

OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

OBP FAQ FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES



Copyrights

This document, the Zero Plastic Oceans, Ocean Bound Plastic and Ocean Bound Plastic Neutral trademarks and certification stamps are protected by Copyright laws. All rights are reserved to Zero Plastic Oceans organization and no reproduction of this material is allowed without previous written consent by Zero Plastic Oceans.

Disclaimer

This document has been developed by the authors with all possible care and best of intentions, however Zero Plastic Oceans and any third parties involved in the creation of this document hereby state the document is provided without warranty, either expressed or implied, of accuracy or fitness for purpose, and hereby disclaim any liability, direct or indirect, for damages or loss relating to the use of this document.

Revisions and Updates

This document will be revised regularly and distributed after each revision to the certification bodies. Please send any questions and comments you have regarding the certification scheme to [contact\(at\)obpcert.org](mailto:contact(at)obpcert.org)

Revision history

Date	Version	Changes
8 th Sept. 2020	V1	Initial Release
23 rd Nov. 2020	V1.1	FAQ #2.4 was updated
22 nd Jan. 2021	V1.2	Addition of FAQ #2.8 and update of FAQ #2.7

Forewords

This document gathers frequently asked questions asked by certification bodies and Zero Plastic Oceans answers. It is to be used as interpretation guidelines for the standards of the OBP certification program.



TABLE OF CONTENT

1. GENERAL QUESTIONS.....	3
1.1. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF ZERO PLASTIC OCEANS (ZPO) WITH CONTROL UNION CERTIFICATIONS (CUC)?	3
1.2. IS IT POSSIBLE TO AUDIT GRS AND OBP TOGETHER?	3
1.3. CAN ANY TYPE OF COMPANY APPLY FOR THIS CERTIFICATION SCHEME?	3
2. OBP COLLECTION ORGANIZATION STANDARD.....	4
2.1. HOW DOES THE CLIENT DEFINE COLLECTION SITES FOR THE PURCHASE TO INDEPENDENT COLLECTORS? DOES THE AUDITOR HAVE TO VISIT THE SITES IN THAT CASE?	4
2.2. WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO IDENTIFY THE SITE LOCATION	4
2.3. HOW CAN THE TIDE LIMITS FOR THE OBP CATEGORIES BE DETERMINED?.....	4
2.4. HOW CAN THE “ABANDONED NATURE” OF THE PLASTIC WASTE BE DETERMINED?	4
2.5. WHAT ARE THE DEFINITIONS OF LANDFILL, MANAGED AND UNMANAGED DUMPS?	7
2.6. REQUIREMENT 5.1 OF OBP-COL-STD STATES THAT WORKING CONDITIONS SHOULD BE FAIR AND MINIMUM WAGES PAID, HOW CAN THIS REQUIREMENT BE ASSESSED WITH INDEPENDENT COLLECTORS?	8
2.7. DO COLLECTORS ALWAYS HAVE TO BE COMPAGNIES OR COOPERATIVES?	8
2.8. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF SEPARATE LEGAL ENTITY FOR SMALL COLLECTORS?	8
3. OBP RECYCLING ORGANIZATION STANDARD.....	9
3.1. CAN THE FINAL PRODUCT BE CERTIFIED?	9
3.2. ARE ALL COMPANIES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN INVOLVED IN SOME TYPE OF PROCESS CALLED RECYCLING ORGANIZATIONS?	9
3.3. IS THE RECYCLING ORGANIZATION THE OWNER OF THE OBP IT PROCESSES?	10
3.4. DO TRADER OR MERCHANT ORGANIZATIONS THAT BUY AND SELL OBP CERTIFIED PRODUCTS NEED TO GET THEIR OWN ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATE?	10
3.5. ARE TRADER OR MERCHANT ORGANIZATIONS ALLOWED TO SUBCONTRACT PART OF THEIR PROCESS FOR OBP CERTIFIED PRODUCTS?	10
3.6. DOES THE RECYCLING ORGANIZATION HAS TO USE THE OBP LOGO ON THE LABEL WHEN IT DELIVERS OBP PRODUCTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS/CLIENTS? IS THIS OBLIGATORY?	10
4. OBP NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES PROVIDER STANDARD.....	11
4.1. WHAT IS THE NEUTRALIZATION CERTIFICATE AND HOW IS IT USED?.....	11
4.2. CAN A CERTIFIED OBP NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES PROVIDER SELL MORE NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES THAN ITS TAOBPW? 12	12



1. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1.1. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF ZERO PLASTIC OCEANS (ZPO) WITH CONTROL UNION CERTIFICATIONS (CUC)?

ZPO is the NGO that has developed the OBP certification scheme in collaboration with CUC from early 2019, the scheme was launched officially on 8th of June 2020.

ZPO remains the public standard setter and owner. ZPO is not involved in the certification process. It is responsible only for posting the certified companies in the official website (www.obpcert.org) to conclude the certification.

CUC is an approved certification body to audit the OBP standards with an exclusivity on the OBP Collection Organization standard for 2 years. Currently CUC is the only approved certification body.

1.2. IS IT POSSIBLE TO AUDIT GRS AND OBP TOGETHER?

Yes, it is. But it is important to keep in mind which certification module the client has applied, as differently from GRS, OBP also covers upstream (Collection Organization Standard).

There is no benchmarking between the schemes, yet OBP is similar to GRS regarding traceability in downstream (Recycling Organization Standard). The use of both checklists is still necessary, but the supply chain model information will probably overlap.

In the end the benefit from generated synergies during the audit can be transferred to the client and make the certifications more affordable.

1.3. CAN ANY TYPE OF COMPANY APPLY FOR THIS CERTIFICATION SCHEME?

There is no limitation to the type of company that can apply. Any active legal entity can apply for certification for their corresponding activity.



2. OBP COLLECTION ORGANIZATION STANDARD

2.1. HOW DOES THE CLIENT DEFINE COLLECTION SITES FOR THE PURCHASE TO INDEPENDENT COLLECTORS? DOES THE AUDITOR HAVE TO VISIT THE SITES IN THAT CASE?

These sites are not required to be visited. The notion of sites is indicative, it can be as broad as naming the districts where they work, but it is a way to check that the independent collectors are working in the 50km zone from shore and in areas where waste management is deficient.

2.2. WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO IDENTIFY THE SITE LOCATION

Regarding requirement 5.3 a) Sites can be identified by the organization providing clear address, drawn location on a local map or GPS coordinates. The supply of GPS coordinates is not an obligation.

2.3. HOW CAN THE TIDE LIMITS FOR THE OBP CATEGORIES BE DETERMINED?

One should refer to ANNEX III of the OBP-COL-STD document. How to determine the highest and lowest tide limits is detailed in the ANNEX. Tolerance is 50 meters as this determination is approximative.

Additionally, there is flexibility in the limits as explained in the OBP Definition in chapter 2. More than 200m distance can be accepted by the auditor if the site configuration is such that it is clear that the plastic waste can be carried away from a greater distance. Typically, this will happen if the site is a hill or if the river is at the bottom of a small valley.

2.4. HOW CAN THE “ABANDONED NATURE” OF THE PLASTIC WASTE BE DETERMINED?

The spirit of the program is to avoid plastic waste is reaching oceans by collecting real Ocean Bound Plastic. This of course is aiming at abandoned plastic waste in urban or natural areas, but it should also include plastic waste that will become abandoned if it is not collected by a recycling program or by segregation at source.

Therefore, the following cases will be considered acceptable as OBP:

- Abandoned plastic waste in urban and natural areas within the geographic limits of the OBP Category.
- Source segregation (collection from homes) or voluntary recycling programs, only in districts/cities where there is visual evidence of waste mismanagement (no collection exists or collection points in streets are clearly overflowing).
- Material collected in unmanaged dumps (See Next FAQ)



- Fishing nets, ropes, buoys, fish boxes, and any plastic waste generated on fishing boats that is recovered through dedicated waste management programs to prevent that this waste is thrown at sea or abandoned on banks or shores.

The following cases will be considered not acceptable as OBP, and these specifications should be included as evidence on the training content for the “abandoned nature” specification with the collecting staff:

- Material that has been collected from voluntary disposal / recycling stations (for example recycle bins in front of a supermarket) in areas where waste is managed.
- Independent collectors or the organization are working in districts where there is no visual evidence of waste mismanagement as mentioned above.
- Waste has been collected from a sorting center or a professionally managed landfill or a managed dump (see next FAQ).

If collection organizations work with plastic not considered OBP by this standards definition, it has to be clear to the auditor that this alternatively sourced plastic has to be segregated and identified so it is never mixed with OBP.

Examples of non-acceptable OBP sources:



Voluntary disposal/recycling station



Well managed areas



Sorting Centers



Properly managed landfills

Example of target and acceptable OBP Sources

OBP should be preferably collected in populated areas with non-existing waste management, as close as possible¹ to rivers or shore or during environmental cleaning operations:



The target areas have an unmistakable problem with waste management and the risk of flowing to the ocean is obvious.

Collection at source (home) or through recycling points in such an area is acceptable as there is no waste management and the river, the street or green areas are used as dumpsites.



Despite the presence of some garbage collection infrastructure it is clear that it is inefficient, usually because of infrequent collection causing overflowing and OBP generation.

¹ Naturally the Potential OBP can be collected in areas where waste is mismanaged within 50Km from shore as per the standard, but the spirit of the program remains to have a positive impact on the ocean and trying to work as close as possible to shores and rivers is a best practice to encourage.





Material recovered through programs dedicated to collecting fishing gears (for eg nets, buoys, ropes...) from fishermen in ports is also accepted as OBP to prevent that this waste is thrown at sea or abandoned on banks or shores.

2.5. WHAT ARE THE DEFINITIONS OF LANDFILL, MANAGED AND UNMANAGED DUMPS?

Landfilling is a disposal method for solid waste by burial which can be professionally designed and operated or not. The differences are the following:

Adequate landfill: Properly managed burial operation in a site with a lower impermeable membrane covering the soil to avoid lixivates polluting phreatic levels; regularly covered so waste is not exposed to reduce disease vectors, and has a top impermeable layer and a biogas capture system to avoid methane leaks to the atmosphere. Such sites are operated by professional operators, fenced, and inaccessible by unauthorized personal.

Managed dumps: May have one or several of the technical characteristics of the landfill mentioned above (1. lower impermeable membrane, 2. regular coverings of waste, 3. top impermeable membrane and biogas capture system, 4. fenced and inaccessible by unauthorized personal), but not all of them, and could allow the presence of waste pickers. In all cases managed dumps will be on authorized sites and managed by an operator.

Unmanaged dumps: Illegal dumping sites where waste is discarded by the population or waste collection operators without licenses, or any type of control and in absence of waste operators. Unmanaged dumps are usually smaller than managed dumps.

Plastic waste collected in landfills or managed dumps is not accepted as OBP, unless the configuration of the managed dump is such that plastic is clearly reaching the oceans from the dump (cases of dumps on seashores for example).

Plastic waste collected from unmanaged dumps is allowed since these dumpsites are usually small and often in the environment next to rivers, creeks, seashores...



2.6. REQUIREMENT 5.1 OF OBP-COL-STD STATES THAT WORKING CONDITIONS SHOULD BE FAIR AND MINIMUM WAGES PAID, HOW CAN THIS REQUIREMENT BE ASSESSED WITH INDEPENDENT COLLECTORS?

Since independent collectors are not dependent workers of the organization, fair working conditions with them are assessed by checking that the price they are paid for the OBP is within or above local market prices and that payment conditions are reasonable. Auditors should do a preliminary desk research to find out local market prices for recyclable plastic waste and verify payment processes of the organization. During interviews auditor should also seek to understand if there are any irregularities in the buying process or abuse of power from the Collection Organization.

2.7. DO COLLECTORS ALWAYS HAVE TO BE COMPAGNIES OR COOPERATIVES?

No, third party collectors (outside of the Collection Organization itself) can be Independent Collectors or Small Collectors:

Independent Collectors are expected to be individual or small groups of individuals not collecting more than 200 Kg/day of OBP, it is not expected, nor necessary that they would form a company or a cooperative.

Small Collectors are expected to be small compagnies or cooperatives but can be any other type of legal entity as defined in FAQ #2.8, that collect less than 400 metric ton per year, they must be part of a Supplier Group Certification system.

2.8. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF SEPARATE LEGAL ENTITY FOR SMALL COLLECTORS?

The requirement 7.2 of the OBP-COL-STD indicates that Small Collectors shall be a separate legal entity from the Collection Organization.

For this requirement, legal entity is to be understood as: Legal personality that has at least the capacity to enter into a contract. Under that definition a legal entity can be, for example, an incorporated company, a sole proprietorship, a cooperative or a natural person.

For this requirement, separate should be understood as: Not linked to the Collection Organization being a branch, subsidiary or employee of the Collection Organization.



3. OBP RECYCLING ORGANIZATION STANDARD

3.1. CAN THE FINAL PRODUCT BE CERTIFIED?

Yes, as long as all the supply chain is certified.

3.2. ARE ALL COMPANIES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN INVOLVED IN SOME TYPE OF PROCESS CALLED RECYCLING ORGANIZATIONS?

Recycling Organizations are defined as:

Organizations of the plastic recycling value chain, starting from purchase of OBP to an organization certified against the OBP Collection Organization standard, to the incorporation of recycled OBP into final business to business (B2B) or business to consumers (B2C) products.

For example, it can be for:

- i. Trader/merchant organizations, or organizations that concentrate and/or transport recyclable OBP without or with little transformation (washing, baling, shredding),
- ii. Recycled polymer production organizations,
- iii. Recycled plastic packaging or recycled product production organizations,
- iv. Final user of products of packaging containing recycled OBP.
- v. Trader/merchant organizations that buy and sell any product containing recycled OBP.

At the beginning of the supply chain are the Collection Organizations which are defined as follows:

any organization (for profit, not for profit, governmental or non-governmental) who is involved or wants to be involved in collecting Ocean Bound Plastic.

The scope covers activities related to ownership of collected OBP until sale or disposal. Depending on each organization, these activities may additionally include storage, cleaning, washing, removal of stickers, packing in bales or similar preparation for transport/sale.



3.3. IS THE RECYCLING ORGANIZATION THE OWNER OF THE OBP IT PROCESSES?

Yes and this needs to remain so throughout the OBP transformation, in particular if subcontracting is involved, the subcontractor shall not become owner of the OBP. If an organization reclaims ownership of certified OBP, and it is not certified as an OBP Recycling Organization, it cannot sell certified OBP. If, however, an organization is hired for subcontracting a part of a process, but it does not reclaim ownership of the product, it does not need to be certified.

3.4. DO TRADER OR MERCHANT ORGANIZATIONS THAT BUY AND SELL OBP CERTIFIED PRODUCTS NEED TO GET THEIR OWN ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATE?

Whenever an organization takes ownership of OBP certified products, and they want to make certification claims to their customers, they need to have their own organization certified. The only exception to that rule is when the product containing OBP is a Final Product as per standard definition and the organization does not make claims (for example a distributor or a shop selling certified OBP products do not need to be certified because they only buy and resell Final Products and do not make claims about it).

3.5. ARE TRADER OR MERCHANT ORGANIZATIONS ALLOWED TO SUBCONTRACT PART OF THEIR PROCESS FOR OBP CERTIFIED PRODUCTS?

Yes, like all organizations certified under the OBP Recycling Organization standard a trader or merchant organization may subcontract all needed activities. For example, a trader could purchase certified OBP from a certified organization and then have it transformed by one or several subcontractor(s) into a final product.

3.6. DOES THE RECYCLING ORGANIZATION HAS TO USE THE OBP LOGO ON THE LABEL WHEN IT DELIVERS OBP PRODUCTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS/CLIENTS? IS THIS OBLIGATORY?

Yes this is a requirement stated in Item 5.9 of the standard and also covered in the Logo Uses and Claims Guidelines document. Exceptions exist for intermediate products or B2B transactions where the use of the logo may not be required. For labelling products, the On-Product Labels predefined formats should be used as detailed in the Logo Uses and Claim Guidelines document.



4. OBP NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES PROVIDER STANDARD

FAQ 2.1 up to 2.8 included, referring to the OBP Collection Organization standard also apply to the OBP Neutralization Services Provider standard.

4.1. WHAT IS THE NEUTRALIZATION CERTIFICATE AND HOW IS IT USED?

Organizations offering OBP neutralization services need to have an annual Scope Certificates as certified OBP neutralization services providers. This guarantees their certified status as an organization allowed to offer such services and specifies their maximum annual service capacity (TAOBPW).

Each Neutralization Certificate, however, is an instrument used as proof for the performance of a specific service within that year, for a determined volume of OBP neutralization, and as support for the neutralization service invoice. This procedure allows for the maximum service capacity control of each organization, and for a global registry of the total volume of OBP being collected and prevented from polluting oceans. The Neutralization Certificate bears some similarities with a transaction certificate used by other standards. This is how the procedure for emitting a Neutralization Certificate works:

1. OBP neutralization services provider carries out collection and treatment (disposal or valorization) of for example 100 tons of OBP in compliance with requirements of the standard.
2. OBP neutralization services provider sends the evidence of the service performed along with the information required in the Neutralization Certificate to the CB. (Evidences can be daily records and summaries with receipt of disposal or valorization)
3. CB assesses information received. If all is ok, CB discounts 100 tons from the organization's TAOBPW, issues and signs Neutralization Certificate, and notifies ZPO, who will log it and publish it in a public registry on www.obpcert.org.
4. CB sends issued Neutralization Certificate to OBP neutralization services provider.
5. OBP neutralization services provider will invoice its client attaching the Neutralization Certificate.



4.2. CAN A CERTIFIED OBP NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES PROVIDER SELL MORE NEUTRALIZATION SERVICES THAN ITS TAOBPW?

OBP neutralization services provider make an annual estimate of their maximum service capacity - TAOBPW. This amount can be adjusted yearly in each certification audit. If within one same year, the organization sees that it has a greater demand and capacity for neutralization services, it can apply to the CB for a revision and extension of its TAOBPW.

However, if this adjustment has not been requested or approved, the organization cannot sell more neutralization services than its TAOBPW because it could not support the services with the Neutralization Certificates, given these would not be issued by CB if there is no credit in its TAOBPW.

