

Global Organic Textile Standard

# Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies

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Contact:

[www.global-standard.org](http://www.global-standard.org)

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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 Approved Certifier to the Global Standard gGmbH. 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 Global Standard gGmbH is cooperating with accreditation bodies that agree with the Global Standard gGmbH 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 Global Standard gGmbH.

However the Global Standard gGmbH may accept that the accreditation process is performed by the Certification Body's actual accreditation body, as long as this accreditation body is a recognised national or international accreditation body (such as IAF member), complies with the procedures of ISO/IEC Guide 17011: 2004 "Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies"; 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 17065: 2012 "Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services". It further especially refers to the International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)<sup>1</sup> as released in October 2008. In addition this manual includes requirements specifically related to the textile sector and to the content of GOTS.

## 3. Scope

The procedures and requirements as specified in this manual are applicable for all newly applying Certification Bodies as well as for current GOTS approved Certification Bodies. The general implementation deadline to fully comply with all requirements of the current issue of this manual is two years after its release (1 Mar 2018) unless other / specific advice is given. Until that date compliance with the requirements of the previous version (issue of 25 May 2009) is accepted.

## 4. Approval and monitoring procedure

### 4.1. Prerequisite for Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies applying for approval as GOTS Approved Certifier must already have a valid accreditation to perform certification for at least one standard according to ISO/IEC 17065: 2012

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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.

"Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services".

#### **4.2. Application procedure**

1. Applications for approval of newly applying Certification Bodies shall be submitted by e-mail (mail@global-standard.org) using the corresponding application form (available on <http://www.global-standard.org/certification/conditions-for-certification-bodies.html> ).
2. Applications will be 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:
    - Certification of mechanical textile processing and manufacturing operations and their products ("Scope 1")
    - Certification of wet processing and finishing operations and their products ("Scope 2")
    - Certification of trading operations and related products ("Scope 3")
    - Approval of dyes and textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists ("Scope 4")
  - d) A copy of the applicant's accreditation certificate(s) and a list of ISO 17065 accredited scopes
  - e) Statement regarding which accreditation body the Certification Body intends to assign to perform 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 non-refundable processing fee of 400 EURO plus tax if applicable ("Processing Fee") to be transferred to the bank account of Global Standard gGmbH.
4. After acceptance of the application by the Global Standard gGmbH the prospective Certification Body must apply to the agreed accreditation body which conducts the further accreditation procedure. Applicants must make a (non-refundable) payment of 5000 EUR plus tax (if applicable) ("Application Fee") to be transferred to the bank account of the Global Standard gGmbH. This fee will be payable upon conclusion of an accreditation contract (or equivalent thereof) between the agreed accreditation body and the prospective certification body.

#### **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 manual.

The Global Standard gGmbH 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 or 1,5% of the files of operators contracted by the Certification Body (whichever is greater) are to be checked on each (up-date) accreditation visit.
- e) For assessment of "Scope 4" a minimum of 5 chemical input assessment files or 1,5% of the total chemical input files (whichever is greater) are to be checked on each (up-date) accreditation visit.
- f) Inform the Global Standard gGmbH prior to any office audit. The Global Standard gGmbH will submit the list of certified facilities and, if applicable, the list of approved chemical inputs as received from the Certification Body for review by the Accreditation Body and inform on any issues requested to be covered/addressed in the audit.
- g) Involvement of an expert in quality assurance of environmentally and socially responsible textile processing, who is notified to the Global Standard gGmbH, in all accreditation procedures.
- h) Inform the Global Standard gGmbH on any accreditation decision taken.

The Global Standard gGmbH reserves the right to review any records or accompany an Accreditation Body audit of a Certification Body.

#### **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.

Granted accreditation is a prerequisite for conclusion of the 'Certifiers Contract' between the Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH, which is the operating unit of the Global Standard gGmbH and the Certification Body. Only after conclusion of the 'Certifiers Contract' is the certification body entitled to act as Approved Certifier and provide corresponding GOTS certification. Approved Certifiers shall maintain at all times accreditation to at least one standard according ISO/IEC 17065 as well as 'GOTS accreditation'. Global Standard gGmbH reserves the right to suspend or terminate the contract, to limit the approved scope as detailed in the 'Certifiers Contract' and to call on the accreditation body to investigate problems.

#### **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 website. Further this manual shall be published on the GOTS website in order to enable reporting

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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.

any perceived violations thereof to the Global Standard gGmbH and/or to the applicable Accreditation Body.

## **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 respective its chemical input approval 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 (contract)**

The Certification Body shall provide its certification service based on a legally enforceable agreement (contract) signed by the operators. In particular, the agreement shall at least:

- a) Include a description of the rights and duties of the operators offering certified processes and products respective approved chemical inputs, including a commitment to comply with the relevant criteria of the GOTS, the Manual for the Implementation of GOTS, the Labelling and Licensing Guide and other provisions of the GOTS certification program as provided by the Global Standard gGmbH;
- b) Provide to the Certification Body and the Accreditation Body the right of access to all units of the inspected facilities, including to units where no GOTS products are processed, stored or administered, if applicable, and to all relevant documentation and records, including financial records.
- c) Contain provisions that upon suspension, withdrawal or termination of certification, the operator discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to it and takes action as required by the certification procedure (e.g. the return of certification documents);
- d) Require that the operator keeps records of all complaints received related to compliance with certification requirements and makes these records available to the Certification Body and / or the Global Standard gGmbH on request, to take appropriate action with regard to such complaints and any related deviations to the certification requirements found and to document the actions taken;
- e) Require that the operator informs the certification body, without delay, of any information or changes that may affect its ability to confirm with the certification requirements;
- f) Contain provisions to allow the Certification Body to exchange information with other GOTS approved Certification Bodies, accreditation bodies and the Global Standard gGmbH to verify relevant information, especially the certification status of the operator, its processes and products, as part of its ongoing evaluation;
- g) Requires the operator to confirm that it does not and will not hold GOTS certification with another Certification Body at the same time<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>3</sup> Not applicable to subcontractors performing job work (in the field of processing or manufacturing) in the supply chain of GOTS goods without becoming owner of them and without assigning their own certification. Such operators may still be subcontracted by

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

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

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

The Certification Body shall accept certificates and letters of approval issued in accordance with the GOTS by other GOTS approved Certification Bodies in order to conclude final certification.

Further the Certification Body shall accept certificates as well as residue analysis reports issued by other certification bodies 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 and training or experience 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. The records shall include:
  - name and address;
  - employer(s) and position held;
  - educational qualification and professional status
  - experience and training
  - the assessment of competence
  - periodic performance review
  - authorisations held within the certification body
  - date of most recent updating of each record.

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

- a) The Certification Body shall define minimum criteria for the competence of their personnel expected to be engaged in GOTS certification services.

Criteria should specify minimum education, training, technical knowledge and work experience relevant to the scope of certification issued.
- b) The Certification body shall formally authorise personnel for functions in the certification process.
- c) The Certification Body shall 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 yearsyears' professional experience as technician in the textile industry plus expertise in quality management issues or 2 yearsyears' professional experience in inspection and certification of textile processors.

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different certified entities with job work and accordingly may be inspected by different Certification Bodies and get listed on more than one Certificate of Compliance issued to the certified entities assigning the certification.



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 is assigned. Personnel assigned with inspection of the GOTS social criteria in processing and manufacturing facilities must have completed an appropriate related auditor course (such as SA 8000 Basic Auditor Course or equivalent).<sup>4</sup>

- d) 'Scope 4' approved Certification Bodies shall ensure for each chemical input approval decision that at least one of its personnel involved must have:
- a university or bachelor degree in chemistry (or specifically in textile chemistry) or
  - professional experience in the textile chemical supply industry (chemical producers / suppliers), with a laboratory, research institute or assessment body dealing with manufacturing and/or environmental and toxicity assessment of chemical inputs (e.g. preparation or assessment of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)) or
  - at least 3 years professional experience as technician in the textile industry with demonstrated expertise in the application of textile auxiliaries (in wet processing / finishing departments) and their environmental and toxicity assessment (on basis of their MSDS). 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;
- b) Ensure that new personnel have sufficient competence. New inspectors must receive qualified training of on-site inspection for the GOTS certification and undergo an on-site apprenticeship period accompanying inspections carried out according to the GOTS certification system while under the supervision of qualified personnel. In case this is reasonably practical considering the given number and geographical structure of existing operators at least 5 inspections are to be accompanied. The training and accompanied inspections must cover each accreditation scope in which the inspector will be assigned;

Note: Certification Bodies can refer to ISO/IEC 17021 Annex D for guidance on the qualities and behaviours of good inspectors in assessing inspectors during the hiring process;

- c) Provide, as necessary, training programs on certification processes, methodologies, activities and other relevant certification scheme requirements;
- d) Participate in the GOTS training system (e.g. courses, seminars) as offered by the Global Standard gGmbH;
- e) Ensure that assigned personnel have access to the area of the GOTS website restricted for Approved Certifiers, where e.g. the training documents of all previous GOTS trainings, the list of companies banned from becoming GOTS certified, the latest chemical input approval list and specific questions & answers with regard to binding interpretation and implementation

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<sup>4</sup> The Global Standard gGmbH is considering development of a customized social training course for auditors and certification personnel which will then be considered as a recognised course to meet this criterion. Further advice and reference to auditor courses which are recognised as equivalent may be provided through an up-dated issue of this manual or first on the corresponding website <http://www.global-standard.org/certification/conditions-for-certification-bodies.html> .

advise is provided and ensure that this information is considered, used and followed if applicable in the GOTS certification process.

- f) Relevant for "Scope 4" approved Certification Bodies: Ensure that assigned personnel have access to and knowledge of the applicable norms (e.g. norms according to which the MSDS of applied inputs is prepared – compare chapter 2.3.3 of the GOTS Manual) literature / databases (e.g. CAS number registry <http://www.cas.org/>) to be able to review chemical product group, properties and classifications of chemical substances (as per GOTS 2.3.1 and 2.3.2).

As adequate training for assigned personnel completion of training courses on the requirements for compilation of MSDS according to accepted norms as detailed in 2.3.3 of the GOTS Manual are considered.

#### **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, a legally binding agreement (contract) 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) Directly hold the certification agreement with the operator (see 5.1.1.2) and 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:
  - Is competent to perform the subcontracted work,
  - and its personnel that it uses, are not involved, either directly or through any other 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 bodies subcontracted for the work;
- e) Review that all communication of the external body about the subcontracted work is accurate;
- f) Implement corrective actions for any breaches of the contract or other requirements related to the subcontracted work which it becomes aware;

- g) Inform the operator in advance of outsourcing activities, in order to provide the operator with an opportunity to object;
- h) Promptly notify the Accreditation Body and Global Standard gGmbH about the body and the kind of the subcontracted 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) 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 internal or external 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 operator as to methods of dealing with matters which are barriers (e.g. 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 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 (such as 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 and its reference documents (acc. to GOTS, chapter 1.5; incl. Labelling and Licensing Guide, Manual for the Implementation of the GOTS) and other provisions of the GOTS certification program as provided by the Global Standard gGmbH (for these documents the Certification Body may link to the GOTS website);
- 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 the certification requirements 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

##### **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, accreditation bodies and the Global Standard gGmbH 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 entities to use;
- b) Review and approve the intended use of the GOTS logo and labelling by certified entities in advance; in particular the Certification Body is expected to:
  - have a procedure for a written GOTS logo and labelling release in place
  - provide individual label release at least for each different artwork, product group and operator

- ensure that clients of the certified entity have indeed a valid scope certificate, in case the applied labelling contains a license number of the clients
  - ensure that any non-certified client of the certified entity is being made aware about the applicable licensing conditions for using the applied on-product GOTS labelling (according to chapter 5.1 if the non-certified client is a processor, manufacturer or B2B trader and according to chapter 5.2 if it is a retailer)
- c) Be able to request an operator to discontinue use of certificates and logos that it authorizes certified entities to use;
  - d) Apply suitable actions and sanctions to deal with incorrect or misleading references to the certification system or use of licenses, certificates as well as GOTS logo and labelling that it authorizes certified entities 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) Performance reviews of personnel responsible for evaluation, inspection and certification shall be conducted 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 Global Standard gGmbH;
- 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 facilities and sub-contractors to be certified;
- b) Provide information as to whether another Certification Body has denied certification and any known reasons for that denial. Additionally, the operator must provide a copy of their last assessment report, if one was performed to the standard, in order to ensure that unresolved non-conformities on the part of the operator are taken into account by the new Certification Body;
- c) Provide information about any past applications made; approvals received; approvals suspended or withdrawn or lapsed.
- d) Provide information about any other certifications and Certification Body relationships that share the same scope as GOTS (e.g. use of organic fibre under the Organic Content Standard of Textile Exchange).

### **5.2.2. Evaluation**

#### **5.2.2.1. Scope**

- a) The Certification Body shall have a plan for the evaluation activities to allow for the necessary arrangements to be managed.
- b) The Certification Body shall evaluate entities against all certification requirements specified. The evaluation shall consist of a review of documents and an on-site inspection visit

#### **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 on-site inspection protocol shall at the very minimum undertake the following, as applicable to the inspected operator:

- a) Assessment of the processing system by means of visits to processing and storage units (which may also include visits to non-certified 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 product 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. In particular the inspection protocol must include:
- Inspection of processing and storage units, toilet facilities, rest areas and other sites of the company with access for workers
  - Interview with management and confidential interviews with workers and worker's representatives
  - Review of personnel files, such as list of workers employed, workers' contracts, pay rolls, shift and working time protocols, age verification, social insurance documents
- 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 certified and non-certified 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 a certified entity is certified also by other Certification Bodies for a standard that shares the same scope (e.g. organic fibre under Organic Content Standard of Textile Exchange), the Certification Body shall 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 to the operator.

- 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, manufacturing or trading 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) 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) 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**

Certification decisions must be made within two calendar months of the inspection.

##### **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.
- c) In case reasons for denial or withdrawal of certification include fraudulent activities the Certification Body shall promptly notify Global Standard gGmbH who will circulate among all approved Certification Bodies details of such operators. Certification Bodies must not offer certification to those operators within a period specified by Global Standard gGmbH.

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

- a) Exceptions to requirements for certification must only be granted if the basis for granting exceptions is explicitly provided for in GOTS (e.g. GOTS 4.0, chapter 2.4.5 auxiliaries permitted for bleaching non-cotton fibre products; 4.1 inspection cycle for small scale subcontractors with low risk potential and for traders) or other documentation of the Global Standard gGmbH.
- b) The Certification Body shall have clear criteria and procedures for granting exceptions to requirements for certification and shall document the basis on which the exception is granted.

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

- a) In case of positive certification decision the Certification Body shall issue official certification documents (= 'Certificates of Compliance') to each certified entity in accordance with the 'Policy and Template for issuing Certificates of Compliance (Scope Certificates, SCs)'. Subcontractors and their relevant processing and manufacturing steps become listed on the Scope Certificate of the certified entity assigning the certification.
- b) The validity period of the Scope Certificate must not exceed 16 months from the date of issue.

### **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 GOTS. 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) In general operators that are obliged to be certified in accordance with the criteria provided in GOTS (ref. chapter 4.1) are to be inspected at least annually.
- b) The Certification Body may decide on exceptions from the annual onsite inspection cycle in accordance with the criteria provided in the GOTS and the Manual for Implementation (ref. chapter 4.1) only.

- c) In addition to the regular inspection visit, the Certification Body must conduct unannounced on-site inspections of certified entities in accordance with the stipulations provided in the latest issue of the Manual for Implementation (ref. chapter 4.1).

#### **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) 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. Process requirements for conducting GOTS Approval of textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs)***

Assessment and approval of textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) can only be offered by Certification Bodies accredited and finally approved (through the 'Certifiers Contract') for this specific accreditation scope (= 'Scope 4').

#### **5.3.1. Application procedures**

##### **5.3.1.1. Information for operators**

The criteria of chapter 5.2.1.1 as applicable to the approval process of textile auxiliary agents apply.

##### **5.3.1.2. Application form and the applicant's obligations**

The Certification Body shall require completion of an application form, signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant. The Certification Body shall require applying chemical producer or supplier to:

- a) Declare that the GOTS requirements for the applied chemical inputs are understood and the applied inputs are compliant to the best of the applicant's knowledge;
- b) Provide an MSDS for each applied chemical input prepared according to a recognised norm or directive as indicated in the Manual for the Implementation of GOTS, chapter 2.3.3;
- c) Inform the Certification Body if another Certification Body has already denied / withdrawn or suspended approval of any of the applied input(s);
- d) Grant the Certification Body the right to exchange information with other Certification Bodies,

accreditation bodies and the Global Standard gGmbH to verify the authenticity of the information;

- e) Inform the Certification Body about any relevant changes related to applied or already approved input(s), such as:
  - change of supplier of raw materials used,
  - change of processing method / technology used or even
  - change of (concentration of) raw materials / ingredients used

Such information needs to be considered in the assessment procedure.

## **5.3.2. Evaluation**

### **5.3.2.1. Review of application**

Prior to the assessment, the Certification Body shall review the application documents to ensure that assessment can be carried out and that application of approval procedures is possible. In particular, the Certification Body shall review whether:

- a) Documents submitted by the applicant are complete;
- b) The applicant appears to understand the relevant assessment requirements (GOTS and applicable related procedures).

### **5.3.2.2. Assessment procedure**

- a) The Certification Body shall assign qualified personnel to the evaluation in line with the relevant requirements of 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 above, and provide them with appropriate work-related documents.
- b) The official MSDS prepared according to a recognised norm or directive is basis for the assessment. The Certification Body is requested, where appropriate and felt necessary, to include further sources of information (such as additional toxicological and environmental data on specific components of the auxiliary agents, current and valid test reports, independent 3<sup>rd</sup> - party lab analysis and traceability checks of ingredients) in the assessment. Related interpretation advice as provided in the Manual for the Implementation of GOTS, chapter 2.3.3, is to be taken into account.
- c) The Certification Body shall request the applicant to add any data derived in the assessment procedure which is relevant information for the official MSDS to an updated version of the official MSDS before approving the corresponding input.

## **5.3.3. Decision on approval**

### **5.3.3.1. Issuing of approval documents**

- a) In case of positive approval decision the Certification Body shall issue conformity documents (= 'Letters of Approval') in accordance with the 'Policy and Template for issuing Letters of Approval for Colourants/Textile Auxiliaries' as released by the Global Standard gGmbH to the chemical input producer / supplier who has applied for input approval.
- b) 'Scope 4' accredited Approved Certifiers shall make summary lists of approved chemical inputs as issued with 'Letters of Approval' available to the Global Standard gGmbH as well as to the other GOTS approved Certification Bodies following the reporting dates and formats as requested by the Global Standard gGmbH so that these lists can be used as a supportive usage and assessment tool by all Approved Certifiers and certified entities. Inputs specifically marked as approved on confidential basis for an applicant (e.g. input developed for a specific

processing operator and only applied in this context) will not be disclosed to the other GOTS approved Certification Bodies and their clients.

#### **5.3.3.2. Renewal of approval**

With a new version of GOTS in force (which is 12 months after its release, provide no other period is published) the validity of any Letter of Approval issued to the former version terminates the latest and re-assessment must be carried out based on the requirements of the new standard version. Based on the Certification Body's procedures and risk assessment a shorter validity period followed by re-assessment may be provided.

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

- a) Reasons for denial of approval of applied inputs shall be stated with clear reference to the GOTS criteria or other certification requirement violated.
- b) In case reasons for denial or withdrawal or suspension of approval include fraudulent activities of the operator the Certification Body shall promptly notify Global Standard gGmbH who will circulate among all Approved Certification Bodies details of such entities.
- c) Certification Bodies must not offer input approval to such entities where fraudulent activities have been detected for a time period specified by Global Standard gGmbH.
- d) In case a chemical input, which was included in the latest circulated summary list needs to be removed from a 'Letter of Approval' because of non-conformities found, a notification is to be sent to the GOTS Technical Director for circulation to all Approved Certifiers. This notification must include the kind of non-conformity found so that the risk potential related to the use of this input can be estimated.

#### **5.3.3.4. Dealing with conflicting decision**

In case of conflicting decisions (chemical input(s) approved by one that is declined or disputed by another Approved Certifier), Approved Certifiers are requested to strive to achieve consistent assessment via consensus, by sharing their proofs of assessment. If this fails in last instance the GOTS Technical Director / Technical Committee will have the right to take a final decision based on screening the provided technical information on the chemical input(s) in question.

#### **5.3.3.5. Changes in the assessment requirements**

The Certification Body shall ensure that each client in the chemical input approval procedure is notified of any relevant changes in the requirements relevant for the assessment and approval of chemical inputs without delay.

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

#### **5.4.1. Annual Fee**

The Certification Body shall pay an Annual Fee per calendar year (including incomplete calendar years) per facility inspected and/or certified as stipulated in the Licensing & Labelling Guide and the 'Certifier Contract'.

#### **5.4.2. Collection of Licence Fee**

The Certification Body shall collect Licence Fees on behalf of Global Standard gGmbH and transfer these as stipulated in the Licensing & Labelling Guide and the 'Certifier Contract'.

#### **5.4.3. Competition**

Beginning 12 months after first approval, Approved Certifiers must not certify and/or inspect according to textile processing standards of its own that deal with the use of organic fibres regardless whether the content of such standards is different or identical to the Global Organic Textile Standard. This applies accordingly to its subsidiary and/or affiliate companies.

#### **5.4.4. Public data base, reporting on activities**

- a) Certification Bodies must keep the GOTS public data base up-dated at all times with the requested information regarding their certified entities (e.g. names, addresses, contact details, product specifications, field of operation, and validity date of certificate).
- b) A report on the relevant activities including a complete list of the inspected and/or certified entities and their facilities as well as withdrawn entities and their facilities in the preceding calendar year is to be sent by end of January of each year to the Global Standard gGmbH.
- c) c. Certification Bodies shall submit upon request by the GOTS Technical Committee detailed procedural or individual documentation related to inspection, certification and – if applicable - chemical approval activities in order to permit the GOTS Technical Committee to supervise Certification Body's adherence to the GOTS, the Manual for Implementation and any procedural rules and interpretation advises issued by the GOTS Technical Committee. The GOTS Technical Committee members shall be bound to treat any of this information confidentially.
- d) Certification Bodies shall submit upon request of the GOTS Evaluator of a complaint (= GOTS Technical Director or assigned staff member or representative) for issues related to the implementation of the GOTS quality assurance and labelling system any relevant information required to process the complaint.

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

Certification Bodies shall cooperate with all other GOTS Approved Certifiers in the Certifiers Council in order to ensure worldwide equal application of the Global Standard and inspection and certification procedures under the supervision of the GOTS Director Standards Development & Quality Assurance.

## 6. Abbreviations

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  
 MSDS: Material Safety Data Sheet  
 UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## 7. Definitions

For the purpose of this document the following terms are defined as:

Term	Definition for the purpose of this document
Accreditation Body	Organisation performing professional and objective auditing of Certification Bodies
Certification Body	Organisation performing professional and objective auditing of manufacturing facilities and operating product certification systems applying for initial or continued accreditation and approval as GOTS Approved Certifier
Approved Certifier	Certification Body which is accredited and approved by the Global Standard gGmbH to perform inspections and certifications according to GOTS in the relevant scope. An updated list of Approved Certifiers and their scopes is available at: <a href="http://www.global-standard.org/certification/approved-certification-bodies.html">http://www.global-standard.org/certification/approved-certification-bodies.html</a>
Operator	Entity (processor, manufacturer, trader or retailer) applying for initial or continued GOTS certification respective chemical input approval to a Certification Body.
Certified Entity	Processor, manufacturer, trader or retailer of GOTS Goods certified by an Approved Certifier.
Global Standard gGmbH (Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH; Global Standard non profit GmbH)	The legal entity operating the Global Organic Textile Standard program. (Founders: International Association Natural Textile Industry, Japan Organic Cotton Association, Organic Trade Association, Soil Association)
GOTS Goods	Textile goods (finished or intermediate) produced in compliance with GOTS by a Certified Entity and certified by an Approved Certifier.

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