



Certification process

GOTS

TS004(GT)v08en - In force on 01/02/2021



The aim of the present document is to describe the key steps of the certification process. This document is part of your certification contract.

The standard in force is available at <https://global-standard.org/> or is forwarded upon request.

This document has been completely revised, modifications do not appear.

Preamble

Ecocert Greenlife is a subsidiary of Ecocert group that was founded in 2009. It is dedicated to the control and the certification of non-food products (*cosmetics, detergents, home fragrances, textiles, etc.*).

You have applied for certification according to the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS).

Thanks to this document, Ecocert will present you the different steps for the certification of your products according to the scheme requirements.

Certification, made by an independent body, allows you to attest your conformity with certification requirements.

Certification process is a voluntary process. Each company is responsible for meeting these requirements.



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ANNEXE I : Definitions



I. Definitions

Terms used in this document are defined in Annex I.

II. Applicable scheme

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) was developed by leading standard setters to define world-wide recognised requirements for organic textiles. From the harvesting of the raw materials, environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing to labelling, textiles certified to GOTS provide a credible assurance to the consumer.

Ecocert Greenlife offers service for the certification according to this scheme in France and abroad in particular through its subsidiaries.

The reference documents for these schemes are:

- The current Standard and its associated Manual
- The associated Licensing and Labelling Guide,
- The Approval procedure for certification bodies
- and any other additional or associated texts, in their version in force which can be obtained online on the website of the Scheme Owner.

All these documents are available free on the GOTS website <https://global-standard.org/> or on request.



III. Access to the certification

A. Scope of our service: In which case should I apply for certification?

Beneficiaries	Terms of commitment
Distributor / Brand owner	No obligation to commit if you sell to the final consumer & you don't do any repacking/relabelling (<i>you are not in charge of the release to market</i>).
Trader	No obligation to commit if you are a trader with an annual turnover ≤ 20,000 € for certified products. In these cases, only registration with GOTS is required.
Manufacturer/ Subcontractor (of semi-finished or finished products) / Handler	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ If you wish to do any reference to the certification: Obligation to commit➤ If no wish to do any reference to the certification: No obligation to commit if your activity is only for one Ecocert contracted client (<i>However, the evaluation of this activity must be realized except if subcontractor identified as low risk through Ecocert risk assessment (embroidery, sizing units...)</i>). If you do an activity for 2 Ecocert contracted clients or more, in this case, you must have your own contract.
Complex and particular cases (industrial groups, superstores and supermarkets...)	We invite you to contact Ecocert to obtain information on commitment obligations.

B. Restrictions

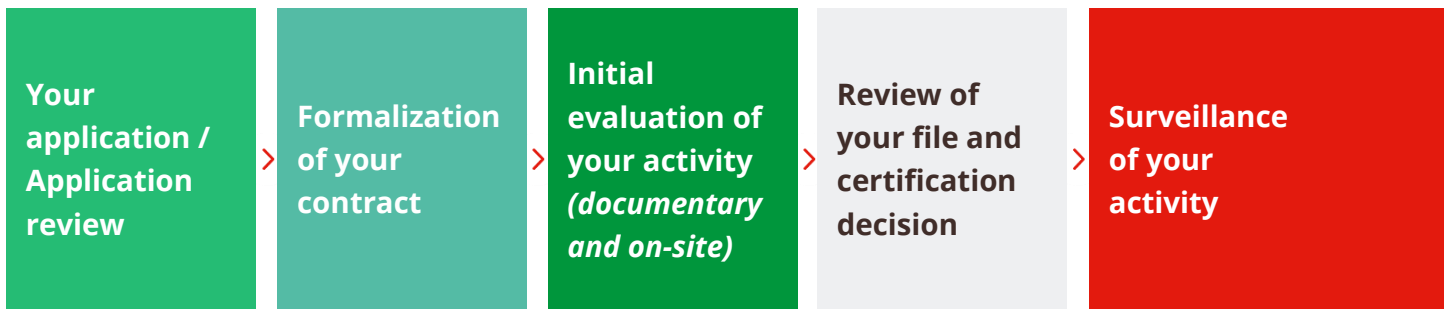
Ecocert may refuse an application for certification when there are fundamental or known reasons such as illegal activities or repeated non-conformities of certification requirements, inappropriate behavior, outstanding payment, etc.



IV. The certification process step by step

The service is based on an annual cycle. It leads, when the certification requirements are fulfilled, to the issuance or renewal of a certificate, allowing you to market your products with a reference to the certification and/or to Ecocert and/or to Ecocert Greenlife.

The steps of the certification process are the following ones (*and are detailed below*):



A. Your certification application

1. Composition of your certification application file

All the information necessary to complete the certification process is detailed in the following documents (*available on request*):

- The current version of the standard
- The associated Licensing and Labelling Guide,
- The Approval procedure for certification bodies
- This certification process (*This document*)

We also ask you to complete the precise information about your project via a commitment form.

Upon receipt of the completed form, we will examine your request, which allows us to:

- Make sure you have read all the requirements of the standard
- Ensure that all necessary information are specified in the forms
- Study the feasibility of your request

We require you to confirm that you do not hold GOTS certification with another Certification Body.



2. Application which cannot be satisfied by Ecocert

Certification is not possible in these specific cases:

- certification ban from GOTS
- a contract with another certification body for the same GOTS standard certification
- a conflict of interest that could undermine the impartiality of our decisions
- a geographical location that makes certification technically impossible or risky for those involved,
- the lack of qualified personnel to meet the specific requirements of your request
- a termination of contract following a decision by Ecocert less than 3 years

B. Formalization of your contract

1. Production of your quote

Ecocert, on the basis of your application, will establish a personal quote for the current year and taking your specific activity into account (*manufacturer, subcontractor, brand owner, handler, other*) and based on an estimate of the required working time. This quote details the documentary evaluation, on site audit(s), and finally audit report review and decision of certification. Audit, sampling, transaction certificate or analysis, which are not planned in the evaluation plan are not included in the initial quotation.

The quotation is sent to you together with the Terms and conditions within 15 days. Additional time may be required for complex cases.

2. What documents are included in your contract with Ecocert?

The contract of certification is composed of the current versions of the following documents:

- The Terms and Conditions
- This certification process
- The quotation

3. Formalizing your commitment

Your contract is concluded upon return of the signed quotation.

By signing this quotation, you agree to the Terms and conditions including the compliance to the requirements defined in the standard.

You also agree that :

- Information provided regarding your certified entity including those regarding your facilities and subcontractors, may be shared with GOTS, and



- GOTS may use these information for purposes related to Impact Assessment, aggregated volume information etc. without compromising individual data privacy norms

C. Initial evaluation

During the initial evaluation, all the activities in scope of the certification will be checked in order to ensure your compliance to the requirements defined in the relevant standard(s).

1. Documentary evaluation and preparation of your on-site audit

Your file will be allocated to a certification officer, who will be your first point of contact. This officer will precise you the forms needed that are specific to your activity.

These documents are reviewed by your certification officer and used to collect all necessary information for your on-site audit.

Labels and communication documents making reference to GOTS and/or Ecocert/Ecocert Greenlife have to be sent for validation before any use.

The approval on-site audit is assigned after once your application has been processed.

The auditor in charge of your audit plans with you an audit appointment. About 10 days before your audit, the auditor sends to you an audit plan and reminds you to keep documents available by sending a notification of visit.

Audit plan and these documents are defined in accordance to Ecocert procedures, according to your position in the process of development (*manufacturing or distribution of the products*) and others involved in process.

2. On-site audit

On-site audits are performed in order to check the compliance of the products with the requirements of the standard and are conducted on all sites carrying out operations on products covered by the certification: manufacturing, packaging, etc.

Ecocert conducts audits on the basis defined inspection plan, specific to your activity (*see paragraph G.2*).

The audit is carried out according to the following steps:

- **The opening meeting:** the auditor presents the objectives and the different points to check, confirms the scope and the audit plan,
- The documentation **evaluation**,



- **The on-site visit** and interview with employees,
- **The closing meeting:** the auditor makes a summary of the on-site audit.

In the event of analysis, any sampling is done in the presence of you or of your representative, who signs the related documents. The nature of the analysis and the laboratory chosen to do the analysis are determined by Ecocert.

If it is necessary, Ecocert may decide to leave a sample in your facility. This sample should be used only in the event of counter-analysis. In this case, you, a representative of Ecocert or a bailiff may send the sample to a third party laboratory appointed by Ecocert according to the Ecocert instructions. Billing terms are defined inclusively in your annual quotation, or otherwise, to real costs.

3. Summary of your audit

During the audit, non-conformities with standards requirements can be found. These non-conformities require actions (*called "corrective actions"*) from you in order to get in compliance.

You receive at the end of the audit, the details of any non-conformity including the timeline for correction.

4. Evaluation of implemented corrective actions

At this point, if you express interest in continuing the certification process, you must submit corrective actions for each non-conformity in the given time. These proposed actions must be relevant and comprehensive in order to continue the certification process. Otherwise we will ask you to suggest new actions.

Depending on additional evaluation tasks needed to verify that non-conformities have been cleared, Ecocert may be required to proceed with:

- A new on-site audit
- Further sampling and analysis,
- Additional documentary evaluation

D. Non-conformities and correction plan

During the audit, non-conformities according to the requirements of the standard can be noticed. They are classified according to **2 categories**:

1. « Minor » Non-conformities

A minor non-conformity is a non-conformity which does not alter the characteristics of the product to be certified. It means that it does not alter the conformity of a product towards the



principles of the standard and its most important requirements and is not misleading for consumers.

2. « Major » Non-conformities

A major non-conformity is a non-conformity which alters or may later alter the characteristics of the product to be certified. It means that it alters the conformity of a product towards the principles of the standard and its most important requirements and/or can be considered as misleading for consumers.

3. Correction plan

The correction plan lists potential non-conformities and classifies them according to their degrees of severity (*“major”, “minor” non-conformity*). It also identifies, for each non-conformity the consequence on the certification. Appropriate actions to be taken and application modalities are also detailed. The consequence on the certification is defined according to the nature and the severity of the non-conformity as well as its occurrence and the risk of fraud.

Appropriate measures may be (*see paragraph H for details*):

- Continuation of certification under conditions
- Reduction of the scope of certification
- Suspension of the certification
- Withdrawal of the certification

E. Review of the evaluation results and certification decision

The audit report and your proposed corrective actions are forwarded to your certification officer, who will ensure the relevance of the report sent. You will then receive the certification decision with the analysis results (*if applicable*) which is based on the correction plan defined by Ecocert, the audit report and other related documents.

Non-conformities are indicated as resolved on the basis of evidence gathered (*in documents or on-site observation, when applicable*) and adherence to the correction plan.

If the certification decision is positive, your certification officer will send you your certification documents.

If the certification decision is negative, your certification officer will inform you by mail and identifies the reasons. In this case, you can apply for a new certification process by going back to step A.



If there are suspicions that you are marketing, or are planning to market, products that do not comply with the standard, but which make reference to certification, Ecocert may demand the provisional suspension of certification for the said products. Before taking such a certification decision, you will be informed and asked to present your own observations.

F. Certification documents

Certification documents shall only be issued after, or concurrent with, the following:

- The decision to grant the certification has been made,
- Certification requirements have been fulfilled.

These certification documents (*certificate*) convey or permit identification of the following:

- The name and address of Ecocert Greenlife
- The certification granting date
- Your name and address
- The term of certification
- The list of your certified products / your controlled processes
- All the sites

Costs that would be incurred (*eg: manufacturing, printing labels...*) in anticipation of a certification decision not yet issued are under your responsibility and cannot be supported by Ecocert.

Only the holder of the certification can make reference to the certification on its products.

G. Surveillance and continuation of the certification process

1. Periodic surveillance

The certification process is automatically renewed every year, if you did not notify Ecocert about the termination of your contract under conditions on current Terms and Conditions.

On the basis of any information you will send to us and/or we may collect during audit and other investigation, Ecocert will update your annual certification fee.

During the annual surveillance period of your certified activity, we implement the surveillance plan which consists of:

- On-Site audit(s) surveillance (*the corrective actions defined to deal with previous non-conformities will be checked*)



- Remote audit(s) surveillance
- Documentary checking, if modifications are implemented on documents that were checked during initial evaluation, or in case of new products to be certified
- Annual analysis plan (when applicable)
- Unannounced On-Site audit(s)

In the special case of Collectors/Concentrators of Reclaimed Material, Ecocert shall undertake additional verification or physical inspection in order to check the authenticity of Reclaimed Material.

2. Implementation of an audit plan on site

The audit plan on site defines the type and the frequency of necessary audits according to your activity and some additional criteria.

Beneficiaries	Approval audit	Renewal audit
Brand owner / Retailer	1 On-Site inspection	1 On-Site inspection
Trader	1 On-Site inspection	Remote audit for 2 years then On-Site audit (3 years audit cycle) if low risk identified*
Manufacturers / Subcontractors (finished or semi-finished products)	1 On-Site inspection	1 On-Site inspection
Handlers	1 On-Site inspection	1 On-Site inspection
Warehouse or logistic site without repacking	1 On-Site inspection	Remote audit for 2 years then On-Site audit (3 years audit cycle) if low risk identified*
Warehouse or logistic site with sensitive raw materials (fibers for ex..) or repacking	1 On-Site inspection	1 On-Site inspection
"Small subcontractors" (less than 10 employees)	1 On-Site inspection	Remote audit for 2 years then On-Site audit (3 years audit cycle) if low risk identified*
Complex and particular cases (industrial groups, superstores and supermarkets...)	1 On-Site inspection	1 On-Site inspection

* The risk assessment for remote audits is based on: no non-committed subcontractors/handlers involved in production, number of workers, activity volume, no fibers storage, or re-packing, labelling activity.



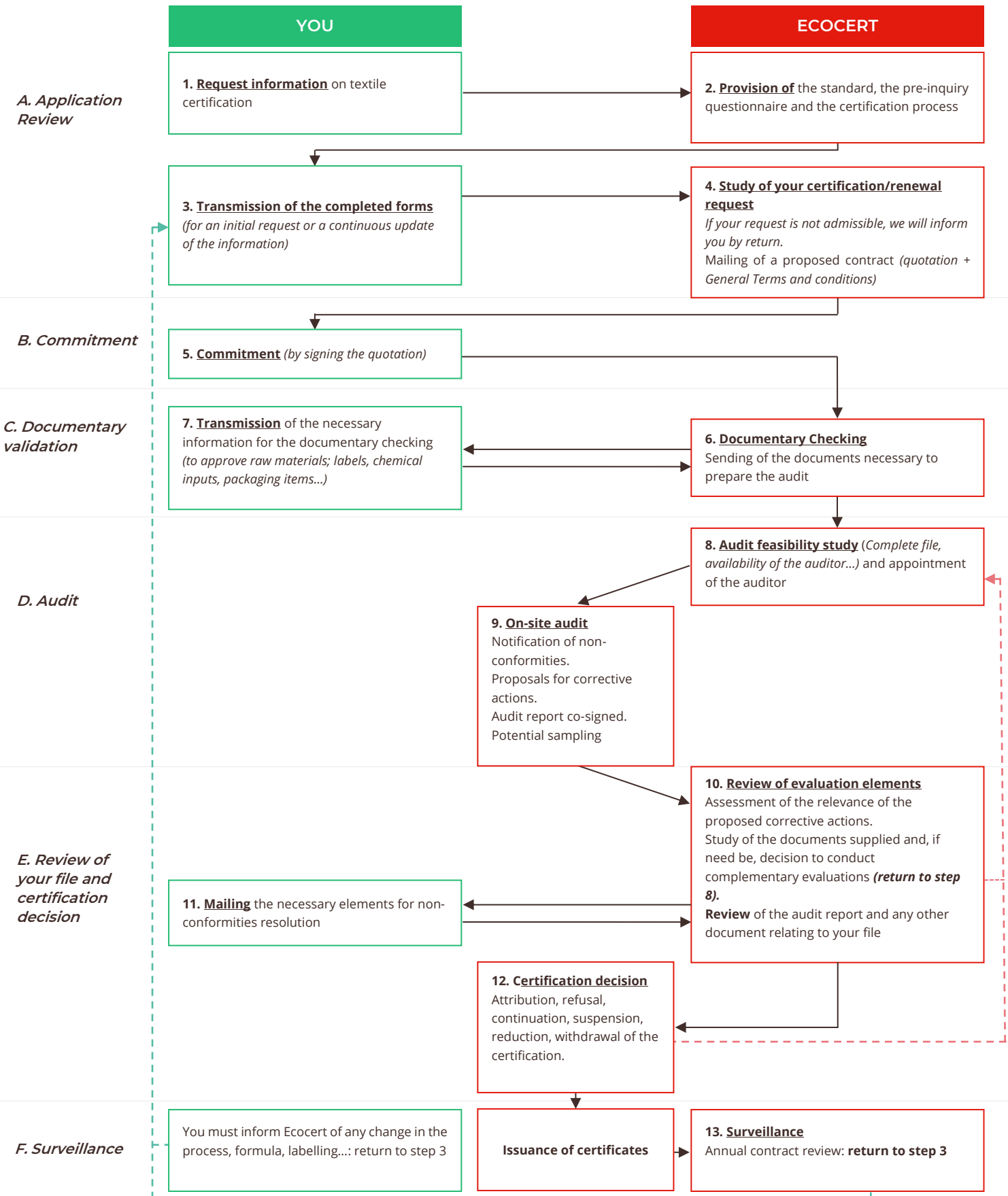
3. Follow-up of your activity

Surveillance is also based on the verification of any changes in certification requirements or the scope of your certification. For this reason, you must inform Ecocert without any delay about any change in your system (*manufacturing, process, quality*) or the range of your products to be certified.

During surveillance, steps C, D, E and F below are repeated.



4. Summary of the certification process



H. Certification renewal

If no non-conformity is identified during surveillance, the certification decision is granted and your certification officer will issue your new certification document.

If a non-conformity arises as a result of the surveillance or by any other means, it will be reviewed by Ecocert and appropriate measures will be taken.

Based on the correction plan and regarding the extent and severity of identified non-conformities, Ecocert can take the following appropriate measures:

1. Continuation of certification under conditions

Conditions to continue certification may be for instance:

- Increased surveillance through new audit or additional analysis
- A deadline to allow you to implement corrective actions
- Etc.

If required conditions are not fulfilled in the given time, Ecocert will start the process of suspension or withdrawal of certification and update the certification documents accordingly.

2. Suspension certification or certification on hold

This involves the interruption of certification for a specific period or until compliance of the product. If the product is not certified yet, your certificate will be on hold. Suspension may involve one or more products and/or batch. To clear such non-conformity you must provide the necessary elements within the time granted.

In all cases, reference to the certification can no longer be made for the product(s) concerned by the suspension until the non-conformity is solved. The concerned product(s) will be removed of your certification document during the suspension period.

3. Reduction of the certification scope

This implies the immediate and final cancellation of the certification for part of the products and/or batch. The products are downgraded in the conventional circuit and can no longer make reference to the certification. This decision may be due to non-conformity noticed during on-site audit or on your request if you do not wish to use the certification for one or more of your products (*cancellation*).

In all cases products are removed from the certificate without notice.



4. Withdrawal of certification

This implies the immediate cancellation of the certification for all your products. You can no longer make reference to the certification for any of your products.

This decision is also accompanied by the termination of the contract with Ecocert.

A product without certificate or whose certificate has been suspended/withdrawn cannot display any reference to the certification. This ban also applies to any other communication materials.

The suspension or withdrawal of your conformity documents implies the immediate end of validity of these documents. It is your responsibility to inform your clients that your products are not certified anymore and to stop using your certification documents

I. Changes affecting certification

1. Changes in the certification scheme (*new or revised requirements*)

Ecocert will inform regularly its clients about the terms and updates of the standard, and about any provisions issued by GOTS.

GOTS standard as well as the manual with official interpretation are available on the web site: <https://global-standard.org/>.

The list of clients certified by Ecocert is available upon simple request to Ecocert and it is also possible to consult the database of certified clients on the GOTS Web site (*see address above*).

In some cases, the amended provisions will apply with immediate effect whereas in others, transitional measures may be implemented by Ecocert or GOTS.

It is your responsibility to implement changes and that of Ecocert to check their implementation.

If changes are not implemented, Ecocert can notify you of a non-conformity which, if not resolved, can lead to a reduction, suspension or even a withdrawal of your certification (*see paragraph H*).

2. Changes of your certification scope

It is also your responsibility to inform Ecocert, without delay, of any changes that might affect your compliance to the certification requirements.

Examples of such changes can include the following:



- Legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership,
- Organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision making, or technical staff),
- Modifications to the product or the production method,
- Contact address and production sites,
- Major changes to the management system and processes,
- The environmental and social impact of the certified organization caused by incidents or events (if applicable to the audit scope),
- Etc.

The changes may have an impact on your certification (*changes of the scope of the certificate, suspension, withdrawal...*) and potentially lead to an additional audit (*in case of new products/processes*).

3. Postponement of your certification

Should you plan to suspend your activity (*halt manufacture, packaging or sale of the Ecocert certified products*), we offer you the possibility to suspend our service for 1 and up to 2 semesters, with our contract remaining in force during this time. Ecocert must be notified as soon as possible of this suspension.

Your certification documents are no longer valid during this period. You are therefore no longer allowed to manufacture or sell products with a reference to the certification nor to Ecocert/Ecocert Greenlife, regardless of the communication support (*labelling, website, communication documents, etc.*).

At the end of this on-hold period, the certification process is resumed at step 1 – application review, followed by an initial approval audit as for any initial application.

J. End of certification

1. End of contract term and consequences on your certification

You can ask to stop certification for all or a part of your products at any time. **In case you would like to cease the certification of all your products and stop at the same time your contract**, you must do so in compliance with the conditions defined under Terms and Conditions.

The end of certification for all or a part of your products, and the termination of your contract if any, implies the end of validity of your certification documents for the concerned products with immediate effect.

Consequently, after the termination date of the certification (*and the termination of the contract as the case might be*), you can no longer manufacture and market the concerned products



making reference to certification and/or to Ecocert and/or to Ecocert Greenlife. Certification of products already distributed and still on the market is not questioned.

2. Specific cases of stock selling off and stock audit

However, **if you have stocks of compliant products** making reference to the certification or to Ecocert or to Ecocert requiring a run-down period going beyond your certificate expiry date and your contract, you are asked to inform us about the estimated time to sell such stock.

Ecocert will examine your request and may extend your contract and allow you to sell your stock of compliant products. In that case an annual audit as a “distributor” might be required and will implies additional cost.

The contract and certificate will therefore remain in force until the date we have agreed for you to be able to sell the stocks of certified products.

In any case, we recommend you to contact Ecocert to find out the exact termination terms and conditions applying to your organisation.

During such contract extension period, you are not allowed to manufacture new products making reference to the certification and/or to Ecocert and/or to Ecocert Greenlife.



V. Complaints and appeals

You may be asked to submit to Ecocert complaints about our services, or to appeal a certification decision taken by Ecocert.

Ecocert commits first to acknowledge receipt of your complaints and appeals and then to deal with them in a timely manner and according to our internal procedures.

A. Complaints

Anyone can send a complaint to Ecocert. Complaints can concern documentary validation, other clients, Ecocert service...

An acknowledge receipt of your complaints is automatically sent to the individual who made the complaint within 8 days.

A response will always be sent after validation by a person who is not get involved in complaint.

All complaints are recorded by the quality manager, as well as measures taken and an analysis is made on a regular basis to improve our service.

B. Appeals

You may appeal any certification decision by sending a notice to Ecocert.

To be eligible, your appeal must:

- Be a written notice (letter or email),
- Be done within 15 days following the receipt of the certification decision,
- Be duly justified: new items that have not yet been brought to the attention of Ecocert must be provided.

If the appeal is admissible, it is processed by Ecocert.

If you refute the outcome of your first appeal, you can make a second appeal to GOTS. It must be sent within 15 days of receipt of the information of the adverse decision following the first appeal.

Appeals are not suspensive of the decision subject to the appeal. These decisions therefore apply until a new decision has been made after evaluation of your appeal.



C. Your obligations with respect to third part claims

You are responsible for managing third parts claims that are addressed to you directly. You must keep a record of all complaints related to compliance with certification requirements and make these records available to Ecocert. These records must keep track of the appropriate actions taken and these actions must be documented.



VI. Use of references to certification, to Ecocert and use of trademarks (*Ecocert and others*) associated to the service provided

Conditions of references to certification, to Ecocert/Ecocert Greenlife and associated trademarks on your labels and communication documents are defined in the following documents:

- TS005 – Labelling guideline,
- TS006 – Rules of reference to the certification,
- GOTS Licensing and Labelling Guide.

You must also comply with any other requirements specified by GOTS.

Misuse of the trademark or incorrect reference to certification or to Ecocert or to Ecocert Greenlife by a client may lead to the implementation of appropriate measures such as reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification. Ecocert is also required to inform competent authorities.

Here are some of the cases that may arise:

- The logo seal or the reference to the certification or to Ecocert or to Ecocert Greenlife is made on products which are not compliant to certification requirements,
- The logo seal or the reference to the certification or to Ecocert or to Ecocert Greenlife is made on products which have not been the subject of an application for certification or in the process of certification,
- In general, the rules of reference to certification are not fulfilled (***please read these rules in the documents available on our website or on request***).

Ecocert wishes you a good certification
and remains at your disposal if you have any question



ANNEXE I : Definitions

Appeal: Written request by a client to the Ecocert group for reconsideration of a certification decision the group has made.

Certification: Issuance of a certification document (see definition).

Certification document: document issued to the client attesting the conformity of products to the scheme.

Certification requirement: Specified requirement that is fulfilled by the client as a condition of establishing or maintaining certification.

Certification scheme: Set of requirements, rules and procedures defined by the scheme owner that must be implemented by the Ecocert Group.

Certification Standard: Technical document defining products requirements to be met, evaluation methods and procedures for communication on certification.

Client: Person or organization that has subscribed to a service from the Ecocert Group through the signature of a service agreement.

Complaint: Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeals, by any person or organization to the Ecocert Group relating to the activity of the Group where a response is expected.

Correction plan: List of non-conformities related to certification requirements and their impact on the certification decision. It can be completed by any additional evaluation needed to clear non-conformities.

Corrective action: Action to clear the cause of non-conformity or other undesirable situation noticed.

Evaluation plan: Description of the number and the evaluation types needed on an evaluation cycle to grant product conformity to requirements based on the type of clients.

Handler: Third party Company that is under contract with the client and that packages, stocks ingredients supplied by the limited partner (i.e. the committed operator) and invoices for labour and/or stocking. Within the framework of these products, a handler does not purchase any ingredients, and does not sell finished products to the final consumer. S/he invoices for the provision of services.

Non-conformity: Non-fulfilment of a requirement.



Surveillance: Repetition of the assessment, review, certification decision, according to the certification scheme, as the basis of certification maintenance.

