

IOAS Inc



**IOAS Operating Manual**  
**information and requirements specific to**  
**assessment against COSMOS**  
**Accreditation**

Valid from: January 1, 2017

# **IOAS Operating Manual**

## **Information and requirements specific to COSMOS Accreditation**

### **1. Introduction**

This operating manual contains specific information and requirements of the COSMOS Accreditation programme implemented by the IOAS on behalf of the scheme owner, COSMOS-standard AISBL. It should always be read in conjunction with the IOAS General Operating Manual which contains a full description of the IOAS and its overall approach to its work conducting accreditation and surveillance of certification bodies working in the field of organic and sustainable agriculture and related fields which is performed in line with ISO/IEC Guide 17011.

It is the IOAS' approach to harmonise the assessment process for the increasing range of schemes offered so as to reduce the burden of accreditation to all certification bodies. We are also continually working to gain recognition or equivalence of our work with scheme owners and government authorities such that we can offer 'one assessment, many accreditations'.

### **2. Scheme owner**

2.1 COSMOS-standard AISBL is an International non-profit Association registered in Belgium, founded in June 2010 by a group of standards associations: BDIH (Germany), Cosmebio (France), Ecocert Greenlife (France), ICEA (Italy) and Soil Association (UK). The Association's Bylaws can be viewed on the COSMOS-standard AISBL [website](#).

2.2 The Association's highest body is the General Assembly, which appoints the Board of Directors. Only Full Members (founders) have voting rights.

### **3. COSMOS Accreditation**

3.1 The COSMOS Accreditation programme is a voluntary accreditation programme which was first implemented by the IOAS in 2012. Accreditation can also be provided by other accreditation bodies approved by COSMOS-standard AISBL.

3.2 The COSMOS Accreditation programme is open to any certification body which meets the requirements of the programme and has been pre-approved by the scheme owner. Approved certifiers sign a contract with COSMOS-standard AISBL and join the Association as Associated Members. Forms for membership application, application for approval and the certifier contract with COSMOS can be downloaded for free from the COSMOS-standard AISBL web site.

3.3 COSMOS accreditation shall be for one or more of the following scopes:

- a) certification of cosmetic products under organic or natural certification and physically processed agro-ingredients not falling within the scope of existing recognised international or national organic standards;
- b) certification of chemically processed agro-ingredients with organic content and approval of ingredients with no organic content that are acceptable for use under the COSMOS-standard.

#### **4. Requirements for accreditation**

4.1 Applicant certification bodies must first apply to the scheme owner by completing the application form and paying the application fee. A prerequisite for the preapproval by COSMOS is that the CB already maintains a valid accreditation to perform certification to any standard according to ISO/IEC 17065.

4.2 Once approved the CB may apply to the IOAS using the standard IOAS application form.

4.3 The requirements against which a certification body is assessed are the COSMOS-standard AISBL Control Manual (Approval Procedure for Certification Bodies) which can be downloaded from the COSMOS web site.

4.4 The certifier is obliged to adopt the COSMOS-standard, the COSMOS Labelling Guide and the COSMOS Technical Guide and any other requirements of COSMOS all of which are available on the COSMOS website.

4.5 The COSMOS Control Manual contains its own requirements that the IOAS must implement during assessment and surveillance including:

- an audit of the headquarters or main office of the applicant Certification Body;
- a witness audit (ie witnessing the Certification Body's inspection) of a representative manufacturing plant appropriate to each of the scopes being applied for;
- ongoing monitoring of the accredited Certification Body, including at least one up-date accreditation visit every second year to the (or an) office conducting COSMOS-standard certifications and at least one witness audit or review audit (ie auditing an operation to review a previous Certification Body inspection) every second year;
- checking the files of at least 1.5% of certified operators (with a minimum of five) on each up-date accreditation visit;
- use of a suitably qualified expert in quality assurance of organic/natural

cosmetics manufacturing in the accreditation procedure, who should accompany the initial audits and maintain further involvement in the ongoing monitoring.

4.6 In cases where the CB has no or few operators the witness audit at the initial on-site visit may be a mock inspection.

4.7 The IOAS reserves the right to require assistance from a technical expert as it deems necessary and depending on the standard scope. The cost of such experts at on-site visits is borne by the certification body. Such a need and a cost estimation will be communicated before the application proceeds.

4.8 Under IOAS procedures, assessment of the CB can be combined with assessment against other schemes.

4.9 Applicant CBs that are already IOAS clients may apply at any time in their accreditation cycle (but first applying to COSMOS) and the IOAS will endeavour to conduct the assessment linked to on-going surveillance procedures. However, if the timing of the application does not fit with existing schedules, additional visits may be required and corresponding fees will be charged. The duration of the initial accreditation contract in such circumstances will be synchronised with all other programmes which means that the initial COSMOS accreditation cycle may be shorter than five years.

4.10 The IOAS is responsible for granting accreditation in line with its normal procedures. The accreditation decision is notified to COSMOS-standard AISBL which will in turn conclude a 'certifier's contract' with the CB. The COSMOS-standard AISBL reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the contract and to call on the IOAS to investigate problems. For further details, see the certifier's contract.

## **5. Reference to COSMOS accreditation and the scheme owner**

5.1 The accredited certification body may make reference to being accredited by the IOAS in accordance with the requirements described and referred to in the General Operating Manual.

5.2 On being accredited, the certification body will sign a contract with the IOAS which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. This contract includes a date by which the CB must submit itself for re-assessment which is 18 months before contract expiry. A sample copy of this contract is available on the IOAS web site and should be consulted before application.

5.3 On being accredited, the certification body will receive a formal accreditation certificate which states that the organisation has been found to be 'in compliance

with the COSMOS-standard AISBL Control Manual (Approval Procedure for Certification Bodies). The relevant scope(s) will be indicated. The IOAS will also publish the name of the CB on a public list indicating full details of the accreditation, the current scope and countries of activity. It is this list which takes precedence over any other source.

5.4 The COSMOS-standard AISBL web site also maintains information on accredited CBs.

5.5 No reference to approval by COSMOS or use of the COSMOS logo may be made until a 'certifier's contract' is concluded with COSMOS.

5.6 The accredited certification body may make suitable claims on promotional material (brochures, web sites etc.) that the specified programme operates in compliance with the COSMOS-standard AISBL Control Manual (Approval Procedure for Certification Bodies).

## **6. Fees**

6.1 The IOAS fee schedule is available at <http://www.ioas.org/assessment/application/>. The IOAS is able to provide a quotation of fees for the requested services but due to the many variables involved, these can only be used for orientation.

6.2 Under the certifier's contract signed with COSMOS-standard AISBL and as specified in the Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies the CB is required to pay to COSMOS-standard AISBL an annual fee and to collect license fees from its certified entities.

For any specific questions on the COSMOS programme please contact your assigned Client Manager or Maxime Sizaret on [sizaret@ioas.org](mailto:sizaret@ioas.org)

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## **Contact details**

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