

OE 100 and OE Blended Standards

Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies

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Acknowledgements

Organic Exchange (OE) would like to recognize the generosity of the International Working Group of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) in helping OE develop its accreditation requirements. By working together and harmonizing as many of our processes and requirements as possible, we can streamline the work of the certification industry, increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

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 the OE 100 and OE Blended and to implement their related quality assurance systems.

2. Principles

Organizations performing professional and objective auditing of manufacturing facilities and operating product certification systems can apply for approval as OE 100/Blended certifiers to OE. These organizations 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, OE is cooperating with accreditation bodies that agree to follow the approval and monitoring procedure and the requirements as specified in this document in their accreditation process for OE 100/Blended. The applying Certification Body may assign its actual or preferred accreditation body, as long as the chosen accreditation body is a recognized national or international accreditation body (e.g.: International Accreditation Forum), has the necessary competence, and follows the given procedures to accredit to the OE 100/Blended standards.

The requirements for Certification Bodies set out in this manual are based upon the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems" as well as the International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)¹ as released in October 2008, in addition to specific requirements relating to the OE standards.

3. Scope

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

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

4. Approval and monitoring procedure

4.1. Prerequisite for Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies applying for approval as an OE 100/Blended certifier must already have a valid accreditation to perform certification for at least one standard according to ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems".

4.2. Application procedure

1. Applications for approval shall be addressed to the Director of Industry Integrity by e-mail (certification@organicexchange.org) using the corresponding application form.
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. Accreditation can be applied according to one or both of OE 100 and OE Blended
 - d. A copy of the applicant's accreditation certificate(s) and a list of ISO 65 accredited scopes
 - e. Announcement of the accreditation body that the Certification Body wants to assign with performance of the OE 100/Blended accreditation procedure
 - f. Declaration that the applicant agrees to the procedure and all requirements of this manual and agreement to enter into a formal contract ('Certifier's contract') accordingly if approved
 - g. A summary presentation of the relevant (textile) professional qualification and experience including a Curriculum Vitae for all designated personnel.
3. Applications must be accompanied by a payment of \$1000 USD ("Application Fee")
4. After acceptance of the application by OE, the Certification Body must apply to the agreed accreditation body that conducts the further accreditation procedure.

4.3. Inspection and evaluation requirements for accreditation bodies

Accreditation bodies must comply with the procedures of ISO/IEC Guide 17011: 2004 "Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies" and must agree to follow the OE 100/Blended approval and monitoring procedure as provided for in this document. Note that the OE accreditation system is very close to the GOTS system, and the two accreditations should be able to be done together to minimize costs.

Organic Exchange 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 for the initially applying Certification Body (to verify chain of custody, protective measures against commingling etc.).
- c. Continuous monitoring of approved OE Certification Bodies, including performing at least one up-date accreditation visit every second year to the/an office conducting OE certifications and at least one witness or review audit² every second year of granted accreditation.
- d. A minimum of 5 operator files, representing 1.5% or more of the files of operators contracted by the Certification Body should be checked on each up-date accreditation visit.

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

4.4. Approval decision

The accreditation body decides if accreditation to the OE 100 and/or OE Blended, based on the procedures and requirements of this document, will be granted to the Certification Body.

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

4.5. Publication of approved Certification Bodies and their conditions

The approved OE 100/Blended Certification Bodies shall be published on the OE website, as well as other communications or materials that OE produces. This manual shall also be published on the OE website in order to enable companies concerned to report to OE any violations thereof.

5. Requirements for Certification Bodies

5.1. General requirements

5.1.1. Responsibility

5.1.1.1 Legal structure

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

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

5.1.1.2. Certification agreement

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

- a. Include a description of the rights and duties of the applicants and operators offering certified products, including a commitment to comply with the relevant criteria of the OE 100 and OE Blended standards, the OE Standards Logo Use guide, other provisions of the OE 100/Blended certification program as provided by OE;
- b. Contain provisions to allow the Certification Body to exchange information with other OE or GOTS approved Certification Bodies and authorities (approval bodies or accreditation bodies) including OE to verify information, especially the certification status of certified products, as part of its ongoing evaluation;
- c. Provide to both the Certification Body and the responsible authorities the right of access to all appropriate facilities, including to non-organic production in the unit or related units, and all relevant documentation and records, including financial records.

5.1.1.3 Responsibility for certification decisions

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

5.1.1.4. Acceptance of prior certification

Where products in the production chain have been certified by other OE or GOTS approved Certification Bodies, the Certification Body shall accept certificates issued in accordance with the OE 100 and OE Blended standards or GOTS.

5.1.2. Personnel

5.1.2.1. General

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

5.1.2.2. Qualification criteria and documentation

- a. The Certification Body shall define minimum criteria for the competence of personnel. Criteria should specify minimum education, training, technical knowledge and work experience relevant to the scope of certification issued. The Certification Body should ensure for each OE 100/Blended certification decision that at least one of its personnel involved must have a university or bachelor degree in the field of textile or clothing engineering plus expertise in quality management issues, or 3 years professional experience as a technician in the textile industry plus expertise in quality management issues or 2 years professional experience in inspection and certification of textile processors. Further the Certification Body must assure that personnel are familiar with the situation and specifics of the local textile industry.
- b. The Certification Body shall maintain up-to-date documents describing the respective responsibilities of assigned personnel.

5.1.2.3. Capacity-building

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

In particular, the Certification Body shall:

- a. Review the competence of its personnel in light of their performance in order to identify training needs; and
- b. Ensure that new personnel have sufficient competence. New inspectors should receive qualified training courses of on-site inspection for the OE 100/Blended certification or undergo an on-site apprenticeship period accompanying at least 5 inspections carried out according to the OE 100/Blended certification system (or up to 2 GOTS inspections, and 3 inspections to the OE standards).

5.1.2.4. Assignment of personnel

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

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

5.1.2.5. Assignment of committees

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

5.1.2.6. Subcontracting (outsourcing)

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

- a. Take responsibility for such subcontracted work;

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

5.1.3. Impartiality and objectivity

5.1.3.1. Organizational structure and stakeholder involvement

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

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

5.1.3.2. Management of impartiality

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

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

5.1.3.3. Division of functions

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

- a. Produce or supply products of the type it certifies;
- b. Give advice or provide consultancy services to the applicant/operator as to methods of dealing with matters which are barriers (eg.: non-conformities identified in the course of the certification process) to the OE 100/Blended certification. Note that explanations regarding the OE 100/Blended and its quality assurance system are not considered to be advice or consultancy. General information or training may be given as long as this service is offered to all applicants/operators in a non-discriminatory manner.

5.1.3.4. Accessibility

The Certification Body shall make its services equally accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within its declared field of operation. It shall work according to non-discriminatory

policies and procedures, ensuring that no undue financial (e.g. with regard to the fee structure) or other conditions (e.g.: size of applicant or membership of any association) are applied. The Certification Body shall accept OE 100/Blended 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. Current copies of the OE 100 and OE Blended standards, the OE Logo Use guide and any other provisions of the OE 100/Blended certification program as provided by Organic Exchange;
- b. Information about procedures applied for evaluating whether operators meet the OE 100 and OE Blended standards.
- c. Information about procedures applied to cases where certification is extended;
- d. Information about procedures and sanctions applied where non-conformities with standards are detected;
- e. The fee structure for its services;
- f. A description of the rights and duties of operators, including requirements, restrictions;
- g. Information about procedures for handling general complaints and appeals against its certification decisions; and
- h. A list of certified operations and the OE standards that they are certified to, as well as a list of the product categories that are certified to OE 100 and/or OE Blended.

5.1.4.2. Confidentiality

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

- a. Protect proprietary information of a client against misuse and unauthorized disclosure; and
- b. Grant the Certification Body the right to exchange information with other Certification Bodies and/or authorities, including OE, 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 OE Standards Logo Use guide the Certification Body shall:

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

5.1.5. Quality management system

5.1.5.1. General

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

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

5.1.5.2. Management system manual

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

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

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

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

5.1.5.3. Document control

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

- a. 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.

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.
- c. Conduct performance reviews of personnel responsible for evaluation, inspection and certification on an annual basis.

5.2. Process requirements for conducting OE 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, in a timely manner, 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 the OE 100 and OE Blended standards and corresponding relevant documents released by OE;
- 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 the OE 100 and OE Blended standards by the Certification Body.

5.2.1.2. Application form and the operator's obligations

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

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

5.2.2. Evaluation

5.2.2.1. Scope

The Certification Body shall evaluate operators against all certification requirements specified. The evaluation shall consist of a review of documents and an on-site inspection visit.

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 (OE 100 and OE Blended, 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, and provide them with appropriate work-related documents.
- c. The Certification Body shall inform inspectors about any non-conformities and the associated requests for corrective action issued previously, to enable the inspectors to verify whether the non-conformities have been resolved.

5.2.2.3. Inspection protocol

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

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

- a. Assessment of the processing system by means of visits to facilities and storage units (which may also include visits to non-organic areas if there is reason for doing so);
- b. Review of records and accounts in order to verify flow of goods (input/output reconciliation and the tracing back);
- c. Identification of areas of risk to organic integrity;
- d. Verification that changes to the standards and to related requirements have been effectively implemented; and
- e. 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 OE 100/Blended certification.

Potential high-risk situations and related measures include:

- a. Parallel processing of OE 100 and non-OE 100 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 processing, storage and sales is well managed and makes clear distinctions between certified and non-certified products. In cases where products are not visibly distinguishable, specified measures should be applied to reduce the risk.
- b. Where an operator is certified also by other Certification Bodies within the same scope, the Certification Body should seek information exchange with the other Certification Bodies involved to prevent misuse of certificates.

5.2.2.5. Reporting

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

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

5.2.3. Decision on certification

5.2.3.1. Division of functions

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

5.2.3.2. Basis for the decision

The decision shall be based solely on the conformity of the operation with the OE 100 and/or OE Blended 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 OE 100/Blended criteria or other certification requirement violated.

5.2.3.5. Exceptions to certification requirements

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

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

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

5.2.3.6. Issuing of certification documents

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

- a. The name and address of the operator whose products are the subject of certification;
- b. Name and address of the Certification Body that issued the certification documents;
- c. The scope of the certification granted, including
 - The products certified, which may be identified by type or range of products,
 - The standard(s) that is the basis for the certification (OE 100 and/or OE Blended), and
 - The effective date and term of certification, including the expiry date.

5.2.4. Extension and renewal of certification

5.2.4.1. Re-evaluation

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

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

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

5.2.4.2. Frequency of inspection

- a. Operators from post harvest handling up to garment making and final packing as well as importers and exporters are to be inspected at least annually.
- b. The Certification Body may decide on exceptions from the annual onsite inspection cycle for sub-contractors with a low risk potential (e.g.: where a clear chain of custody is maintained, and there is minimal risk of commingling). Such units must be clearly identified, must have a contract with the licensee (who is responsible for their compliance with these standards) and may be subject to inspection at the certifiers' discretion.
- c. In addition to the regular inspection visit, the Certification Body must conduct unannounced on-site inspections on a minimum of 2% (or 1 unit; whichever is greater) of certified operators per year, chosen randomly and/or chosen taking into account the risk or threat to the organic integrity of the production or products.

5.2.4.3. Notification of changes made by the operator

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

5.2.4.4. Changes in the certification requirements

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

5.3. Further specific conditions for OE approved Certification Bodies

5.3.1. Certification Fee

The Certification Body shall pay a fee as determined by Organic Exchange (presently \$50 USD) per unit inspected and/or certified. This fee will be paid by the Certification Body directly to OE.

5.3.2. Collection of Licence Fee

On behalf of OE, the Certification Body shall collect from its certified entities a licence fee (presently \$50 USD) per unit inspected and/or certified.

5.3.3. Reporting on activities

- a. Certification Bodies must keep accurate records of the names, addresses, and production steps of the inspected and/or certified operators. A report on the relevant activities is to be sent to OE at a frequency to be determined by OE, depending on volumes of certified units. All reports must be submitted in a timely fashion.
- b. Payment of the certification and licence fees will be made within 30 business days of receipt of invoice from OE.
- c. Certifier shall submit from time to time, upon request by OE, detailed inspection documentation in order to permit OE to ascertain certifier's adherence to the OE 100 and OE Blended standards, and any procedural rules and interpretations issued from time to time by OE. OE shall be bound to treat any of this information confidentially.

5.3.4. Cooperation with other approved Certification bodies

a. Certification Bodies shall cooperate with all other OE Approved Certifiers in order to ensure worldwide equal application of the OE 100 and OE Blended standards and inspection and certification procedures under the supervision of the OE Director of Industry Integrity.

6. Abbreviations/References

OE:	Organic Exchange – www.organicexchange.org
GOTS:	Global Organic Textile Standard – www.global-standard.org
IAF:	International Accreditation Forum – www.iaf.nu
IEC:	International Electrotechnical Commission – www.iec.ch
IFOAM:	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – www.ifoam.org
IOAS:	International Organic Accreditation Service – www.ioas.org
IROCB:	International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies - www.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/meetings/itf8/IROCB.pdf
ISO:	International Organization for Standardization – www.iso.org
ITF:	International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture – www.itf-organic.org
UNCTAD:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – www.unctad.org