tools) is followed as soon as the IWG shall have introduced the same.

### **5.1.2.4. Assignment of personnel**

The Certification Body shall require personnel, including committee members, involved in the certification process to:

- a. Commit themselves to observing the policies and procedures of the Certification Body;
- b. Declare any prior or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with an operator seeking certification to which they are to be assigned to perform certification procedures.

### **5.1.2.5. Assignment of committees**

The Certification Body shall have formal rules and structures for the appointment and operation of any committees that are involved in the certification process, reflecting requirements of 5.1.2.1 and 5.1.2.2.

#### **5.1.2.6. Subcontracting (outsourcing)**

When a Certification Body decides to subcontract work (outsourcing) related to certification (e.g. inspection) to an external body or person, an agreement covering the arrangements, including confidentiality and conflict of interest, shall be drawn up. The Certification Body shall

- a. Take responsibility for such subcontracted work;
- b. Keep final responsibility for the granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, suspending or withdrawing of certification. Delegation of certification decisions is not permitted;
- c. Ensure that the subcontracted body or person is:
  - Competent to perform the subcontracted work,
  - Not involved, either directly or through the body/person's employer, with the operation, process or product that is subject to certification in any way that may compromise impartiality and
  - Committed to the policies and procedures as defined by the Certification Body;
- d. Monitor the performance of the persons or bodies subcontracted for the work.

#### **5.1.3. Impartiality and objectivity**

##### **5.1.3.1. Organizational structure and stakeholder involvement**

The Certification Body shall be impartial; it shall not be financially dependent on single operations that are subject to its certification in any way that compromises its impartiality. Specifically, the Certification Body shall have a documented structure which safeguards impartiality by:

- a. Including provisions to ensure the impartiality of the operations of the Certification Body; and
- b. Providing for the participation of all parties concerned in a way that balances interests and prevents commercial or other interests from unduly influencing decisions.

##### **5.1.3.2. Management of impartiality**

The Certification Body shall identify, analyse and document the possibilities for conflicts of interest arising from its provision of certification, including any conflicts arising from its relationships. Rules and procedures shall be established to prevent or minimize threat of conflicts of interest. In particular, the Certification Body shall

- a. Require personnel, committee and board members to declare existing or prior association with an operation subject to certification. Where such an association threatens impartiality, the Certification Body shall exclude the person concerned from work, discussion and decisions at all stages of the certification process related to the potential conflict of interest;
- b. Follow defined rules for appointing and operating committees involved in certification activities to ensure that decisions taken are not influenced by any commercial, financial and/or other interest.

##### **5.1.3.3. Division of functions**

The Certification Body shall not provide any other products or services which could compromise the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of its certification process and decisions. In case the Certification Body also performs other activities in addition to certification, it shall apply additional measures to ensure that the confidentiality, objectivity and impartiality of its certifications are not affected by these other activities. In particular the Certification Body shall not

- a. Produce or supply products of the type it certifies;
- b. Give advice or provide consultancy services to the applicant/operator as to methods of dealing with matters which are barriers (s.a. non-conformities identified in the course of the certification process) to the GOTS certification.

Explanations regarding the GOTS and its quality assurance system are not considered to be advice or consultancy. General information or training may be given as long as this service is offered to all applicants/operators in a non-discriminatory manner.

#### **5.1.3.4. Accessibility**

The Certification Body shall make its services equally accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within its declared field of operation.

It shall work according to non-discriminatory policies and procedures, ensuring that no undue financial (e.g. with regard to the fee structure) or other conditions (s.a. size of applicant or membership of any association) are applied. The Certification Body shall accept GOTS inspection assignments regardless whether they are for the entire processing chain, parts thereof or single operators.

#### **5.1.4. Access to Information**

##### **5.1.4.1. Publicly accessible information**

The Certification Body shall provide access to information to ensure confidence in the integrity and credibility of its certification.

The Certification Body shall make available (through publications, electronic media or other means) on request:

- a. The GOTS; Labelling and Licensing Guide, Manual for the Implementation of the GOTS and other provisions of the GOTS certification program as provided by the IWG;
- b. Information about procedures applied for evaluating whether operators meet the GOTS;
- c. Information about procedures applied to cases where certification is extended;
- d. Information about procedures and sanctions applied where non-conformities with standards are detected;
- e. The fee structure for its services;
- f. A description of the rights and duties of operators, including requirements, restrictions;
- g. Information about procedures for handling general complaints and appeals against its certification decisions; and
- h. A list of certified operations and the scope of their certification.

##### **5.1.4.2. Confidentiality**

In order to gain privileged access to information, the Certification Body shall make adequate arrangements to safeguard the confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its certification activities at all levels of its organization, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf. Arrangements shall

- a. Protect proprietary information of a client against misuse and unauthorized disclosure; and
- b. Grant the Certification Body the right to exchange information with other Certification Bodies and/or authorities including the IWG to verify the authenticity of the information.

##### **5.1.4.3. Reference to certification and use of certification logo (mark)**

In accordance with the provisions of the GOTS Labelling and Licensing Guide the Certification Body shall

- a. Exercise control over ownership, use and display of licenses, certificates and logos that it can authorize certified operators to use in accordance with the provisions of the Labelling and Licensing Guide;
- b. Be able to request an operator to discontinue use of certificates and logos that it authorizes certified operators to use;
- c. Apply suitable actions to deal with incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of licenses, certificates or logos that it authorizes certified operators to use.

#### **5.1.5. Quality management system**

##### **5.1.5.1. General**

- a. The Certification Body shall define, document and implement a quality management system in accordance with the relevant elements of these requirements so as to impart confidence in its ability to perform organic certification. The quality management system shall be effective and appropriate for the type, range and volume of work performed.

b. The management shall ensure that the quality management system is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organization.

#### **5.1.5.2. Management system manual**

a. The Certification Body shall address and document all applicable procedures, either in a manual or in associated documents, in order to ensure uniform and consistent application.

b. The manual and associated documents, as appropriate for the type, range and volume of work performed, and considering the number of personnel involved in the process, shall contain:

- An organizational chart showing lines of authority, responsibilities and allocation of functions;
- A description of procedures applied by the Certification Body in the course of performing certification, including granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, suspending and withdrawing of certification;
- Procedures for the recruitment, selection, training and assignment of the Certification Body's personnel (as outlined under 5.1.2.);
- Policy and procedures for appeal against certification decisions and other complaints; and
- Policy and procedures for reviewing quality (e.g. internal audits, management review).

c. The Certification Body shall ensure that the manual and relevant associated documents are accessible to all relevant personnel.

#### **5.1.5.3. Document control**

The Certification Body shall establish and maintain procedures to control its documents that relate to its certification functions. In particular, the Certification Body

a. Shall, through authorized and competent personnel, review and approve documents for adequacy prior to their original issue or any subsequent amendment;

b. Maintain a list of all appropriate documents with the respective issue dates and duly identify their amendment status; and

c. Control the distribution of all such documents to ensure that the appropriate documentation is provided to personnel of the Certification Body or its subcontractors when they are required to perform any function relating to the Certification Body's activities, and prevent the unintended use of obsolete documents.

#### **5.1.5.4. Maintaining and managing records**

a. The Certification Body shall maintain a system of records (either electronic or paper documents) to demonstrate that the certification procedures have been effectively fulfilled, particularly with respect to application forms, evaluation or re-evaluation reports, and other documents relating to granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, suspending or withdrawing certification.

b. The records shall be identified, managed and disposed of in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the information.

c. Operator records shall be up to date and contain all relevant information, including inspection reports and certification history.

d. Records shall also be kept on exceptions granted, appeals and subsequent actions.

e. Records shall be kept for at least five years, or as required by law, in order to be able to demonstrate how certification procedures have been applied.

#### **5.1.5.5. Internal audit and management review**

The Certification Body shall demonstrate that it seeks and achieves continuous quality improvement. It shall perform management reviews and internal audits according to the type, range and volume of certification performed.

a. In particular, it shall periodically review all procedures in a planned and systematic manner, to verify that the quality system and its procedures are implemented and effective. Performance reviews conducted periodically shall be part of the review.

b. Review intervals shall be sufficiently short to ensure that the objective of quality improvement is fulfilled. Records of quality reviews shall be maintained.

c. It is industry practice to conduct performance reviews of personnel responsible for evaluation, inspection and certification on an annual basis.

#### **5.1.5.6. Appeals and complaints**

The Certification Body shall have in place policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints and appeals received from operators or other parties about the handling of certification or any other related matters. In particular, the Certification Body shall

- a. Take appropriate subsequent action to resolve complaints and appeals; and
- b. Document the action taken and its effect.

### **5.2. Process requirements for conducting GOTS certification**

#### **5.2.1. Application procedures**

##### **5.2.1.1. Information for operators**

The Certification Body shall provide to operators an up-to-date description of the procedures to be applied for conducting certification. The Certification Body shall inform operators about

- a. Contractual conditions, including fees and possible contractual penalties;
- b. The operator's rights and duties, including the appeals procedure;
- c. The current version of GOTS and corresponding relevant documents released by the IWG;
- d. Program changes, including regular updates of procedures and standards;
- e. The evaluation and inspection procedures applied by the Certification Body in the course of certification; and
- f. Documentation to be maintained by the operator to enable verification of compliance with GOTS by the Certification Body.

##### **5.2.1.2. Application form and the operator's obligations**

The Certification Body shall require completion of an application form, signed by a duly authorized representative of the operator. To enable evaluation and assignment of qualified personnel, the Certification Body shall require operators to:

- a. Provide information about the scope of the desired certification, including a description, as specified by the Certification Body, of the production, products and area to be certified; and
- b. Provide information as to whether another Certification Body has denied certification.

#### **5.2.2. Evaluation**

##### **5.2.2.1. Scope**

- a. The Certification Body shall evaluate operators against all certification requirements specified. The evaluation shall consist of a review of documents and an on-site inspection visit.
- b. Basis for assessment of textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) is the corresponding material safety data sheet (MSDS). The Certification Body should, where appropriate and felt necessary, include further sources of information (s.a. additional toxicological and environmental data on specific components of the auxiliary agents, test reports and independent lab analysis) in the evaluation procedure.

##### **5.2.2.2. Review of application and preparation of inspection**

- a. Prior to the inspection, the Certification Body shall review the application documents to ensure that certification can be carried out and that application of certification procedures is possible. In particular, the Certification Body shall review whether
  - Documents submitted by the operator are complete;
  - The operator appears to be able to comply with all certification requirements (GOTS and applicable related procedures);
- b. The Certification Body shall assign qualified personnel to the evaluation in line with the requirements of 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 above, and provide them with appropriate work-related documents.

c. The Certification Body shall inform inspectors about any non-conformities and the associated requests for corrective action issued previously, to enable the inspectors to verify whether the non-conformities have been resolved.

#### **5.2.2.3. Inspection protocol**

Inspection is carried out in order to verify information and compliance with certification requirements applicable to the operator. It shall follow a set protocol to facilitate non-discriminatory and objective inspection.

The inspection protocol shall at the very minimum undertake the following, as applicable to the operator:

- a. Assessment of the processing system by means of visits to facilities and storage units (which may also include visits to non-organic areas if there is reason for doing so);
- b. Review of records and accounts in order to verify flow of goods (input/output reconciliation and the tracing back)
- c. Inspection of the chemical inputs (dyes and auxiliaries) and accessories used and assessment of their compliance with the applicable criteria of the GOTS
- d. Identification of areas of risk to organic integrity;
- e. Inspection of the waste water (pre-)treatment system of wet processors.
- f. Verification of the operator's risk assessment of contamination and residue testing policy potentially including sample drawing for residue testing either as random sampling or in case of suspicion of contamination or non-compliance.
- g. Verification of adherence to the defined minimum social criteria (including confidential interviews of workers, if applicable)
- h. Verification that changes to the standards and to related requirements have been effectively implemented; and
- i. Verification that corrective actions have been taken.

#### **5.2.2.4. Particular requirements to address high-risk situations**

The Certification Body shall amend and adapt its certification procedures to address higher risks found in certain situations specific to GOTS certification.

Potential high-risk situations and related measures include:

- a. Parallel processing of GOTS and non-GOTS products: In order to prevent co-mingling or contamination of organic products with other products that do not meet the standards, the Certification Body should verify whether handling and documentation regarding (wet-)processing, storage and sales is well managed and makes clear distinctions between certified and non-certified products. In cases where products are not visibly distinguishable, specified measures should be applied to reduce the risk.
- b. Where an operator is certified also by other Certification Bodies within the same scope, the Certification Body should seek information exchange with the other Certification Bodies involved to prevent misuse of certificates.

#### **5.2.2.5. Reporting**

The Certification Body shall report evaluation findings according to documented reporting procedures.

- a. Inspection reports shall follow a format appropriate to the type of operation inspected, and facilitate a non-discriminatory, objective and comprehensive analysis of the respective processing system.
- b. The inspection report shall cover all relevant aspects of the standards, and adequately validate the information provided by the operator. It shall include
  - A statement of any observations relating to conformity with the certification requirements;
  - Date and duration of the inspection, persons interviewed, facilities visited; and
  - Type of documents reviewed.
- c. The Certification Body shall promptly notify the operator of any non-conformity to be resolved in order to comply with applicable certification requirements.

d. The Certification Body shall document and apply measures to verify effectiveness of corrective actions taken by operators to meet the requirements.

### **5.2.3. Decision on certification**

#### **5.2.3.1. Division of functions**

The Certification Body shall ensure that each decision on certification is taken by (a) person(s) or committee different from the one(s) that carried out the inspection.

#### **5.2.3.2. Basis for the decision**

The decision shall be based solely on the conformity of the operation with the GOTS certification requirements, using information gathered during the inspection and evaluation process.

#### **5.2.3.3. Documentation**

Documentation of certification decisions shall include the basis for the decisions.

#### **5.2.3.4. Dealing with non-conformities**

a. Certification decisions may include requests for the correction of minor non-conformities within a specified time period. In case of major non-conformities, a certificate shall be withheld or suspended until implementation of corrective actions can be demonstrated. In serious cases, certification shall be denied or withdrawn.

b. Reasons for denial, withdrawal or suspension of certification shall be stated with clear reference to the GOTS criteria or other certification requirement violated.

#### **5.2.3.5. Exceptions to certification requirements**

a. The Certification Body shall have clear criteria and procedures for granting exceptions to requirements for certification.

b. Exceptions shall be of limited duration, and not be granted permanently.

c. The documentation of any exception shall include the basis on which the exception is granted.

#### **5.2.3.6. Issuing of certification documents**

The Certification Body shall issue official certification documents to each operator. In case of operators that are sub-contractors to a mandator, the Certification Body may issue the documents to the mandator. Documents shall contain the following information:

a. The name and address of the operator whose products are the subject of certification;

b. Name and address of the Certification Body that issued the certification documents;

c. The scope of the certification granted, including

- The products certified, which may be identified by type or range of products,
- The standard that is the basis for the certification (=GOTS), and
- The effective date and term of certification.

### **5.2.4. Extension and renewal of certification**

#### **5.2.4.1. Re-evaluation**

a. The Certification Body shall regularly re-evaluate operators in order to verify whether they continue to comply with the applicable standard. Mechanisms shall be in place to effectively monitor whether corrective actions have been implemented.

b. The Certification Body shall report and document its re-evaluation activities, and shall keep operators informed about their certification status.

c. Re-evaluation generally follows procedures outlined in 5.2.2 (i.e. Evaluation). However evaluation for the purpose of renewal may focus on certain measures related to risk, and might not repeat all procedures listed in 5.2.2.

#### **5.2.4.2. Frequency of inspection**

- a. Operators from post harvest handling up to garment making and final packing as well as importers and exporters are to be inspected at least annually.
- b. The Certification Body may decide on exceptions from the annual onsite inspection cycle for sub-contractors with a low risk potential (non wet-processing units only, such as home based knitting - / weaving units, mechanical finishing units, ready to wear manufacturing units). Such units must be clearly identified, must have a contract with the contracting licensee (who is responsible for their compliance with these standards) and may be subject to inspection at the certifiers discretion.
- c. In addition to the regular inspection visit, the Certification Body may conduct unannounced on-site inspections of certified operators, chosen randomly and/or chosen taking into account the risk or threat to the organic integrity of the production or products.

#### **5.2.4.3. Notification of changes made by the operator**

- a. The Certification Body shall require operators to inform the Certification Body about changes cited in 5.2.1.2.
- b. The Certification Body shall determine whether the announced changes require further investigations.  
If such is the case, the operator shall not be allowed to release certified products produced under the changed conditions until the Certification Body has notified the operator accordingly.
- c. In response to an application for amendment to the scope of a certificate already granted, the Certification Body shall decide what evaluation procedure, if any, is appropriate, in order to determine whether or not the amendment should be made, and shall act accordingly.

#### **5.2.4.4. Changes in the certification requirements**

- a. The Certification Body shall ensure that each operator is notified of any changes in the certification requirements without delay.
- b. The Certification Body shall verify the operator's implementation of such changes in a timely manner, within the given implementation periods.

### ***5.3. Further specific conditions for GOTS approved Certification Bodies***

#### **5.3.1. Annual Fee**

The Certification Body shall pay a fee as determined by the IWG (presently 30 Euro) plus tax if applicable per calendar year (complete or not) per facility/unit inspected and/or certified ("Annual Fee") by end of January of each year to the bank account of the Global Standard GmbH.

#### **5.3.2. Collection of Licence Fee**

The Certification Body shall collect from its certified entities licence fees plus tax if applicable in accordance with the 'Labelling and Licensing Guide' as amended from time to time (published on the GOTS web site) and transfer it to the to the bank account of the Global Standard GmbH.

#### **5.3.3. Commitment with regard to textile standards of their own**

Certifiers must not certify and/or inspect according to textile standards of their own beginning one year after first approval.

#### **5.3.4. Approved list of chemical inputs**

- a. A Certification Body that has received accreditation for the scope to approve textile auxiliary agents on positive lists is obligated to make current issues of the lists available to the IWG as well as to the other GOTS approved Certification Bodies so that they can be used as a tool for assessment for all operators participating the GOTS certification scheme. Lists which are issued on confidential basis to a specific processing client will not be disclosed to the other GOTS approved Certification Bodies and their clients.

b. In case of conflicting decisions (product approved by one that is declined by another certifier), certifiers are requested to achieve consistent assessment by sharing their proofs of assessment. If this fails in last instance the Technical Director / Technical Committee of the IWG decides after screening the provided technical information on the chemicals in question.

#### **5.3.5. Reporting on activities**

a. Certification Bodies must keep the Global Standard GmbH up-dated about names, addresses, production category and products of the inspected and/or certified operators as well as about approved GOTS logo users. A report on the relevant activities in the preceding calendar year is to be sent by end of January of each year.

b. Certifier shall submit from time to time upon request by the Technical Committee detailed inspection documentation (including those for preparing approved lists of chemical inputs for GOTS, if applicable) in order to permit the Technical Committee to ascertain certifier's adherence to the Global Standard and any procedural rules and interpretations issued from time to time by the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee members shall be bound to treat any of these information confidentially.

#### **5.3.6. Cooperation with other approved Certification bodies**

a. Certification Bodies shall cooperate with all other Approved Certifiers in a Certifiers Council in order to ensure worldwide equal application of the Global Standard and inspection and certification procedures under the supervision of the Technical Director of the IWG.

## **6. Abbreviations**

IWG: International Working Group on Global Organic Textile Standard

GOTS: Global Organic Textile Standard

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

IAF: International Accreditation Forum

IEC International Electrotechnical Commission

IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

IOAS: International Organic Accreditation Service

IROCB: International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

ITF: International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development