



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD  
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# APPROVAL PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

VERSION 3.0

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## Document Revision History

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE OF THIS DOCUMENT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PRINCIPLES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SCOPE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>APPROVAL AND MONITORING PROCEDURE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
4.1	PREREQUISITE FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES .....	4
4.2	APPLICATION PROCEDURE .....	4
4.3	REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES .....	6
4.4	APPROVAL DECISIONS .....	7
4.5	PUBLICATION OF APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODIES AND THEIR CONDITIONS .....	7
<b>5</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS .....	8
5.2	PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR CONDUCTING GOTS CERTIFICATION .....	16
5.3	PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR CONDUCTING GOTS APPROVAL OF TEXTILE AUXILIARY AGENTS (CHEMICAL INPUTS).....	20
5.4	PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF SCOPE CERTIFICATES .....	24
5.5	PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES .....	24
5.6	FURTHER SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FOR GOTS APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODIES .....	25
<b>6</b>	<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b> .....	<b>27</b>

The following verbal forms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions, or capabilities in this document:

- “**shall**” indicates a mandatory requirement
- “**should**” indicates a recommendation
- “**may**” indicates a permission
- “**can**” indicates a possibility or capability

## 1 OBJECTIVE OF THIS DOCUMENT

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 systems within their purview so as to ensure compliance to GOTS requirements and needs.

## 2 PRINCIPLES

Organisations performing professional and objective auditing of manufacturing facilities and operating product certification systems can apply for approval as GOTS approved Certification Body to the Global Standard gGmbH. These Organisations are referred to as 'Certification Body', 'CB' or 'Certifier' in the following and other GOTS documents.

For this approval process as well as for continuous monitoring of the approved Certification Bodies the Global Standard gGmbH is cooperating with Accreditation Bodies ("ABs") 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 IOAS Inc., 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 a member of the International Accreditation Forum's Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (IAF MLA<sup>1</sup>)), complies with the procedures of ISO/IEC Guide 17011<sup>2</sup> "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 document are based upon the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 "Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services". It further especially refers to the [International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies \(IROCB\) and Guide for Assessing Equivalence of Organic Standards and Technical Regulations \(EquiTool\), version 2<sup>3</sup>](#), released in 2012 as released in October 2008. In addition, this document includes requirements specifically related to the textile sector and the content of GOTS.

Within this document are references to numerous GOTS Documents. The latest operative and valid versions of these documents shall always take precedence. Should any clause within this document result in divergence with another GOTS document, the latest version shall be valid.

Confirmation and clarification of the same shall be obtained from Global Standard gGmbH by writing to: [bhajekar@global-standard.org](mailto:bhajekar@global-standard.org)

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) is to ensure mutual recognition of accredited certification and validation/verification statements between signatories to the MLA, and subsequently, acceptance of accredited certification and validation/verification statements in many markets based on one accreditation.

<sup>2</sup> The latest version of all referred Standards shall be applicable.

<sup>3</sup> The International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture (ITF) was convened from 2003 to 2008 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It served as an open-ended platform for dialogue between private and public institutions involved in trade and regulatory activities in the organic agriculture sector. The ITF developed a normative document, "International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies" (IROCB) as a tool to enable governments and organic certification and accreditation bodies to recognize certification bodies outside of their own system, and thus facilitate the acceptance of organic products certified by these bodies. IROCB is a public document that 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. A spreadsheet version of IROCB is also available to facilitate comparative assessment of other certification requirements to the IROCB. Further information on IROCB, including the spreadsheet version and contact information, is available on the GOMA website, [www.goma-organic.org](http://www.goma-organic.org).

Global Standard gGmbH expects all organisations within the Standard's purview, including Certification Bodies and Accreditation Bodies, to comply with all applicable local, national, international laws and regulations at all times.

### 3 SCOPE

The procedures and requirements as specified in this document 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 document shall be six months after the date of release. Until that date compliance with the requirements of the previous version is accepted.

## 4 APPROVAL AND MONITORING PROCEDURE

### 4.1 PREREQUISITE FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

Certification Bodies applying to become a GOTS Approved Certification Body shall already have a valid accreditation to perform certification for at least one standard according to ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 "Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services".

Applicant Certification Bodies, as an organisation, shall be required to have at least 5 years of experience in the certification of organisations in the textile field to other sustainability or related standards.

Applicant Certification Bodies, as an organisation, shall have at least 5 years of experience in the certification of social audit requirements in the textile field.

### 4.2 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 4.2.1 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> ).
- 4.2.2 Applications and contents therein shall always be kept confidential within the GOTS Management / Team dealing with the process of Certification Body approvals
- 4.2.3 Applications will be considered only if they contain the following information/declarations:
  - 4.2.3.1 Legal name, legal status, address and legal representative of the applicant.
  - 4.2.3.2 Copy of applicant company's legal registration document with relevant authorities
  - 4.2.3.3 Names of all shareholders of the applicant company. Publicly Listed Companies may declare "Publicly Listed".
  - 4.2.3.4 A declaration that the applicant company, their principal shareholders or senior management staff have no business interests within the textile supply chain (including chemical inputs) – apart from the certification or audit or inspection or quality control services of the same.
  - 4.2.3.5 List of all offices and branches of the applicant, their legal status and ownership.
  - 4.2.3.6 Scope(s) according to which the applicant seeks GOTS accreditation
  - 4.2.3.7 Accreditation can be applied according to one of, a combination of or all of the following scopes:
  - 4.2.3.8 Certification of mechanical textile processing and manufacturing operations and their products ("Scope 1")
  - 4.2.3.9 Certification of wet processing and finishing operations and their products ("Scope 2")

- 4.2.3.10 Certification of trading operations and related products ("Scope 3")
- 4.2.3.11 Approval of dyes and textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists ("Scope 4")
- 4.2.3.12 A copy of the applicant's accreditation certificate(s) and a list of ISO 17065 accredited scopes
- 4.2.3.13 Statement regarding which accreditation body the Certification Body intends to assign to perform the GOTS accreditation procedure
- 4.2.3.14 A declaration that the applicant agrees to the procedure and all requirements of this document and that he agrees to enter into a formal contract ('Certifier's contract') accordingly if approved
- 4.2.3.15 A summary presentation of the relevant (textile) professional qualification and experience including a Curriculum Vitae for all designated personnel.
- 4.2.4 Applicants shall confirm that they shall pay a non-refundable processing fee of € 400 plus tax ("Processing Fee") and a non-refundable Application Fee of € 5.000 to Global Standard gGmbH on receipt of such an invoice(s) from Global Standard gGmbH
- 4.2.5 An approval application for an Applicant Certification Body may progress as follows<sup>4</sup>:
- a) The applicant Certification Body sends in their application with all details by email to GOTS.
  - b) This application is studied for completeness and clarifications requested if necessary.
  - c) The Management takes a preliminary decision on whether to accept the application or not in a scheduled Management Meeting (typically held once every 30 or 45 days) and conveys this decision to both the applicant and the applicant's chosen Accreditation Body.
  - d) GOTS will then raise two invoices for the processing and application fees for payment.
  - e) Applicant Certification Body will then make the necessary payment to GOTS.
  - f) The applicant's chosen Accreditation Body shall commence their formal procedure for accreditation after receiving our preliminary acceptance decision.
  - g) The Accreditation Body will formally and directly inform GOTS of their final decision. Should the accreditation be successful, the AB will also inform the scope for which they accredit the applicant Certification Body (Scopes 1,2,3,4) and the geographical coverage of such accreditation.
  - h) The Management of GOTS will formally accept the accreditation of a Certification Body at the next scheduled management meeting.
  - i) GOTS shall send a Certifiers Contract for acceptance and signature. GOTS shall not entertain negotiations related to Certifier Contract clauses, which are identical for all GOTS Approved Certification Bodies.
  - j) The Certification Body is only then permitted to work for GOTS certification and issue GOTS scope and transaction certificates under known and published policies.
  - k) Every Approved Certification Body shall nominate one person from their organisation to be "CB Admin" for the GOTS website (Certifier restricted area, GOTS public database upload etc.) to whom GOTS will provide appropriate access.
  - l) Approved Certifiers shall nominate one person to the GOTS Certifier Council which meets in person once a year unless hampered by extenuating circumstances whence the meeting may be arranged virtually.
  - m) Approved Certification Bodies can, at their discretion, provide their logo and photograph of the Certifier Council member for display on the GOTS website.
- 4.2.6 A decision to accept or reject an application by a prospective applicant Certification Body is reserved by GOTS without an obligation to disclose or assign any reason for the same. The decision of the GOTS Management shall be final in all cases. Certification Body Applicants shall not have recourse to an appeal procedure in such cases.

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<sup>4</sup> Illustrative example for a general application case. Process may follow different steps for some applicants. GOTS reserves the right to modify this procedure at any time, without notice to any stakeholder.

- 4.2.7 GOTS reserves the right to (temporarily or permanently) suspend new applications from any or all countries/regions around the world for a period determined by the GOTS Management without obligation to disclose or assign any reason for the same.
- 4.2.8 Global Standard gGmbH reserves the right to alter the processing and application fees (see Section 4.2.4) for applicant Certification Bodies at any time.

### 4.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES

- 4.3.1 Accreditation Bodies (ABs) shall comply with the procedures of ISO/IEC Guide 17011 "Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies" and shall agree to follow the GOTS approval and monitoring procedure as provided in this (and any other relevant GOTS) document.
- 4.3.2 Accreditation Bodies shall be registered legal entities.
- 4.3.3 The Global Standard gGmbH requests that the assigned accreditation body include the following specific minimum assessment elements in its respective accreditation and monitoring procedure:
  - 4.3.3.1 Accreditation Bodies shall share competence records and training provided to the personnel conducting the assessments annually.
  - 4.3.3.2 Accreditation Bodies shall provide their annual tentative surveillance/assessment/witness Audit plan to GOTS.
  - 4.3.3.3 Accreditation bodies shall submit a summary of assessments carried out by them for GOTS in form of an Annual report to GOTS by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February of the following year.
  - 4.3.3.4 Accreditation assessment to the headquarter / main office of the initially applying Certification Body
  - 4.3.3.5 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
  - 4.3.3.6 Witness audit performed at a chemical formulator (provided that the Certification Body has applied for this scope) for the initially applying Certification Body
  - 4.3.3.7 Continuous monitoring of approved GOTS Certification Bodies, including performing at least one up-date accreditation assessment every second year to the/an office conducting GOTS certifications and at least one witness or review audit for every second year of granted accreditation.
  - 4.3.3.8 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 during each (up-date) accreditation assessment.
  - 4.3.3.9 Verification of Transaction Certificate issuance procedures (including volume reconciliation and financial transaction verifications) conducted by the Certification Body within the scope of such checks during monitoring assessments.
  - 4.3.3.10 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.
  - 4.3.3.11 Inform the Global Standard gGmbH before any office assessment. 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.
  - 4.3.3.12 Involve an expert in quality assurance of environmentally and socially responsible textile processing, who is notified to the Global Standard gGmbH, in all accreditation procedures.
  - 4.3.3.13 Involve an internal or external expert in textile processing/manufacturing in relevant accreditation processes.

- 4.3.3.14 Involvement of an internal or external expert in textile chemicals in relevant accreditation processes.
  - 4.3.3.15 Confirm the legality of operations of the Certification Body in countries/regions for which they seek accreditation or renewal of such accreditation.
  - 4.3.3.16 Promptly inform the Global Standard gGmbH on any accreditation decision taken, including decisions to limit, suspend, withdraw or cancel the accreditation of any Certification Body and the reasons for doing so.
- 4.3.4 The Global Standard gGmbH reserves the right to review any records or accompany, as an observer, an Accreditation Body assessment of a Certification Body, with prior notice and written request towards its needs for quality assurance.
- 4.3.5 Accreditation Bodies are recommended to seek and consider feedback from GOTS for their surveillance visits, assessments and witness audits.
- 4.3.6 Accreditation body shall provide an annual report to GOTS on its accreditation activities related to the GOTS standard to include the following:
- 4.3.6.1 Summary of all accreditation decisions made
  - 4.3.6.2 Summary of complaints and stakeholder feedback received.
  - 4.3.6.3 Implementation information as per IAF MD 12:2016
  - 4.3.6.4 Identified opportunities for the improvement of GOTS
  - 4.3.6.5 Other related issues

#### 4.4 APPROVAL DECISIONS

- 4.4.1 The accreditation body decides if accreditation according to the applied scope(s) (see Sections 4.2.3.7 through 4.2.3.11) based on the procedures and requirements of this document (= 'GOTS accreditation') will be granted to the Certification Body.
- 4.4.2 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.
- 4.4.3 Granted accreditation is a prerequisite for the 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 the conclusion of the 'Certifiers Contract' is the certification body entitled to act as Approved Certification Body and provide corresponding GOTS certification. Approved Certification Bodies shall maintain at all times accreditation to at least one standard according to 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 document shall be published on the GOTS website to enable reporting of 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 and provide details of all owners/shareholders;
- b) Have documented the rights and responsibilities relevant to the certification of 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.
- d) Have legal and statutory permission to perform its activities within the countries and regions that they seek and receive accreditation. Such permission shall not be outsourced to another unrelated organisation but may be permitted through a majority-owned subsidiary.

##### 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 Conditions for the Use of GOTS Signs 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, access to formulations and manufacturing premises 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 or the destruction of electronically issued 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 conform to 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) Require the operator to confirm that it does not and will not hold GOTS certification or GOTS Letter of Approval (LoA) with another Certification Body at the same time<sup>5</sup>;

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<sup>5</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 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.



- h) Require the operator to provide data to and participate in the GOTS relevant surveys and central database system<sup>6</sup> if called upon to do so.
- i) Provide for the possibility of GOTS nominated personnel being allowed to witness an audit of the operator's facilities or those of their sub-contractors as observers.
- j) Provide for the possibility of GOTS nominated personnel being allowed to attend an office assessment of the Certification Body as observers.

#### **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 based on requirements given in subsequent paragraphs. Criteria shall 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 shall have a university or bachelor's degree in the field of textile or clothing engineering plus expertise in quality management issues or 3 years of professional experience in a technical capacity in the textile industry plus expertise in quality management issues or 2 years professional experience in audits and certification of textile processors. Further, the Certification Body shall assure that

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<sup>6</sup> Provisionally called Global Trace-Base

- personnel familiar with the situation and specifics of the local textile industry and competent for audit and evaluation of the GOTS social criteria is assigned.
- d) Personnel assigned with audit of the GOTS social criteria in processing and manufacturing facilities shall have completed an appropriate related auditor training course accredited to ISO 19011 (such as SA 8000 Basic Auditor Course or GOTS SAI Social Training programme or BSCI Auditor Qualification Programme<sup>7</sup>) or equivalent).
  - e) 'Scope 4' approved Certification Bodies shall ensure for each chemical input approval decision that at least one of its personnel involved in taking decisions or evaluating approval of chemical inputs shall have:
    - a university or bachelor's degree in chemistry (or specifically in textile chemistry/processing) or
    - at least 3 years 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 (SDS)) or
    - at least 3 years professional experience as a 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 SDS). The Certification Body shall maintain up-to-date documents describing the respective responsibilities of assigned personnel.
    - adequate knowledge of legal restrictions of chemicals globally including regulations such as [REACH](#) and information publicly available through agencies such as ECHA ([European Chemical Agency](#))
  - e) Certification Bodies that approve GOTS accessories shall ensure that the person tasked with approval understands and is familiar with what requirements relate to GOTS approved accessories.
  - f) It is required that the approval process of dyes and textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists and accessories involves one evaluator and a second, independent decision-maker, who shall be capable of taking such decisions.

### 5.1.2.3 Capacity-building

The Certification Body shall ensure that personnel involved in certification and approvals (i.e. inspectors, evaluators and other certification/approval 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/approval 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.
- c) Ensure that new inspectors/evaluators shall receive qualified training<sup>8</sup> of on-site audit inspection for the GOTS certification and formulators.
- d) Ensure that new inspectors/evaluators shall undergo an on-site apprenticeship period (by observing a qualified auditor or participating as assistant auditor-in-training) accompanying audits 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 audits are to be

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<sup>7</sup> Further advice and reference to auditor courses which are recognised as equivalent may be provided through an updated issue of this document or first on a corresponding GOTS webpage.

<sup>8</sup> 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

accompanied. The training and accompanied audits shall cover each accreditation scope in which the inspector will be assigned;

- e) Provide, as necessary, training programs on certification processes, methodologies, activities and other relevant certification scheme requirements;
- f) Participate in the GOTS training system (e.g. courses, seminars, webinars) as offered by the Global Standard gGmbH;
- g) Ensure that assigned personnel have access to the area of the GOTS website restricted for Approved Certification Bodies, 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 advice is provided and ensure that this information is considered, used and followed if applicable in the GOTS certification process.
- h) 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 SDS 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).
- i) As adequate training for assigned personnel completion of training courses on the requirements for compilation of SDS according to accepted norms as detailed in 2.3.3 of the GOTS Manual are considered.
- j) Personnel involved in audits and approvals of inputs pertaining to sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 of the Standard receive appropriate training to evaluate and audit formulators' sites.

#### **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 observe the policies and procedures of the Certification Body;
- b) Declare any prior or present association on their part, or 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)**

- a) Certification Bodies shall not engage subcontracted organisations for inspection/audits with the sole exception of section g) below.
- b) Certification Bodies may engage individual professional freelance inspectors/auditors, either on a short-term or long-term basis, at their own risk, provided they ensure such persons are fully aware of and are capable and competent to discharge assignments towards GOTS requirements ("Assignee")
- c) Any such assignments shall be executed only after Global Standard gGmbH is informed in advance; the respective Accreditation Body of the Certification Body is informed in advance and a proper legal contract is drawn up between the Certification Body and the Assignee.
- d) Certification Bodies, at all times, will be wholly and directly responsible for training, any and all actions and/or decisions of their assignees. Assignees shall be permitted to participate in GOTS training programmes and training webinars. Information about such webinars shall be given to assignees by the Certification Body and not Global Standard gGmbH.

- e) GOTS related official documentation such as Inspection/Audit Reports, Scope Certificates, and Transaction Certificates shall always be issued under the supervision, risk, authority, letterhead and seal of the respective GOTS approved Certification Body.
- f) Allocating audit within wholly owned Certification Body group offices or companies is not considered sub-contracting<sup>9</sup>. Exemptions may be granted where national law limits company ownership.
- g) Certification Bodies are permitted to use other GOTS Approved Certification Bodies for subcontracting inspections/audits.
- h) Subcontracting of activities that do not directly affect inspections, audits and/or certification decisions (such as payment collection or invoicing) is permitted, provided the Certification Body takes full responsibility for such work, holds a binding and legally enforceable contract with such an organization, ensure that the integrity of GOTS Certification is never compromised in any action, shape or form.
- i) Certification Bodies shall not use regulatory or national registrations of third parties (other than their subsidiaries) for the purposes of conducting their inspections and/or audits in the countries and regions that they operate or are expecting to operate. This shall be considered subcontracting under Section 5.1.2.6 (a) above and therefore not permitted.

### **5.1.3 Impartiality and objectivity**

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

The Certification Body shall document its organizational structure as per ISO 17065. It 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 the 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.
- c) An individual auditor shall not audit the same organization for more than three consecutive years.

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<sup>9</sup> Clause 7.6.4 of ISO 17065 shall be referred to for a further explanation.

### 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 applications and audit assignments regardless of 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 including the Standard, Implementation Manual, GOTS Policies, Templates 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;

### 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 or disclose information with or to other Certification Bodies, accreditation bodies and the Global Standard gGmbH for quality control, for aggregated data reporting, for impact measurements and to verify the authenticity of the information.

#### **5.1.4.3 Reference to certification and use of GOTS Signs**

In accordance with the provisions of the document “Conditions for the use of GOTS Signs V3.1” 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 concerning 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 audit 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, to be able to demonstrate how certification procedures have been applied.

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

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Review intervals shall be sufficiently short to ensure that the objective of quality improvement is fulfilled. Records of quality reviews and corrective, preventive actions shall be maintained.
- d) Performance reviews of personnel responsible for evaluation, audit and certification shall be conducted on an annual basis.

#### **5.1.6 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 and a summary of complaints submitted annually to GOTS

## 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 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, fees diversification of GOTS license fee and fee from approved certification bodies) 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 audit 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 shall 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 audit visit

#### 5.2.2.2 Review of application and preparation of audit

- a) Prior to the audit, 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);

- The certification has a system in place to identify a request from operators for new certification involving expertise of which the certification body has no prior experience
- 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 Audit protocol for Certified facilities**

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

The on-site audit 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 a reason for doing so).
- b) Review of records and accounts in order to verify the flow of goods (input/output volume reconciliation and traceability). Traceability checks and volume reconciliation checks shall include as applicable, transport documents, and financial records.
- c) Review of records related to input materials used in GOTS production. Such checks shall include, as applicable, transaction certificates, invoice and delivery documents, transport documents and financial records.
- d) Identification of areas of risk to product integrity;
- e) Audit of the wastewater, effluent treatment plant, if any (pre-)treatment system of wet processors;
- f) Verification of the operator's risk assessment of contamination and residue testing policy 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 audit protocol shall include:
  - Audit 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 representatives
  - Review of personnel files, such as a list of workers employed, workers' contracts, payrolls, shift and working time protocols, age verification, social insurance documents
- h) Verification that changes to the standards and 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 commingling 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 Risk Assessment**

- a) Prior to each audit, the certification body shall conduct a risk assessment and assign a risk level for each certified entity, its associated facilities and each associated subcontractor following a documented process.
- b) A risk assessment shall be done for each new certified entity or facility or subcontractor before it is issued with or added to a scope certificate. Risk Assessments are not required for Independently certified subcontractors.
- c) It is required that the Certification Body shall also include a background check on the applicant / certified entity and shall consider feedback (solicited and/or unsolicited) received about the organization. The background check should at a minimum include information about legal compliance history and ownership.
- d) Risk assessments can be used for a range of requirements, though the process is the same.
- e) Risk assessments shall be conducted by the certification body prior to each audit and at other times as needed (e.g., due to change in certificate scope or supplemental or additional audits)
- f) The certification body shall document the risk assessment and may inform the certified entity of their assigned risk designation as required.
- g) The certification body shall consider any additional relevant criteria it is aware of when conducting risk assessments.
- h) Each facility and subcontractor shall always be assessed individually for risk.
- i) Certification Bodies may use quantitative risk assessment tools in their operations.

#### **5.2.2.6 Reporting**

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

- a) Audit reports shall follow a set protocol for different types of operations inspected, and facilitate a non-discriminatory, objective and comprehensive analysis of the respective processing, manufacturing or trading system.
- b) The audit report shall cover all relevant aspects of the standards, and adequately validate the information provided by the operator. It shall include
  - i. A statement of any observations relating to conformity with the certification requirements;
  - ii. Date and duration of the audit, persons interviewed, facilities visited;
  - iii. If the previous audit was conducted by another certification body and within two years prior to the audit, a full evaluation of any non-conformities which were issued in the previous audit report, whether or not they were previously closed and
  - iv. Type of documents reviewed.
- c) The Certification Body shall promptly notify the operator of any non-conformity to be resolved within a specified time in order to comply with applicable certification requirements.
- d) The Certification Body shall document and apply measures to verify the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by operators to meet the requirements.

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

Certification decisions shall be made within two calendar months of an audit and informed to the applicant appropriately.

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

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

#### **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 Audit 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 the 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 requirements 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 shall 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 shall only be granted if the basis for granting exceptions is explicitly provided for in the latest version of GOTS (e.g. auxiliaries permitted for bleaching non-cotton fibre products; Audit 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 a positive certification decision the Certification Body shall issue official certification documents ("Scope Certificates") to each certified entity by the latest operative versions of the 'Policy for the Issuance of Scope Certificates' and 'Template for issuing Scope Certificates'.
- b) Subcontractors and their relevant processing and manufacturing steps become listed on the Scope Certificate of the certified entity assigning the certification.
- c) The process for issuance of Scope and Transaction Certificates has been described further in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 respectively.

### **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 renewal may focus on certain measures related to risk and might not repeat all procedures listed in 5.2.2.

- d) The Certification Body shall review and check appropriate financial records related to Transaction Certificates (for example: bank receipts/payments, Bank transfers, Letters of Credit, Income tax records) of certified input and output materials using appropriate sampling approaches to detect if any substitution of certified and non-certified material has occurred in the previous scope certificate validity period.
- e) Sampling approaches shall be based on the total number of Transaction Certificates issued to the certified entity in the last period of certification, in a suitable reducing scale, subject to a minimum of 5 TCs but not more than the square root of the total number of issued Transaction Certificates.
- f) The Certification Body shall verify material flow records for traceability and also input-output volumes for each certified entity.

#### **5.2.4.2 Frequency of Audit**

In general, operators that are obliged to be certified in accordance with the criteria provided in the latest operative version of the Standard are to be inspected at least annually.

The Certification Body may decide on exceptions from the annual onsite Audit cycle in accordance with the criteria provided in the Standard and the Manual for Implementation only.

In addition to the regular Audit visit, the Certification Body shall conduct unannounced on-site Audits of certified entities in accordance with the stipulations provided in the latest issue of the Manual for Implementation.

#### **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 an 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 chemicals (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 chemicals (chemical inputs) apply.

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

The Certification Body shall require the 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 a Product Stewardship plan and relevant documents
- c) Provide an SDS 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; and provide further resources requested by the certification bodies
- d) Inform the Certification Body if another Certification Body has already denied/withdrawn or suspended approval of any of the applied input(s);
- e) 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;
- f) Provide documents related to environmental health and safety for formulator's facilities if applicable.
- g) Inform the Certification Body about any relevant changes related to applied or already approved input(s), such as:
  - i. change of supplier of raw materials used,
  - ii. change of processing method/technology used
  - iii. 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 the 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) GOTS LoA from other CBs
- c) The applicant appears to understand the relevant assessment requirements (GOTS and applicable related procedures).

### 5.3.2.2 Assessment procedure

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.

- a) Certification bodies shall inspect the applied products to all applicable requirements for GOTS additives.
- b) The official SDS prepared according to a recognised norm or directive is the basis for the assessment, The Certification Body is requested, where appropriate and felt necessary, to include further sources of information as applicable (such as additional toxicological and environmental data on specific components of the auxiliary agents, current and valid test reports, independent 3rd - 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 SDS to an updated version of the official SDS before approving the corresponding input.



- d) For accessories, valid test reports verifying to conformance to requirements for GOTS in section 2.4.16 are the basis of assessments. GOTS may recognise third party standard equivalent as mentioned in Implementation manual.

### 5.3.2.3 Audit protocol

Audits shall be carried out in order to verify information and conformance with all chemical approval requirements applicable to the formulator and its subcontractor. It shall follow a set protocol to facilitate non-discriminatory and objective audit. Formulators and its subcontractor shall undergo onsite audit to verify product stewardship, environmental management system and safety audit as per section 2.3.5 of GOTS.

The on-site audit protocol shall take place once per standard version unless there are changes in approved scope. At the very minimum, the protocol shall undertake the following,

- a) Visits to chemical inputs production areas and its storage units (which may also include visits to non-approved inputs areas if there is a reason for doing so).
- b) Audit of the chemical inputs) in terms of product safety guidelines, release of certain substances during synthesis and other relevant reports of their compliance with the applicable criteria of the GOTS
- c) Review of records for chemical management in order to verify the flow of intermediates and final chemical inputs
- d) Identification of areas of risk to product integrity;
- e) Audit of the wastewater treatment plant if any. In case common effluent treatment plant (CETP), relevant records shall be assessed.
- f) Verification of other environmental norms as per GOTS 2.4.10
- g) Verification of the formulators/subcontractors risk assessment of contamination and residue testing policy including sample drawing for residue testing either as random sampling or in case of suspicion of contamination or non-compliance;
- h) Verification of adherence to the defined Occupational health and Safety In particular, the Audit protocol must include:
  - Audit of processing and storage units, toilet facilities, rest areas and other sites of the company with access for workers
  - Interview with OHS responsible person
- i) SDS of incoming raw materials and implementation of relevant chemical safety norms  
Verification that changes to the standards and to related requirements have been effectively implemented;
- j) Verification that corrective actions have been taken

### 5.3.2.4 Reporting

The Certification Body shall report evaluation findings according to documented reporting procedures to the formulators and its subcontractors.

- a) Audit reports shall follow a set protocol for different type of operations inspected, and facilitate a non-discriminatory, objective and comprehensive analysis of the respective formulators of its manufacturing
- b) The audit report shall cover all relevant aspects of the standards, and adequately validate the information provided by the formulators and its subcontractors. It shall include
  - A statement of any observations relating to conformity with the approval requirements;



- Date and duration of the Audit, persons interviewed, formulators facilities visited;
  - If the previous audit was conducted by another certification body and within two years prior to the audit, a full evaluation of any non-conformities which were issued in the previous audit report, whether or not they were previously closed and
  - Type of documents reviewed.
- c) The Certification Body shall promptly notify the formulators and its subcontractors of any non-conformity to be resolved within a specified time in order to comply with applicable certification requirements.
- d) The Certification Body shall document and apply measures to verify the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by formulators and its subcontractors to meet the requirements.

### **5.3.3 Decision on approval**

Approval decisions shall be made within two calendar months of an audit and informed to the applicant appropriately.

#### **5.3.3.1 Division of functions**

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

#### **5.3.3.2 Basis for the decision**

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

#### **5.3.3.3 Documentation**

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

#### **5.3.3.4 Issuing of approval documents**

In case of a 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.

'Scope 4' accredited Approved Certification Bodies 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 Certification Bodies and certified entities. Inputs specifically marked as approved on a 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.

#### **5.3.3.5 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 a re-assessment shall 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 a re-assessment may be provided.

#### **5.3.3.6 Dealing with non-conformities**

Reasons for denial of approval of applied inputs shall be stated with clear reference to the GOTS criteria or other certification requirements violated.

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.

Certification Bodies shall not offer input approval to such entities where fraudulent activities have been detected for a time period specified by Global Standard gGmbH.

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 Managing Director for circulation to all Approved Certification Bodies. This notification shall include the kind of non-conformity found so that the risk potential related to the use of this input can be estimated.

#### **5.3.3.7 Dealing with conflicting decisions**

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

#### **5.3.3.8 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 PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF SCOPE CERTIFICATES**

5.4.1 Scope Certificates shall be issued by Approved Certification Bodies to every Certified Entity strictly on the basis of the 'Policy for Issuance of Scope Certificates' and using the latest operative version of the Templates.

5.4.2 Issuance shall always be within timelines that have been established for the purpose.

### **5.5 PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF TRANSACTION CERTIFICATES**

5.5.1 Transaction Certificates shall be issued by Approved Certification Bodies to every Certified Entity strictly on the basis of the 'Policy for Issuance of Transaction Certificates' and using the latest operative version of the Templates.

5.5.2 Scrutiny and validity checks conducted by Certification Bodies before issuance of Transaction Certificates are required to expressly include traceability and volume reconciliation verification.

5.5.3 Verification of financial transactions shall be considered as one of the components of validity checks.

5.5.4 First process Transaction Certificates shall be issued by Certifiers using any additional validity checks to prevent fraud, such as first processing site capacities, stock positions, full traceability evidence back to the farm and verified financial transactions between concerned parties.

5.5.5 Issuance shall always be within timelines that have been established for the purpose.

## 5.6 FURTHER SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FOR GOTS APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODIES

- 5.6.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that the terms of Contract with Global Standard gGmbH are fulfilled at all times.
- 5.6.2 The Certification Body shall abide by GOTS requirements and policies including obligations regarding collection and payment of fees, reporting of information, and ethical business behaviour that may be detailed in other GOTS documents.
- 5.6.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that contract terms with their clients include a clause that permits their Accreditation Bodies to make visits to their premises should this be found necessary by the AB to verify the quality of CB audits.

### 5.6.4 Certification Body 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 Conditions for the Use of GOTS Signs and the 'Certifier Contract'.

### 5.6.5 Collection of Entity Annual Fees

The Certification Body shall collect Entity Annual Fees on behalf of Global Standard gGmbH and transfer these as stipulated in the 'Conditions for the Use of GOTS Signs' and the 'Certifier Contract'.

### 5.6.6 Collection of Additive Registration Fees

The Certification Body shall collect Additives Registration Fees on behalf of Global Standard gGmbH and transfer these as stipulated in the 'Conditions for the Use of GOTS Signs' and the 'Certifier Contract'.

### 5.6.7 Collection of Additives Annual Fees

The Certification Body shall collect Additives Annual Fees on behalf of Global Standard gGmbH and transfer these as stipulated in the 'Conditions for the Use of GOTS Signs' and the 'Certifier Contract'.

### 5.6.8 Competition

Beginning 12 months after first approval, Approved Certification Bodies shall not certify and/or inspect according to textile processing standards of its own that deal with the use of organic fibres regardless of 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.

### 5.6.9 Public database, reporting on activities

- 5.6.9.1 Certification Bodies shall keep the GOTS public database updated 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).
- 5.6.9.2 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.
- 5.6.9.3 Certification Bodies shall submit upon request by the GOTS Standards Committee detailed procedural or individual documentation related to audit certification and – if applicable - chemical approval activities in order to permit the GOTS Standards 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 Standards Committee. The GOTS Standards Committee members shall be bound to treat any of this information confidentially.
- 5.6.9.4 Certification Bodies shall submit upon request of the GOTS Evaluator of a complaint (= GOTS Managing 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.

- 5.6.9.5 More details of obligatory reporting and the use of the GOTS Public Database shall be carried within the Certifiers Contract.

#### **5.6.10 Further development of GOTS databases**

- 5.6.10.1 Certification Bodies shall agree to participate in the activities of the proposed development of the GOTS database, Global Trace-Base (working title), being developed by Global Standard gGmbH as and when operational and requested to do so. This database is expected to supersede the GOTS public database in time.
- 5.6.10.2 Scope 4 Certification Bodies shall use and keep updated the GOTS database for approved chemical inputs within reasonable times, as stipulated by GOTS.

#### **5.6.11 Obligation to use Global Trace-Base<sup>10</sup>**

Certification Bodies shall agree to use the new under-development GOTS database Global Trace-Base and all its functionality including Scope Certificates, Transaction Certificates, Impact data etc. when operational.

#### **5.6.12 Cooperation with other approved Certification bodies**

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

#### **5.6.13 Obligation to participate and cooperate with investigations**

- 5.6.13.1 Upon request, Certification Bodies shall agree to fully cooperate with Global Standard gGmbH's investigations regarding allegations of fraud or of complaints, including providing to Global Standard gGmbH all documentation or other information regarding certification activities, such as inspection/audit reports, Scope Certificates, Transaction Certificates, material volumes and quantities, etc. or those obtained from or regarding their Certification Client and their activities.
- 5.6.13.2 Investigations may be performed at any time with or without the involvement or knowledge of the Certification Body's accreditation body.

#### **5.6.14 Obligation to participate in the development of GOTS**

- 5.6.14.1 Certification Bodies shall participate in the development of the GOTS Standards, policies and procedures when requested for consultation by Global Standard gGmbH
- 5.6.14.2 Certification Bodies shall participate in Quality Assurance programmes and projects, including surveys towards the improvement of the Standard, policies and procedures when requested by Global Standard gGmbH.

#### **5.6.15 Obligation of Certifications Bodies in times of Suspension & Withdrawal of their Accreditation**

- 5.6.15.1 Certification Bodies shall follow appropriate GOTS policies following loss, suspension or withdrawal of their accreditation by their Accreditation Bodies.

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<sup>10</sup> Global Trace-Base is the working title for the under development GOTS central database which may be changed if necessary.

- 5.6.15.2 Certification Bodies shall inform Global Standard gGmbH of any loss, suspension or withdrawal of Accreditation within 2 working days of them receiving such information from their Accreditation Bodies.
- 5.6.15.3 Certification Bodies shall inform all their clients of their (changed) status, how this directly affects the clients and the clients' options for conducting GOTS business within 7 working days of the changed status.

## 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
- SDS: Safety Data Sheet
- UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## 7 DEFINITIONS

For this document the following terms are defined:

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 Certification Body
Approved Certification Body	Certification Body which is accredited and approved by the Global Standard gGmbH to perform inspections/Audits and certifications according to GOTS in the relevant scope. An updated list of Approved Certification Bodies 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 of chemical input approval to a Certification Body.
Certified Entity	Processor, manufacturer, trader or retailer of GOTS Goods certified by an Approved Certification Body.
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 Certification Body.



Certifiers Council	Body established by Global Standard gGmbH consisting of one nominated member from each Approved Certification Body. the Certifiers Council has an advisory function with regard to issues related to the GOTS quality assurance system. The collaboration of all approved GOTS certification bodies in this unique forum is an important prerequisite for a consistent interpretation of the criteria and requirements of the standard. The Certifiers Council is coordinated by the GOTS Director of Standards and Quality Assurance,
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