

OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CERTIFICATION BODIES APPROVAL GUIDELINES



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Revisions and Updates

This document shall be revised as deemed necessary. Please send any comment you have regarding the document to [contact\(at\)obpcert.org](mailto:contact(at)obpcert.org).

Revision history

Date	Version	Changes
8 th Sept. 2021	V1	Initial Release
13 th Dec. 2021	V1.1	- Requirement 3.1 was amended (accreditation for ISO 17021 is not considered a requirement anymore) - Annex I Requirements for OBP Program personnel, previously in the Audit protocols was updated and added to this document
8 th Mar. 2022	V1.2	- Addition of effective date (1.5) - Updates in Auditor Task and Responsibilities (4.2.2) regarding non-conformities management and delays. - Clarifications in Certifier description (4.3.1) - Updates in Certifier Tasks and responsibilities (4.3.2) regarding delays. - Update of point 4 of Program manager Tasks and responsibilities (4.4.2)
21 st Jun. 2022	V1.3	- Inclusion of the onboarding process (1.7, 2.7) - Reformulation of chapter 2.5
8 th Sept. 2023	V1.4	- Updates to incorporate the Social+ OBP Component in chapters 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 3.7. - Addition of chapter 2.9 concerning quality assurance audits and clarification regarding the costs of such audits in chapter 3.7.
31 st Mar. 2024	V1.5	Updates to incorporate the Brand Standard in chapters 1.3, 1.4, 1.5.
8 th Sept 2026	V1.6	Addition of a note in chapter 1.3

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of Zero Plastic Oceans is to protect oceans from the continuous leakage of Plastic waste from land-based activity by developing incentives and models that promote the collection of Ocean Bound Plastic¹ (OBP).

The **OBP Certification Program** was designed to encourage the removal of OBP from the environment by adding value in effectively collecting and treating it before it reaches oceans. The scheme is composed of two subprograms; the **OBP Recycling Subprogram**, and the **OBP Neutrality Subprogram**.

When OBP is commercially recyclable², its collection and Recycling can be encouraged by certifying its origin and traceability, giving it a higher market value with the OBP Recycling Subprogram. This chain of custody is certified using the OBP Collection Organization Standard, the OBP Recycling Organization Standard and the OBP Brand Standard depending on which step on the chain an organization is.

When OBP is not commercially recyclable³, its collection and final treatment can be encouraged by certifying the process with the OBP Neutrality Subprogram. In this model, Plastic producers or users can contribute to a better environment by removing a determined volume of plastic waste from nature through the acquisition of OBP Credits. This model is certified using the OBP Neutralization Services Provider Standard and the OBP Plastic Producers & Users Standard.

Organizations may certify themselves for one or both subprograms as they are complementary solutions. Working with both subprograms makes sense in terms of economic efficiency, given all OBP is collected and marketed at once. It also makes sense from the environmental perspective, since it is only by addressing both, Commercially and Non-Commercially Recyclable OBP, that we will be able to make a real impact.

¹ Ocean Bound Plastic, is, as defined in OBP-DEF-GUI, Plastic litter that will be carried away to oceans in particular by the effects of currents, winds, river flows or tides.

² Commercially recyclable OBP as defined in OBP-DEF-GUI, means that OBP is technically recyclable and that it can be sold locally to recyclers for a price that renders its collection attractive to waste pickers or collection organizations. Currently, especially in countries where OBP is leaking into the oceans, a significant portion of technically recyclable OBP is unfortunately not commercially recyclable.

³ Not commercially recyclable OBP as defined in OBP-DEF-GUI, means that OBP cannot be sold for an attractive price but also includes products or packaging which are technically not recyclable (because of the resin used, the mix of different materials or because they are too damaged).

Organizations collecting OBP willing to provide enhanced social benefits to their employees and informal collectors (Independent Collectors), may additionally certify to the Social+ OBP Component.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides guidance and specifies requirements for Certification Bodies (CB) interested in getting approved by ZPO in order to carry out third party Audit assessments and issue Scope Certificates for the OBP Certification Program.

1.3. SCOPE

This document is applicable globally and for any Standard of the OBP Certification Program. Interested Certification Bodies may apply to be approved for one or several of the OBP Standards, globally or for a defined geographical area.

The OBP Standards available are the following:

For the OBP Recycling Subprogram

- OBP Collection Organization Standard
- OBP Recycling Organization Standard
- OBP Brand Standard

For the OBP Neutrality Subprogram

- OBP Neutralization Services Provider Standard
- OBP Plastic Producers and Users Standard⁴

For both the OBP Recycling and Neutrality Subprograms

- The Social+ OBP Component (applicable as a voluntary option to the OBP Collection Organization and the OBP Neutralization Services Provider Standards)

Certification bodies may apply to work on the geographical scope that they feel pertinent with regards to their international presence and Audit capabilities by regions. The final geographical scope will be negotiated between the Certification Body and ZPO.

⁴ This standard is currently not proposed to new CBs.

1.4. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 - Conformity Assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- The OBP Certification Program documentation
 - OBP-COL-STD: OBP Collection Organization Standard
 - OBP-REC-STD: OBP Recycling Organization Standard
 - OBP-BRA-STD: OBP Brand Standard
 - OBP-NEU-STD: OBP Neutralization Services Provider Standard
 - OBP-PRO-STD: OBP Plastic Producers & Users Standard
 - OBP-DEF-GUI: OBP Program Definitions & Annexes
 - OBP-TEM-GUI: OBP Program Templates
 - OBP-LOG-GUI: OBP Logo Uses and Claims Guidelines
 - OBP-FEE-GUI: OBP Fees Guidelines
 - OBP-FAQ-GUI: OBP Frequently Asked Questions
 - OBP-REM-GUI: OBP Remote and Supervised/Shadow Audit Guidelines
 - OBP-ROS-GUI: OBP Recognition of other Standards and Audits
 - OBP-CBA-GUI: OBP Certification Body Approval Guidelines (this document)
 - OBP-CPA-PRO: OBP Certification Program Audit Protocols
 - OBP-CPM-PRO: OBP Certification Program Manual Content Outline for Certification Bodies
 - OBP-SOC-STD: Social+ Ocean Bound Plastic Component
 - OBP-SOC-GUI: Social+ Ocean Bound Plastic Component Implementation Guidelines

1.5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This document becomes effective on the release date and shall become compulsory to use on the 8th of December 2026.

1.6. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Capital letters are used throughout the document to signal the words that are included in the definitions available in OBP-DEF-GUI. Acronym's significance is also available in the same OBP-DEF-GUI document.

1.7. SUMMARIZED STEPS OF APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. Submission of application form (OBP-CBA-APF) with relevant requested documentation.
- b. Review of submitted documentation and offer letter to CB by ZPO.
- c. Payment of approval process fee by CB.
- d. ZPO-CB Training.
- e. Submission of CB's OBP Certification Program documentation (CB's program manual and additional template documentation materials) for ZPOs revision.
- f. Approval agreement signature formalizing CB's license to start auditing and certifying the OBP program.
- g. Registration of Approved CB on the OBP program website.
- h. Onboarding guidance process of ZPO with CB, with the first two OBP certification clients the CB has.

2. APPROVAL PROCESS

2.1 APPLICATION

Certification Bodies interested in getting approval by ZPO to offer the OBP Certification Program shall request the application form from ZPO at the following email: contact@obpcert.org, or through the OBP Certification Program website (www.obpcert.org). Requirements for approval are specified in this document. The completed application form shall be submitted by email and shall be accompanied by the required supporting documents.

2.2 DOCUMENT REVISION AND OFFER LETTER

Once the submitted documentation has been revised and found in compliance with ZPOs requirements in the application form, ZPO will send an offer letter for the approval and license fees, along with the contract terms for being an approved certification body for the OBP Certification Program.

ZPO reserves the right to require additional documentation not listed in the application form or request additional evidence to support/clarify the submitted documentation before sending the offer letter.

2.3 OFFER LETTER APPROVAL AND FEE PAYMENT

Once the applying Certification Body agrees with the offer letter and the terms of contract for being an Approved CB, the CB shall send the signed offer letter and pay the corresponding fee to continue with the approval process.

2.4 TRAINING

ZPO in coordination with the CB shall prepare and impart the required training sessions. The content and length of the training sessions shall be adapted to the scope of application of the CB.

Relevant program personnel need to successfully complete the required training sessions. All trainings should be attended by the proposed OBP program manager. Proposed Auditors and certifiers can attend specific trainings in relation to their applicable scope.

2.5 SUBMISSION OF CB'S OBP PROGRAM MANUAL AND REVISION BY ZPO

Once relevant CB personnel has been trained, the CB shall develop their own OBP Certification Program Manual for which they shall use as guidance the Certification Program Manual Content Outline for Certification Bodies (OBP-CPM-PRO) document. The CB has to describe their procedures for operating the program such as contracting, planning, audit execution, audit reporting, etc. This should include all relevant information for issues applicable to their selected scope and take into consideration compliance with the OBP Certification Program Audit Protocol document (OBP-CPA-PRO). The program manual needs to be submitted to ZPO for revision and approval within 3 months of the training being imparted to the applying CB.

2.6 APPROVAL AGREEMENT

Once all requirements are met, the approval agreement will be signed between the Certification Body and ZPO. The validity period of the approval agreement is three years. An update and revision of the application process shall be required in order to extend the approval agreement for three further years.

2.7 CB REGISTRY

Once the approval agreement is signed, the Approved CB and contact details will be published in the OBP Certification Program website, in the section >Getting certified>Certification bodies. The CB is ready to start auditing and certifying on behalf of ZPO for the OBP Certification Program.

2.8 ONBOARDING

The first 2 Audits and certifications performed by the CB will be monitored step by step (from application form to scope certificate issuance) by ZPO to ensure conformity with the standards and procedures of ZPO.

2.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The CB will receive annual random virtual or on-site audits by ZPO to confirm that Audits and certification procedures are conducted in conformity with the OBP Program documentation. In case non-conformities are found during these quality assurance audits, and these are not resolved within the allocated time for closure, the CB will lose its approval to offer OBP certifications.

3. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

3.1. ACCREDITATION

The OBP Certification Program shall only be audited and certified by Certification Bodies whose auditing and certification processes are competent, consistent, and impartial, with quality management of auditors, reporting and evaluation as defined and specified in ISO norm ISO 17065.

It is therefore a minimum requirement that Interested Certification Bodies supply evidence of accreditation of ISO 17065 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services, by an IAF accreditation member.

Approved Certification Bodies will lose their approval to carry Audit inspections and issue Scope Certificates for the OBP Certification Program if they lose the accreditation to the above ISO norms. CBs shall inform ZPO immediately in case this occurred.

3.2. DEFINITION OF PROGRAM RESPONSIBLE PERSONNEL

Interested certification bodies shall submit a list of names, contact details and experience for the different program responsible personnel they want to propose. These include:

- Responsible OBP program manager and contact person between the CB and ZPO. This person will receive all information regarding the OBP Certification Program, and will be in charge of handling and managing the program internally within the CB, making sure all requirements of the relevant Standard Audit protocols are complied with.
- A minimum of one proposed available Auditor
- A minimum of one proposed available certifier

The minimum requirements for program manager, Auditors and certifiers are specified in Annex I of this document.

3.3. RECOGNITION OF OTHER APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODY SCOPE CERTIFICATES

Approved Certification Bodies shall recognize other Scope Certificates issued by other Approved Certification Bodies as equivalent to their own, unless they have reasons to suspect they are fraudulent or were improperly issued. In such cases, the Certification Body shall contact ZPO.

3.4. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Approved Certification Bodies shall make available on their own website as a minimum the following public information:

- The scope for which the Certification Body is approved (OBP Standards and Geographical Area).
- A link to the OBP Certification Program website.
- Information for potential clients on how to get certified.
- The list of companies certified by the CB against the OBP Standards holding a valid Scope Certificate.

3.5. ZPO ACCESS TO APPROVED CERTIFICATION BODIES' INFORMATION

Approved Certification Bodies shall allow ZPO access to any information relevant to the OBP Certification Program that ZPO may request, and shall also be prepared to receive random audits on behalf of ZPO of their procedures, offices, and personnel interviews at any time during the approval agreement.

3.6. OBP FEES

Approved Certification Bodies shall collect OBP fees on behalf of ZPO from their client Organizations (according to the OBP-FEE-GUI document), additionally to their own auditing and certification fees. These fees need to be paid to ZPO following the terms of contract.

3.7. APPROVAL PROCESS FEES AND ANNUAL ZPO FEES

Applying Certification Bodies shall pay an approval process fee of EURO 350 upon signature of offer letter for each Standard or Component they want to include in their scope. The onboarding fee, applicable only for the first 2 Audits of the CB will be charged at EURO 350 per certification of client organization.

Additionally, Approved Certification Bodies shall pay an annual maintenance fee of EURO 300 per Standard or Component included in their scope. This fee will not be invoiced the first year and will start only from the second year. This fee also covers quality assurance audits when performed remotely by ZPO. Travel expenses and daily rate will be invoiced separately when quality assurance audits are conducted onsite supervising a client Audit or in the CB premises.

Approved Certification Bodies will not incur in any approval fees when renewing their approval after the first three-year period, for Standards they were already approved for. They will only have to pay the annual maintenance fees.

Fees will be discounted for CBs applying for a limited geography in the following manner:

- 50% discount for single country scope
- 30% discount for a single area scope (an area being defined as a single continent or a geographically coherent region such as for example, South East Asia, Latin America, etc).

4. ANNEX I - CRITERIA FOR OBP AUDITORS, CERTIFIERS, AND PROGRAM MANAGER OF THE CERTIFICATION BODY

4.1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- The program manager and the certifier shall be permanent personnel of the applying CB and to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of the applying CB internal process they need to comply with the minimum employment time within the CB.
- Auditors can be permanent personnel of the applying CB or contractors as long as they comply with the requirements of this document and have received the internal OBP training developed by the CB.
- The program manager, auditors and certifiers can be in different office/countries of the CB.

4.2. OBP AUDITOR

4.2.1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

An Auditor plans and executes Audits in accordance with the relevant Audit Protocol and reports findings to the Certifier of the Certification Body.

4.2.2. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain a good relationship with the client Organization's coordinator during planning and on-site audit.
- Send audit plan to Organization at least 10 calendar days prior to audit.
- Send audit report to certifier latest 10 working days after audit date.
- Monitor, follow up, and communicate deadlines for closing open non-conformities to client Organizations.
- Assessment of evidence sent by client in order to close non-conformities.
- Maintain up to date files of all quality policies, procedures, working instructions, trainings and documentation issued by the CB regarding the OBP certification scheme.
- Keeping abreast of developments, issues and legislative changes pertaining to the sectors in which Audits are carried out.

4.2.3. REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Post-secondary school education or comparable level by training or experience in environmental disciplines for at least 4 years.
- Spoken and written knowledge of the local language and English.
- Knowledge of assessment principles, practices and techniques.
- Knowledge of Certification Body's processes and tools.
- Knowledge of normative documents.
- Language skills appropriate to all levels within the client Organization.
- Note-taking and report-writing skills.
- Interviewing skills.
- Assessment-management skills.
- Understanding of the recycling industry, preferably plastic recycling industry.
- Knowledge about informal collection of recyclable material.
- Maintain knowledge of/and apply the relevant legislation, regulations and other requirements for the assigned modules.

4.2.4. SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Auditors may comply with one of the two following options:

Option1 (both requirements are mandatory):

- Previous experience as auditor in a certification body for at least 2 years in similar certification schemes like FSC, RSPO, GRS, GOTS, etc., and,
- Previous experience as auditor for chain of custody audits of any variety of certification schemes for at least 2 years, or,

Option 2:

- Qualified ISO 9001 Lead Auditor.

4.3. OBP CERTIFIER

4.3.1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The certifier reviews the Audit reports, and requires clarifications from the auditor if needed. Once compliance with all Standard requirements is asserted, issues a positive certification decision, and sends final report to the auditor for the client. In cases of non-conformities, after the auditor has reviewed and assessed evidence sent by client Organizations, the certifier confirms whether non-conformities can be closed or not.

4.3.2. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Facilitate, monitor and ensure a correct Audit process.
- Ensure auditor sends Audit report latest 10 working days after Audit date.
- After all required information from auditor is received, revise the Audit report and documentation to give certification decision within 10 working days.
- Internal and external implementation of new or updated OBP Program documents.
- Registration, investigation, handling and follow-up of complaints regarding the certification process.
- Registration, selection, implementation and follow-up of improvements.

4.3.3. REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Post-secondary school education or comparable level by training or experience in environmental disciplines for at least 4 years.
- Spoken and written knowledge of English.
- Understanding of the recycling industry, preferably plastic recycling industry.
- Knowledge about informal collection of recyclable material.

4.3.4. SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Previous experience of 2 years as certifier in a certification body for other similar certification schemes such as GRS, RSPO, GOTS, or related.
- Have been employed by the applying CB for at least a year.

4.4. OBP PROGRAM MANAGER

4.4.1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The OBP Program manager is responsible for developing the OBP Program manual within the Certification Body, and the responsible person with ZPO for the correct implementation of the OBP Certification Program within the CB, in order to maintain approval as a Certification Body.

4.4.2. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Initial development, maintenance and updates of CBs' OBP Program Manual.
- Specification of internal procedures required to comply with the different aspects of the certification program (when, and how, qualification/training of more auditors and certifiers is required, developing program documents, keeping up with updates and changes of the OBP Certification Program, etc).
- Acting as internal "quality compliance" for the program within the CB (verifying the internal procedures developed are correctly followed, planning and scheduling internal audits for compliance).
- Delegating local offices to schedule audits for new client Organizations and renewal audits.
- Identification and proposal for need of training further auditors and/or certifiers.

4.4.3. REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Post-secondary school education or comparable level by training or experience in environmental disciplines for at least 4 years.
- Spoken and written knowledge of English.
- Knowledge of assessment principles, practices and techniques.
- Knowledge of Certification Body's processes and tools.
- Knowledge of normative documents.

4.4.4. SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The OBP Program manager may comply with one of the following two options,

Option 1:

- Previous experience of minimum 6 months as program manager for another certification program within the CB or,

Option 2:

- Previous experience of minimum of 3 years working for the CB, in issues related to accreditation/compliance/quality, or equivalent.