

COSMOS-standard AISBL

Control Manual

Authorisation Procedure for Certification Bodies

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1. Introduction

This document is the Control Manual for the COSMOS-standard and specifies the procedures and requirements for Certification Bodies to apply for, gain and maintain authorisation to use the COSMOS-standard. Certification Bodies are those that operate independent, third party product certification (including inspection) systems.

The authorisation process is carried out by the COSMOS-standard AISBL and includes accreditation by accreditation bodies that agree to follow the procedures outlined in this document for their COSMOS-standard accreditation. The main cooperating accreditation body is the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS), since it specialises in organic accreditation and operates worldwide. However Certification Bodies may use other accreditation bodies, provided they are a recognised national or international accreditation body (e.g. International Accreditation Forum member), have the necessary competence and follow these procedures.

These procedures are based upon the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 17065: 2012 "Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, process and services", together with the International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB), released in October 2008 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). They also contain some additional or different requirements that are specific to the COSMOS-standard AISBL.

2. Scope

These procedures and requirements apply to all Certification Bodies that wish to certify to the COSMOS-standard (including to any other fully harmonised standard). Authorisation 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; this excludes validation of ingredients and raw materials which are covered by scope 2.b);
- 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. For the latter, the approval process follows the same procedures as for certification, but without the need for on-site inspection or as otherwise detailed in this Manual.

3. Requirements for accreditation bodies

1. 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 are expected to follow the procedures and requirements as detailed in this Manual.
2. Accreditation procedures shall include the following as a minimum:
 - a) a review of the applicant Certification Body's clearly defined certification

- procedures and documentation for the scopes applied for;
- b) a witness audit (ie witnessing the Certification Body's inspection) of a manufacturing process appropriate to each of the scopes being applied for;

4. Authorisation procedure for Certification Bodies

4.1 Prerequisites

Certification Bodies applying for authorisation as COSMOS-standard certifiers must:

- a) simultaneously apply for (associate) membership of COSMOS-standard AISBL;
- b) have a valid accreditation to perform certification for at least one standard according to ISO/IEC Guide 17065: 2012 "Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, process and services " (note, it does not have to be cosmetics);
- c) have sufficiently qualified/experienced staff to perform certification of the scopes for which they are applying; and
- d) have applied to their designated accreditation body for accreditation according to this Control Manual.

4.2 Application procedure

1. Applications for authorisation should be sent to the Secretary General of the COSMOS-standard AISBL at: 124 rue du Commerce, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, or info@cosmos-standard.org.
2. Applications will be considered only if they contain the following information/declarations:
 - a) duly completed application form;
 - b) duly completed application form for membership of COSMOS-standard AISBL (if the Certification Body is not already a member);
 - c) legal name and status, address and legal representative of applicant;
 - d) list of all offices and branches;
 - e) scopes for which the applicant seeks authorisation (see paragraph 2 above);
 - f) a copy of the applicant's ISO 17065 accreditation certificate and a list of accredited scopes;
 - g) details of the nominated accreditation body to undertake the COSMOS-standard accreditation;
 - h) a summary of the relevant professional qualifications and experience of the applicant's designated cosmetics personnel; and
 - i) declaration that, if authorised, the applicant agrees to:
 - operate in compliance with the requirements of this Manual,
 - certify according to the COSMOS-standard, and
 - enter into a formal contract with the COSMOS-standard AISBL.
3. An application fee of €2000 must have been transferred to the bank account of COSMOS-standard AISBL: BNP Paribas Fortis, Montagne du Parc 3, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium; Account No: 001-6167642-70; IBAN: BE60 0016 1676 4270; BIC: GEBABEBB.
4. After acceptance of the application by the COSMOS-standard AISBL the Certification Body must apply to the nominated accreditation body to conduct the accreditation process.

4.3 Accreditation and Authorisation decision

1. The accreditation body shall decide in accordance with this Manual to grant, or grant with conditions, or not grant accreditation to the Certification Body for the applied scope(s). The decision must happen latest eighteen months after the date of application to the accreditation body.
2. Once accreditation is given, the COSMOS-standard AISBL will conclude a contract with the Certification Body, which completes the authorisation process. The Certification Body cannot start to certify to the COSMOS-standard until the contract is concluded. The COSMOS-standard AISBL reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the contract and to call on the accreditation body to investigate problems, as provided for in the contract. The contract will be terminated if at any time the accreditation body withdraws its accreditation.
3. The COSMOS-standard AISBL will publish the contact details of the authorised Certification Bodies, together with their authorised scope(s) and any other limitations or conditions, on the COSMOS-standard web site.

5. General Requirements for Certification Bodies

5.1 Responsibility

5.1.1 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 its functioning, including its finances.

5.1.2 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 COSMOS-standard and any other provisions of the COSMOS-standard certification programme;
- b) contain provisions to allow the Certification Body to exchange information with other authorised Certification Bodies and accreditation bodies including the COSMOS-standard AISBL 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 nominated accreditation body 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.

5.1.3 Responsibility for certification decisions

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

5.1.4 Acceptance of prior certification

Where products in the production chain have been certified by other authorised Certification Bodies, the Certification Body shall accept certificates issued in accordance with the COSMOS-standard. The Certification Body shall refuse to accept certificates which are obviously not in accordance with the COSMOS-standard.

5.2 Personnel

5.2.1 General

1. The Certification Body shall employ sufficient personnel competent to perform certification functions and operate its system. The personnel must have knowledge relevant to the location and type of processing facilities for which the certification is issued.

NOTE: the personnel include those normally working for the Certification Body as well as persons working under an individual contract or a formal agreement.

2. The Certification Body shall maintain up-to-date records on personnel, including the responsibilities assigned to them.

5.2.2 Qualification criteria and documentation

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 certification scopes, and in particular:

- a) for scope 2.a) as defined above, at least one of its personnel must have:
 - a university degree in the field of cosmetics, chemistry or related subject plus experience in quality management issues,
 - or at least 3 years professional experience in the cosmetics industry or related field plus experience in quality management issues,
 - or at least 2 years professional experience in inspection and certification of cosmetics;
- b) for scope 2.b) as defined above, at least one of its personnel must have:
 - a university degree in chemistry or biochemistry plus at least 3 years professional experience (or further qualifications) in chemistry or related field plus experience in quality management issues,
 - or at least 6 years of professional experience in chemistry or biochemistry or related field including experience in quality management issues;
- c) other personnel are familiar with the cosmetics/ingredients industry and are competent for inspection and evaluation of the COSMOS-standard.

5.2.3 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 and receive adequate training including theoretical training and practical training. For auditors, the practical training shall include at least 4 inspections including accompanying and being accompanied on-site inspections for organic or natural cosmetics certification.

5.2.4 Assignment of personnel

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

- a) commit themselves to observing the policies and procedures of the Certification Body;
- b) declare any prior or present conflict of interest, of their own or on the part of their employer, with an operator seeking certification to which they are to be assigned to perform certification procedures.

5.2.5 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 the requirements above.

5.2.6 Sub-contracting

When a Certification Body decides to outsource work related to certification (e.g. inspection) to an external body, 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 is:
 - competent to perform the subcontracted work,
 - not involved, either directly or through the body, with the operation, process or product that is subject to certification in any way that may compromise impartiality,
 - committed to the policies and procedures as defined by the Certification Body;
- d) monitor the performance of the bodies subcontracted for the work; and
- e) provide COSMOS-standard AISBL (secretary) with a list of subcontracted external bodies (name, address) and update this list in case of changes.

5.3 Impartiality and objectivity

5.3.1 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 its operations; 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.

5.3.2 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 minimise 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 interest.

5.3.3 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 to the COSMOS-standard certification, for example identified non-conformities. Explanations and general information or training may be given as long as this service is offered to all applicants/operators in a non-discriminatory manner.

5.3.4 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.

5.4 Access to Information

5.4.1 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 COSMOS-standard (and/or other harmonised standard) and other provisions of certification as provided by the COSMOS-standard AISBL;
- b) information about procedures applied for evaluating whether operators meet the COSMOS-standard;
- 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 or limitations on ways of referring to the certification granted;
- g) information about procedures for handling general complaints and appeals against its certification decisions; and
- h) Information about operators and their certified or approved products (COSMOS-standard AISBL may require a specific data format for use in databases with public access and a specific timeframe and procedure for updating).

5.4.2 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 organisation, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf. Arrangements shall:

- a) protect a client's proprietary information against misuse and unauthorised disclosure; and
- b) ensure that the Certification Body has the right to exchange information with other Certification Bodies and/or authorities including the COSMOS-standard AISBL to verify the authenticity of the information.

5.4.3 Reference to certification and use of certification logo and COSMOS-standard signature

The Certification Body shall, in accordance with the provisions of the COSMOS-standard and Labelling Guide:

- a) exercise control over use and display of licences, certificates, logos and signatures that it can license/allow certified operators to use;
- b) be able to request an operator to discontinue use of certificates, logos and signatures that it licenses/allows certified operators to use;
- c) apply suitable actions to deal with incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of licenses, certificates, logos or signatures that it licenses/allows certified operators to use.

5.5 Quality management system

5.5.1 General

1. 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.
2. The management shall ensure that the quality management system is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation.

5.5.2 Management system manual

1. 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.
2. The manual and associated documents shall contain, as appropriate for the type, range and volume of work performed and considering the number of personnel involved in the process:
 - a) an organisational chart showing lines of authority, responsibilities and allocation of functions;
 - b) a description of procedures applied by the Certification Body in the course of performing certification, including granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, suspending and withdrawing certification;
 - c) procedures for the recruitment, selection, training and assignment of the Certification Body's personnel;
 - d) policy and procedures for appeal against certification decisions and other complaints; and
 - e) policy and procedures for reviewing quality (e.g. internal audits, management review).

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

5.5.3 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 assigned 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 its activities, and prevent the unintended use of obsolete documents.

5.5.4 Maintaining and managing records

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Operator records shall be up to date and contain all relevant information, including inspection reports and certification history.
4. Records shall also be kept on exceptions granted, appeals and subsequent actions.
5. 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.

5.5.5 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. 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 (preferably annually) shall be part of the review. Review intervals shall be sufficiently short to ensure that the objective of quality improvement is fulfilled. Records of quality reviews shall be maintained.

5.5.6 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 effectiveness.

6. Process requirements for certification

6.1. Application procedures

6.1.1 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 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 COSMOS-standard (and/or other harmonised standard) and corresponding relevant documents released by the COSMOS-standard AISBL;
- d) programme 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 COSMOS-standard by the Certification Body.

6.1.2 Application form and the operator's obligations

The Certification Body shall require completion of an application form, signed by a duly authorised 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.

6.2 Evaluation

6.2.1 Scope

1. 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. The on-site inspection visit shall happen annually according to 6.4.2, but approval of new products shall be based on a review of documents, whereas the on-site inspection visit may follow during the annual inspection period.
2. Within scope 2.b), for certification of chemically processed agro-ingredients with organic content and for approval of ingredients with no organic content under the COSMOS-standard:
 - a) the certification body must develop specific control documents and procedures, including for risk analysis;
 - b) for certification of chemically processed agro-ingredients with organic content the on-site inspection visit shall happen annually;
 - c) for approval of ingredients with no organic content, the verification of compliance shall be based on a review of all the necessary information and documents needed for the approval.

6.2.2 Review of application and preparation of inspection

1. 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:
 - a) documents submitted by the operator are complete; and

- b) the operator appears to be able to comply with all certification requirements (COSMOS-standard and applicable related procedures).
2. The Certification Body shall assign qualified personnel to the evaluation in line with the requirements of 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 above, and provide them with appropriate work-related documents.
 3. 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.

6.2.3 Inspection protocol

Inspection by on-site visit 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 if necessary storage units (according to the risk and information availability). It 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 of audits in processing and handling facilities);
- c) assessment of packaging and labelling;
- d) assessment of the environmental management of the operation;
- e) identification of areas of risk to organic and natural integrity;
- f) verification that changes to the standards and to related requirements have been effectively implemented;
- g) verification that corrective actions have been taken; and
- h) verification of the complaints received as well as of the actions taken.

6.2.4 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 COSMOS-standard certification. Potential high-risk situations and related measures include:

- a) parallel processing of COSMOS-standard and non-COSMOS-standard 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 manufacturing, formulation, 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.

6.2.5 Reporting

The Certification Body shall report evaluation findings according to documented reporting procedures, as detailed below.

- 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.

6.3 Decision on certification

6.3.1 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.

6.3.2 Basis for the decision

The decision shall be based solely on the conformity of the operation with the COSMOS-standard certification requirements, using information gathered during the inspection and evaluation process.

6.3.3 Documentation

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

6.3.4 Dealing with non-conformities

1. Certification decisions may include requests for the correction of minor non-conformities (ie which do not threaten the integrity of the product) within a specified time period. In case of major non-conformities (ie which threaten the integrity of the product), a certificate shall be withheld or suspended until implementation of corrective actions can be demonstrated. In serious cases (ie where the integrity of the operator is brought into question), certification shall be denied or withdrawn.
2. Reasons for denial, withdrawal or suspension of certification shall be stated with clear reference to the COSMOS-standard criteria or other certification requirement violated.

6.3.5 Issuing of certification documents

The Certification Body shall issue official certification documents to each operator. 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, with the level of certification for each product
 - the COSMOS-standard that is the basis for the certification, and
 - the effective date and term of certification;
- d) in the case of approval of raw materials with no organic content, clear reference to the approved status (being different from certification).
- e) the percentage of organic origin ingredients for certification of ingredients with organic content;
- f) the reference to accreditation (if applicable).

6.4 Extension and renewal of certification

6.4.1 Re-evaluation

1. 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.
2. The Certification Body shall report and document its re-evaluation activities, and shall keep operators informed about their certification status.
3. Re-evaluation generally follows procedures outlined in 6.2 (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 6.2.

6.4.2 Frequency of inspection

1. All operators that have applied for certification (including brand owners), with the exception of manufacturers of ingredients with no organic content that are acceptable for use under the COSMOS-standard (in scope 2.b), shall be inspected at least annually.
2. In addition to the regular inspection visit, the Certification Body shall conduct follow-up or unannounced on-site inspections of certified operations, chosen randomly and/or chosen taking into account the risk or threat to the organic integrity of the production or products.
3. There is no requirement for inspection of operations for the approval of ingredients with no organic content that are acceptable for use under the COSMOS-standard (in scope 2.b), though the certification body may carry out inspections in case of suspicion.

6.4.3 Notification of changes made by the operator

1. The Certification Body shall require operators to inform the Certification Body about changes cited in 6.1.2.
2. 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.
3. 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 may be made, and shall act accordingly.

6.4.4 Changes in the certification requirements

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

7. Requirements for authorised Certification Bodies

7.1 Annual Fee

The Certification Body shall pay relevant fees as determined from time to time and published by the COSMOS-standard AISBL.

7.2 Collection of Licence Fee

The Certification Body shall where appropriate collect fees from its certified operators as determined from time to time and published by the COSMOS-standard AISBL.

7.3 Non-organic ingredients that are acceptable for use

1. Certification Bodies that are authorised for the scope of 'ingredients with no organic content that are acceptable for use under the COSMOS-standard' (within scope 2.b) shall ensure that up-to-date lists of these ingredients are available to the COSMOS-standard AISBL and the other authorised Certification Bodies. However, ingredients that are approved on a confidential basis for a specific operator need not be disclosed to the other authorised Certification Bodies.
2. In cases where Certification Bodies reach conflicting decisions on an ingredient, the Bodies concerned shall share their proofs of assessment with the aim of achieving a consensus decision. If this fails, the COSMOS-standard AISBL will consider all the proofs of assessment and shall decide whether the specific ingredient is acceptable or not.

7.4 Cooperation with other authorised Certification Bodies

1. Certification Bodies must accept certificates issued in accordance with the COSMOS-standard by other authorised Certification Bodies in order to conclude their COSMOS-standard certification.
2. Certification Bodies must accept inspection assignments regardless of whether they are for the entire processing chain or only parts thereof.
3. Certification Bodies must interact with each other in order to secure equal application of the COSMOS-standard and report any relevant decisions to the Secretary General. They shall adhere to any procedural rules and interpretations made from time to time by the COSMOS-standard AISBL.
4. Certification Bodies shall refuse to accept certificates which are obviously not in accordance with the COSMOS-standard.

7.5 Reporting on activities

1. Certification Bodies shall keep the COSMOS-standard AISBL up-dated about names, addresses, production category and products of the certified operators. A report on the relevant activities in the preceding calendar year shall be sent by the end of January of each year.
2. Upon request, certifiers shall submit detailed documentation to the COSMOS-standard AISBL to ascertain adherence to the COSMOS-standard and any procedural

rules and interpretations from time to time issued. The COSMOS-standard AISBL will treat this information confidentially.

Ends.