

IOAS Inc.



IOAS Operating Manual

**information and requirements specific to
assessment against procedures and
requirements of the
Global Organic Textile Standard**



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IOAS Operating Manual

Information and requirements specific to GOTS Accreditation

1. Introduction

This operating manual contains specific information and requirements of the Global Organic Textile Standard Accreditation programme implemented by the IOAS on behalf of the scheme owner, Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH. 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 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 Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH was established in August 2008 and is owned by an International Working Group of four members: International Association Natural Textile Industry (IVN), Germany, Soil Association (SA), England, Organic Trade Association (OTA), USA and Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA), Japan.

2.2 The International Working Group (IWG) itself is the decisive committee for all relevant organisational, structural and political issues related to the Global Organic Textile Standard programme. Its committee members consist of one board representative of each organization, coordinated by the Director of the Global Standard gemeinnützige GmbH.

2.3 The IWG has installed a Technical Committee which consists of one textile expert appointed by each member organisation of the IWG. This expert is backed up by the respective standard committee of the appointing organization, thus ensuring a broad basis for the Technical Committee's decisions. In addition, the Technical Committee may co-opt up to three further expert members. The Committee is coordinated by the Technical Director.

2.4 The Technical Committee has the following main functions / authorities:

- Generating revisions of the standard and the related manual for implementation
- Developing the Licensing and Labelling Guide and supervising labelling applications
- Developing the accreditation system and related qualification and quality assurance requirements for certification bodies
- Supervising accredited certification bodies to ascertain their adherence to and consistent interpretation of the GOTS and the related stipulations

2.5 The GOTS-approved certifiers are tasked with implementation of the GOTS quality assurance system. In this context, they work with the operations applying for GOTS certification and use the standard, procedures and tools of the GOTS programme on a daily basis. The broad expertise gathered during this work is vital for the IWG in order to establish and further develop a functioning and practical system in the market. Based on these considerations, the IWG has formed a Certifiers Council to which each certifier sends a responsible expert. The Certifiers Council has an advisory function with regard to all issues related to the GOTS quality assurance system. The collaboration of all approved GOTS certifiers in this unique forum is an important prerequisite for consistent interpretation of the GOTS criteria and requirements. Coordinated by the GOTS Technical Director, the Certifiers Council submits its proposals to the Technical Committee.

3. GOTS Accreditation

3.1 The GOTS Accreditation programme is a voluntary accreditation programme which has been implemented by the IOAS from 2009. The IOAS is designated the main cooperating partner with GOTS to provide this service.

3.2 The GOTS Accreditation programme is open to any certification body which meets the requirements of the programme and has been pre-approved by the scheme owner. Forms for application for pre-approval by GOTS can be downloaded from the GOTS web site.

3.3 Certification bodies accredited under the GOTS scheme are required to certify against the GOTS standard and abide by the interpretations and guidance contained in the GOTS Manual and the Licensing and Labelling Guide, all of which can be downloaded from the GOTS web site.

3.4 GOTS accreditation shall be for one or more of the following scopes:

1. Certification of mechanical textile processing and manufacturing operations and their products.

2. Certification of wet processing and finishing operations and their products.
3. Certification of trading operations and related products.
4. Approval of textile auxiliary agents (chemical inputs) on positive lists.

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 GOTS is that the CB already maintains a valid accreditation to perform certification to any standard according to ISO/IEC17065 .

4.2 Once the application is accepted by the scheme owner 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 GOTS Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies which can be downloaded from the GOTS web site. These requirements are based upon the International Requirements for Certification Bodies.

4.4 The GOTS Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification demand of the IOAS that the assessment and surveillance service is conducted in line ISO/IEC 17011 and the assessment of CBs includes the following elements:

- a) Accreditation audit to the headquarters/main office of the CB;
- b) Witness audit performed at a textile manufacturing mill (preferably vertical mill including wet processing unit, provided the CB has applied for this scope) of the CB;
- c) Continuous monitoring of approved GOTS CBs including performing at least one update accreditation visit to the/an office conducting GOTS certification and at least one witness or review audit of granted accreditation every year;
- d) A minimum of 5 operator files or 1.5% of the files of operators contracted by the CB should be checked on each update accreditation visit;
- e) Assignment of an expert in quality assurance of organic/environmental friendly textile processing who is notified to the IWG in the accreditation procedure. This expert should accompany the initial accreditation audit and witness audit and maintain further involvement in the continuous monitoring procedure.

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

4.6 Regarding e) above 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 or before proceeding with the surveillance visit.

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

4.8 Applicant CBs that are already IOAS clients may apply at any time in their accreditation cycle (but first applying to GOTS) 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 GOTS accreditation cycle may be shorter than five years.

4.9 The IOAS is responsible for granting accreditation in line with its normal procedures. The accreditation decision is notified to GOTS which will in turn conclude a 'certifier's contract' with the CB. The IWG of GOTS 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 GOTS 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 No reference to approval by GOTS or use of the GOTS logo may be made until a 'certifiers contract' is concluded with GOTS.

5.4 On being accredited the CB will also receive a formal accreditation certificate which states that the organisation has been found to be 'in compliance with the GOTS Approval Procedure and Requirements 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.

5.5 The GOTS web site also maintains information on accredited CBs.

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 GOTS Approval Procedure and Requirements 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 the IWG of GOTS and as specified in the Approval Procedure and Requirements for Certification Bodies the CB is required to pay to GOTS an annual fee and to collect license fees from its certified entities.

For any specific questions on the GOTS programme please contact your assigned Client Manager or Jennyfer Karall on karall@ioas.org

End

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