



Chapter 3– European Recognition Program

Introduction

This chapter of the CAEQ Accreditation Guide covers requirements that a certification body (hereinafter called control body) must comply to be recognized under the European recognition program according to Regulation (EU) 2018/848. It means to be recognized by the European Commission (hereinafter called competent authority) and to be under the oversight of the CAEQ (hereinafter called control authority) for assessment and surveillance for the activities in third countries.

This chapter must always be accompanied by Chapter 1 of the CAEQ Accreditation Guide which is the requirements contained in the *ISO/CEI 17065* standard (Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services).

Scope

Legal bases

Considering the Regulation (EU) 2018/848, Article 45 defines requirements for imports of organic products into the EU from third countries:



(a) the product is a product as referred to in Article 2(1);

(b) one of the following applies:

(i) the product complies with Chapters II, III and IV of this Regulation, and all operators and groups of operators referred to in Article 36, including exporters in the third country concerned, have been subject to controls by control authorities or control bodies recognised in accordance with Article 46, and those authorities or bodies have provided all such operators, groups of operators and exporters with a certificate confirming that they comply with this Regulation;

(ii) in cases where the product comes from a third country which is recognised in accordance with Article 47, that product complies with the conditions laid down in the relevant trade agreement; or

(iii) in cases where the product comes from a third country which is recognised in accordance with Article 48, that product complies with the equivalent production and control rules of that third country and is imported with a certificate of inspection confirming this compliance that was issued by the competent authorities, control authorities or control bodies of that third country;

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Stakeholders

There are 3 main players:

- I. Control body (certification body)
- II. Control authority (CAEQ)
- III. Competent authority (European Commission)

Who can apply?

All control bodies that are legally established in third countries can apply to be recognized under the Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007.



The categories of production are the following:

- (a) unprocessed plants and plant products, including seeds and other plant reproductive material,
- (b) livestock and unprocessed livestock products,
- (c) algae and unprocessed aquaculture products,
- (d) processed agricultural products, including aquaculture products, for use as food,
- (e) feed,
- (f) wine,
- (g) other products listed in Annex I to Regulation EU 848/2018 or not covered by the previous categories.

Accreditation requirements

All Control Bodies which apply to be recognized by the European Commission must comply with the following requirements:

- ✓ ISO/IEC 17065
<https://www.iso.org/standard/46568.html>

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- ✓ Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007
- ✓ Secondary legal acts of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 for three main areas: production and labelling, controls and trade.
- ✓ Official communications related to the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 from the General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/organic-farming/legislation_en

Transitional period



Starting on January 1, 2022, all control bodies with activities in third countries operating certification systems for products destined for EU markets must demonstrate that they implement a control system compliant to Regulation EU 2018/848 and its secondary acts.

Certification bodies currently recognised by the EU Commission for equivalence may retain this recognition until final transition to compliance with Regulation EU 2018/848 at the very latest by December 31, 2024. Recognized control bodies can apply for extension of new categories at any time.

CAEQ continues surveillance of the recognised control bodies operating in third countries as per Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007, (EC) 889/2008 and (EC) 1235/2008 for the purpose of equivalence assessment until their transition to the new Regulation EU 2018/848. Concerning third countries, the regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 is replaced by the regulations (EU) 2021/1697 and 1698 for purpose of compliance and by the regulation (EU) 2021/1342 for purpose of equivalency.

Responsibilities

As part of the accreditation process, CAEQ provides the control bodies with reports relating to the documentary review, on-site/remote assessment (office audit and witness audits), monitoring and other on-going evaluation of its activities (annual report), which are necessary to maintain accreditation and recognition by the European Commission.

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A Policy for the Accreditation of Organic Production Certification - EA-3/12 M: 2022 has been developed by the European Cooperation on Accreditation. This document outlines the EA Policy for application of ISO/IEC 17011 when processing accreditation to control bodies in the field of organic production according to Regulation (EU) 2018/848. This guidance has been adopted by the CAEQ as an internal procedure for assessment. CAEQ strictly follows the requirements of this Policy all along the assessment process (initial, renewal, surveillance) of control bodies.


This Policy is available on:

<https://european-accreditation.org/publications/ea-3-12-m/>

It is the responsibility of control body to apply via the OFIS portal for the recognition to the European Commission. Information on the procedure of the application to be submitted is detailed in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/1698. When the control body is recognized by the Commission, the latter publishes the name of the CB via:

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/ofis_public/r8/ctrl_r8.cfm?targetUrl=home

For more information, you can contact to General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development of European Commission.

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