COABC ACCREDITATION BOARD

Canada Organic Regime Accreditation Manual

Manual for the Surveillance of Certifying Bodies Operating under the Canadian Organic Regime

VERSION 2

COABC Accreditation Board

COR Accreditation Manual

Manual for the Surveillance of Certifying Bodies Operating under the Canadian Organic Regime

VERSION 2

Published by:

Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia

202-3002 32nd Ave. Vernon, BC Canada V1T 2L7
T. 250-260-4429
Fx. 250-260-4436
accreditation@certifiedorganic.bc.ca
www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca

This manual replaces the ones entitled 'British Columbia Certified Organic Program, COABC COR Compliant Accreditation: BOOK 1 Annex 2 Part A' and 'British Columbia Certified Organic Program, COABC COR Compliant Accreditation: BOOK 1 Annex 2 Part B'.

Preamble

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia is the Administrator of the *Organic Certification Regulation* *under* the *Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act of British Columbia*.

The COABC also has a role in the Canada Organic Regime (COR) and is approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) as a Conformity Verification Body to carry out surveillance activities on its behalf. The CFIA is responsible for administering the COR which follows the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act.*

The COABC Accreditation Board is an arms-length agency of the COABC. The COABC meets the requirements set out in ISO/IEC 17011 and has entered into an agreement with the CFIA to provide functions as a Conformity Verification Body (CVB). In this role the COABC Accreditation Board has a responsibility to assess, recommend for accreditation and monitor certification bodies operating under the Canada Organic Regime (COR).

This manual is for Certifying Bodies who are interested in applying for and maintaining accreditation to the COR.

Forward

All COABC manuals and policies are available to all interested parties through the COABC website. The following manuals replace versions published prior to February 2020.

Information in the *COABC Operating Manual* covers:
- An introduction to the COABC and the BC Certified Organic Program
- Scope, structure and main policies

Information in the *COABC Accreditation Board Operating Manual* covers:
- Scope, structure and main policies of the COABC Accreditation Board
- Quality System administered by the COABC Accreditation Board

Information in the *BCCOP Accreditation Manual* covers:
- Application, evaluation, criteria and procedures for BCCOP accreditation
- Information on rights and responsibilities of applicants, accredited CBs and the COABC

Information in the *COR Accreditation Manual* covers:
- Application, evaluation, criteria and procedures for accreditation under the COR
- Information on rights and responsibilities of applicants, accredited CBs and the COABC

Information in the *BCCOP Operator's Manual* covers:
- Guidance with respect to production standards required under the BCCOP
- Standards which are not covered under the scope of the *Canadian Organic Standards*
- Rules for labelling organic product

Table of Contents

Definitions

Accreditation
A process by which a certification body is approved by the CFIA under this program.

Accreditation Board (AB / COABC AB)
An independent body appointed by the COABC to carry out accreditation activities.

Accreditation Board Director (AB Director)
Person responsible for overall management of the Accreditation Board and the COABC Accreditation Program.

Accreditation Certificate
A document issued by the COABC Accreditation Board; used to confirm a certification body's accredited status.

Appeal
A procedure whereby a certified operation or a member of the public requests a review of a certification decision. The appeal may also be filed against a CB or by a CB against the COABC AB.

Auditor
The person appointed by the COABC AB to provide evaluations of the certification programs operated by CBs.

Certificate
The document (issued by the CB) that describes the organic status of an operator. May also be called the 'Certificate of Conformity'. This document identifies at least the name and address of the enterprise certified, effective date of certification, certification number, categories of organic operation, name and standards to which the enterprise is certified.

Certification
The procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a clearly identified process has been methodically assessed such that adequate confidence is provided that specific products conform to specific requirements.

Certification Body (CB)
Means a society incorporated under the Society Act, one of whose functions is to provide a third-party certification process to its members. Within COABC membership this refers to bodies accredited by the COABC according to established criteria, procedures and requirements for administering a certification program in BC.

Certification Program
A system operated by a CB with its own rules and procedures and management for carrying out certification.

Certification Scope
The parameters defining the certification granted including the product and product types certified, and where applicable the acreage and volumes.

Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)
The administrator and delegated authority of the Organic Certification Regulations under the *Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act* (BC). A competent body for accreditation to ISO 17011 compliant standards.

Complaint
An objection to the policies, procedures, or performance of the CB or the COABC AB. A complaint may also be an objection to the performance or activities of a licensee lodged with the certification body by a third party.

Conflict of Interest
The situation where an individual's capacity for objectivity is put at risk by financial or personal interests in conflict with their interest in conducting fair and impartial inspection or certification or accreditation.

Conformity Verification Body (CVB)
An entity that shall meet the requirements set out in ISO/IEC 17011 to be able to enter into an agreement with the CFIA under subsection 14(1) of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act to assess, recommend the accreditation of and monitor the CB.

Declaration of Interest
A declaration of personal and/or commercial interests in the organic industry made by those involved in the certification or accreditation process to enable determination of an individual's objectivity.

Evaluation
Systematic assessment based on all relevant information obtained in order to make a decision. With reference to a certification decision this includes, but is not limited to, inspection.

Internal Audit
A systematic annual review and assessment of the performance of a program which ensures that internal procedures are carried out in compliance to standards, policies and procedures.

International Standards Organization (ISO)
Organization that develops and publishes the international standards by which the COABC complies with (ISO 17011, ISO 17065, ISO 19011).

Management Review
A systematic annual review and assessment of the objectives and overall performance of the certification program and identifies trends and areas for improvement.

Operation
A production or processing business or establishment.

Quality System
Documented procedures that are established, implemented, and periodically audited to assure that production, handling, management, certification, and other systems meet specified requirements and outcomes by following standardised protocols.

Records and documents
In general, documents are uncompleted forms. Records are completed documents, reports, minutes, and other files.

Sanctions
Measures taken against members who have failed to comply with the standards or other requirements of the BC Certified Organic Program and the Canada Organic Regime.

Verification Officer (VO)
A person contracted by the certification body to gather information relating to an operator’s application for certification. A verification officer must be a member in good standing of the International Organic Inspectors Association.

Verification Audit
An operator file inspection at the CB premises. This visit does not require a VO.

Witness Audit
An operator inspection performed under normal certification body procedure in the presence of the COABC evaluator.

1. Introduction to COR

1.1 Overview of the COR

1) All BC grown or processed organic products that are marketed or exported outside of BC require federal certification under the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR).*

   The Canada Organic Regime (COR) is Canada's national regulated system for organic agricultural products. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for monitoring and enforcing federal organic regulations.

   Accreditation under COR, granted by the CFIA, allows CBs to certify operators who wish to market and/or export BC grown or processed organic products outside of BC.

2) The requirements of the COR in this document are inclusive of the procedures and criteria for accreditation in the Canada Organic Regime as outlined in the Canada Organic Regime Operating Manual and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulation (SFCR) Part 13. This document is applicable to all CBs operating in BC that wish to conform to the requirements of the COR. Under the COR, CBs are accredited based on recommendation from the COABC Accreditation Board to the CFIA.

3) The COABC Accreditation Board is an arms-length agency of the COABC. The COABC meets the requirements set out in ISO/IEC 17011 and has entered into an agreement with the CFIA to provide functions as a Conformity Verification Body (CVB). In this role the COABC Accreditation Board has a responsibility to assess, recommend for accreditation and monitor certification bodies operating under the Canada Organic Regime (COR).

1.2 COR Accreditation as granted by the CFIA

1) Accreditation under the Canada Organic Regime (COR) means that the accredited certification body (CB) has met the requirements of the COR program which includes the criteria of ISO/IEC 17065. The CB is accredited to carry out certification activities for the scopes granted by the competent authority – the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The accredited CB is also subject to regular oversight by the COABC as a Conformity Verification Body (CVB) to ensure compliance with the COR requirements.

2) The COABC Accreditation Board monitors, evaluates and makes a recommendation for accreditation under COR to the CFIA. The accreditation is valid for five years, and in order to have its accreditation renewed once this period has ended, the CB must reapply and again be granted accreditation by the CFIA, via the COABC Accreditation Board.

1.3 BCCOP Equivalent Scheme

1) The BCCOP Equivalent scheme operates under the authority of the COABC and is not affiliated with accreditation under COR granted by the CFIA. This scheme was developed to permit the use of the BCCOP Checkmark outside of the province. The BCCOP Equivalent scheme functions in tandem with the COR accreditation program. CBs applying for COR accreditation through the COABC will be evaluated for accreditation to the BCCOP Equivalent scheme concurrently if applicable.

2) The procedures and criteria relevant to the BCCOP Equivalent scheme are described in this manual unless specific to the BC Certified Organic Program (see current version of BCCOP Accreditation manual). The BCCOP Checkmark cannot be permitted for use by COR certified operations that do not comply with the BCCOP standard.

Part A. Accreditation Procedures

1) The accreditation procedures described in this section are applicable to all certification bodies to obtain accreditation to COR from CFIA. In addition, these procedures apply to accredited COR CBs that wish to be accredited to the BCCOP Equivalent scheme (See BCCOP Accreditation Manual).

   - **See Additional Policy:**
     AB-PRO-700C COR & BCCOP Equivalent Accreditation Process Flowchart

1. Application and Reassessment for Accreditation

1.1. Application

1) A CB that applies to the COR Accreditation Program through the COABC by submitting the duly completed application form together with the registration fee (below). The certification body must forward all the required documentation as stipulated in the COR Application to the Director of the Accreditation Board. At a minimum, the documents included in the applications shall include the documents listed in the COR Manual in Section B11

2) A CB requesting accreditation must submit a completed Application Form, accompanied by a non-refundable initial application fee of $2500. Applications forms are available from the COABC office.

3) The COABC shall acknowledge receipt of the application within 10 working days and shall notify the CFIA about the application.

4) Accreditation of a CB does not imply accreditation for all programmes operated by the CB if they fall outside the scope of the BC Certified Organic Program or the Canada Organic Regime. Therefore CBs must be asked to clearly define the areas of activity to be included in the accreditation scope and to provide information on any organic certification activities that do not fall within the scope of the BC Certified Organic Program or the Canada Organic Regime. Information must also be provided regarding region of operation.

5) Before the initial assessment, a preliminary visit may be conducted with the agreement of the applicant CB. The visit may result in the identification of deficiencies in the quality management system of the applicant CB or its competencies. The COABC shall at no time during the visit offer or provide consultancy services.

1.2. Fees for Service

1) CBs requiring COR Accreditation may be charged an extra fee for this service. This fee will be used to cover extra costs associated with the audit process. The COABC will determine the fee.

2) COABC Accreditation Board will provide auditing services in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible with consideration to the needs of the applicant, the capabilities and needs of the Program, and sound management practices.

3) Auditor assignments will also include considerations such as ensuring uniformity of service, specialised training, personnel staffing issues, and specific program needs. It will be the responsibility of the COABC Accreditation Board to staff audits in the most cost-effective manner possible while ensuring uniform, high-quality service.

2. Program Analysis

2.1. Resource Review

1) The Director shall review the Accreditation Board's ability to carry out the assessment of the applicant certification body, in terms of the board's own policy, the scope of accreditation requested, its competence, the availability of evaluators(auditors) to conduct the assessment given the location and the number of days required for the assessment and operator visits and the time frame for the evaluation and decision making.

2) The review shall also include the ability of the accreditation board to carry out the initial assessment in a timely manner.

2.2. Review of File

1) The application and accompanying documents will be reviewed to determine if the certification program of the CB complies with the procedures and standards established by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

2) All applicants for COR accreditation will be audited against the requirements of the COR, which includes the requirements of ISO 17065, Part 13 of the SFCR, and any additional requirements of the COR Operating Manual and the CFIA memos and directives.

2.2.1. Preliminary review of application

1) Upon receipt of the application, the Director shall determine whether the documentation submitted is sufficiently complete to proceed to the analysis stage. If this documentation is deemed inadequate, the Director shall so inform the applying certification body, specifying the missing documents.

2.2.2. Application Analysis

1) The Director, or an evaluator assigned by the Director, shall review all documentation and prepare a document review report which indicates any non-conformities (NCs) and opportunities for improvement (OFIs) with the requirements and requests for further information, if necessary. The report will be submitted to the Accreditation Board who shall determine whether the accreditation program criteria have been met. The Accreditation Board, shall establish, if applicable, points of non-conformity and write its recommendations within a reasonable period. The Accreditation Board may determine:

   a) Approval to proceed to the on-site evaluation without conditions;

   b) Approval to proceed to the on-site evaluation with conditions for amending the program to be fulfilled by the time of the visit;

   c) Refusal to continue the process of accreditation for major non-compliance revealing that the program is unable to monitor organic integrity.

2) At any point in the application or initial assessment process, if there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour, the COABC AB shall reject the application or terminate the assessment process.

2.2.3. Intention to Proceed with Accreditation Analysis (applies to initial application only)

1) Upon completion of the document file review, the Director shall inform the CB in writing of the Accreditation Board's intention to proceed with the analysis and the assessment. A copy of this letter will be sent to the CFIA.

2.2.4. Corrective Measures and Conditions

1) In the case of a refusal, the Accreditation Board shall inform the CB as to the necessary corrective measures so that it may reapply for accreditation.

3. Assessment Process for COR Accreditation

3.1. Resource Review

3.1.1. Audit Scheduling

1) The on-site assessment occurs after the document review is satisfactorily completed and when the certification program has been running long enough that a thorough examination is practical. The initial on-site audit assessment shall take place within 1 year from the document review. The CB agrees to submit its program to a meticulous on-site evaluation, of its activities and monitoring procedures. The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure the CB manages the program in the manner described by its own documentation.

3.1.2. Assessment Team

1) The AB Director shall appoint an assessment team consisting of a lead auditor and, where required, a suitable number of assessors and/or experts for each specific scope. When selecting the assessment team, the AB Director shall ensure that the expertise brought to each assignment is appropriate. In particular, the team as a whole:

    a) Shall have appropriate knowledge of the specific scope for which accreditation is sought;

    b) Shall have understanding sufficient to make a reliable assessment of the competence of the CB to operate within its scope of accreditation.

2) The Director shall ensure that team members act in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner. In particular:

    a) Assessment team members shall not have provided consultancy to the CB which might compromise the accreditation process and decision;

    b) In accordance with the provisions of 6.2.2, of ISO/IEC 17011 the assessment team members shall inform the Director, prior to the assessment, about any existing, former or envisaged conflict, link or competitive position between themselves or their organization and the CB to be assessed.

3) The AB Director shall inform the CB through the Notice of Audit of the names of the members of the assessment team and the organization they belong to, sufficiently in advance (no less than 30 days prior to the audit) to allow the CB to object to the appointment of any particular auditor or expert. In light of the response by the CB, the Director will decide to appoint another auditor or will retain the one initially selected.

4) The Director shall clearly define the assignment given to the assessment team and shall ensure the assessment team is provided with the appropriate criteria documents, previous assessment records, and the relevant documents and records of the certification body. The auditor shall seek prior clarification on any aspect of the audit.

3.2. Evaluation Procedures

3.2.1. Notification to CB

1) The Director shall ensure that the CB receives the information, documentation, and instructions necessary for the evaluation visit, witness audits and verification audits as well as estimated travel and lodging expenses that could be incurred during that visit.
2) The CB must provide detailed directions for reaching all sites included in the audit in advance of the visit.
3) Preferable at least 6 weeks before the planned visit all site visit logistics are confirmed including:

    a) Dates for audit – a minimum 4 days is required for an initial assessment or reassessment and the CB administrator must be available for the duration;

    b) Number of files to be reviewed;

    c) Number of operator visits and locations;

    d) Location and expected duration of witness audit. The CB is to provide a list of operators due for inspection in that time period and the choice is made by the AB Director & and auditor not by the CB;

4) A detailed itinerary is available to the CB at least 3 weeks in advance of the audit.

3.2.2. Visit to CB Office

1) During their visits to each selected office, auditors must work in an objective manner as they gather any evidence that would allow them to evaluate the certification body's ability to meet requirements related to accreditation.

2) The auditors shall interview those responsible for the certification program (employees, contractors, volunteers, managers, etc.). The auditors shall ensure in an opening meeting that the purpose of the assessment and the accreditation criteria are clearly defined, and the assessment schedule as well as the scope for the assessment, are confirmed. They must verify that the Quality Manual is being implemented and inspect and verify all points specifically identified by the Accreditation Board in its analysis report. The auditors shall conduct a thorough examination of certification records.

3) In the event of an initial accreditation application, the auditor will carry out an in-depth verification of the certification files of active operators in the COR program according to Table 3 provided in Part B of the COR Manual.

4) The auditor shall randomly select the files to be included in the sample as per the COR Manual Section B 2.2.10, with consideration given to the various categories of operations being carried out by the operations registered with the certifying body.

5) The examination of these records is carried out to determine whether:

    a) Documentation files are complete (i.e. that questionnaires, forms, production specifications, copies of certificates, decision sheets and other correspondence are present and up to date);

    b) Inspection reports are present and include enough information to make informed decisions;

    c) Certification decisions are consistent with the information in the inspection report;

    d) All instances of non-compliance shall be noted in the auditor’s report.

6) The assessment team shall verify the competence of the personnel involved with certification activities by assessing the personnel and training files of the CB personnel, to provide assurance of

the competence of the CB across the scope of accreditation and shall conduct interviews with some of them.

7) In addition, the assessment team shall visit a production premises to conduct a witness audit, where the auditor will observe a routine inspection to assess the performance of the Verification Officer and the implementation of the CB's inspection procedures.

8) The Auditor's visit to the CB office shall include a closing meeting between the auditor and the certification body management. The auditor will provide a written indication of the conformity of the CB (to the COR accreditation requirements), while the CB will have an opportunity to query the findings and their basis. The team's observations on areas for possible improvement may also be presented to the CB. However, consultancy shall not be provided.

3.3. Evaluation Report

1) Once the evaluation visit has been completed, the auditor shall write the evaluation report. This evaluation report must include, among others:

   a) The date of the audit and name of the auditor;

   b) A brief history of the certification program;

   c) An evaluation of the certification program's independence from other activities conducted by the applying body;

   d) A detailed report on the examination of documentation – the numbers and types of files examined, how they were selected, how they compare to the entire program (% of total operations, types of operations, etc.) and what strengths and weaknesses were found.

   e) The findings of the witness audit;

   f) Any useful comparisons between this and previous evaluation visits;

   g) A summary report on the evaluation visit, including the people met, the operations visited, and the observations noted. All instances of non-compliance identified must be included in the report;

   h) A summary of the auditor's main conclusions and recommendations.

2) The auditor must submit a draft report to the COABC, which will be provided to the CB. The CB is thus invited to make comments on the reports content and verify its accuracy. If any comments are made, the auditor should include the comments and corrections in the report.

3) When completed, the final report shall be submitted to the COABC Accreditation Board.

4) The accreditation board shall remain responsible for the content of the evaluation report, including nonconformities, even if the lead evaluator is not a permanent staff member of the accreditation board.

3.3.1. Accreditation Board Review & Analysis

1) Upon receipt of the evaluation report, the Accreditation Board shall prior to making a recommendation, be satisfied that the information provided in the evaluation report is adequate to decide that the requirements for accreditation have been fulfilled.

2) The Accreditation Board shall review the information in order to point out any instances of non-compliance with the program's accreditation criteria and any divergence between the certification program's documentation and its current application.

3) The Accreditation Board will allow the applicant a time period of 30 working days from receiving the COABC report to submit the specific actions taken or planned to be taken in order to resolve the identified NCs. The AB may also request further information or conduct additional assessment activities before making a final decision.

4) In light of this analysis of the information in the evaluation report and of the corrective actions taken by the CB to address any nonconformities identified, the Accreditation Board shall make the decision on whether to recommend to the CFIA to grant or extend accreditation. The decision should be made in a timely manner.

3.4. Accreditation Decision & Conditions

3.4.1. Application Status

1) The COABC Accreditation Board shall notify the applicant of their organization's accreditation recommendation status as being:

   a) Recommend Accreditation – Recommend the accreditation status in cases where the applying CB has established monitoring procedures leading to a certification program that conforms to accreditation criteria for the COR;

   b) Not to Recommend Accreditation- No recommendation for accreditation will be forwarded to CFIA where major non-compliance shows the inability of the program to control the integrity of product characteristics. In the case of a refusal, the Accreditation Board shall inform the CB as to the necessary corrective measures so that it may reapply for the accreditation program.

2) The COABC Accreditation Board shall notify the applicant of their organization's accreditation status as being:

   Evidence of effective implementation of actions taken shall be provided—the Accreditation Board shall evaluate whether the responses and action taken by the applicant to resolve any non-conformity appear sufficient and effective and shall decide whether a follow-up assessment is required to verify effective implementation of corrective actions.

3) In cases where evaluation visits deal with a certification program that had been previously accredited by the CFIA, the Accreditation Board shall decide, in accordance with analysis of results of the evaluation report whether to:

   a) Recommend maintaining accreditation status;

   b) Impose conditions that prescribe a timeframe for amendments to the certification program;

   c) Recommend to the CFIA withdrawal of the accreditation status.

3.4.2. Written Report

1) The applying CB shall be advised in writing of any decision made by the Accreditation Board.

3.4.3. Recommendation to the CFIA

1) The Accreditation Board shall, without undue delay, recommend to the CFIA the status of the applicant body:

   a) To grant accreditation or renew accreditation, when all identified non-conformities have been adequately addressed by the applicant;

b) Recommendation of denial of accreditation.

2) The Accreditation Board shall send the recommendation to the CFIA in writing and provide evidence for the decision. The Accreditation Board will provide a copy of the evaluation report.

3.4.4. Appeals of COABC Recommendation Decision of a CB

1) If the Accreditation Board refuses to recommend the accreditation of an applicant, it will send a notice to the CB stating the reason for the decision and advising the applicant of their right to appeal the recommendation decision within 30 working days as per the COABC Appeals policy.

- **See Additional Policy & Procedure:**
  AB-POL-801 Appeals
  AB-PRO-801 Appeals

3.4.5. Appeals of CFIA Accreditation Decision of a CB

1) If accreditation is refused by the CFIA, the CB has the right to appeal by requesting that the CFIA review the accreditation decision. The appeal against the decision shall be made within 30 working days of notification of that decision pursuant of the SFCR. See also the COR Manual Appendix F.

2) The appeal must be received in writing along with all the necessary supporting documents.

3) The CB shall include the COABC in all communication between the CB and the CFIA regarding the appeal.

4) The CFIA shall give the final decision on the appeal.

3.5. Accreditation Completion

3.5.1. Surveillance Agreement

1) The CFIA will review the COABC's recommendation and shall make the decision on whether to grant accreditation based on the submitted information.

2) The CFIA will inform the COABC of the accreditation decision and issue an accreditation letter.

3) The COABC Accreditation Board shall send the CB a surveillance agreement detailing the COABC's role in the surveillance of COR accreditation activities that binds the latter to complying with the conditions for accreditation and to the timeframe submitted.

4) The surveillance agreement shall ensure (among other things) that accredited CBs automatically and unconditionally accept the certification decisions made by any other accredited certifier under the COR.

5) The surveillance agreement remains valid for up to 5 years. Within five years of the initial decision a reassessment shall take place and a new accreditation decision made, followed by the signing of a new surveillance agreement.

6) The CB shall apply for reassessment in a timely manner to allow the COABC to complete all assessment activities before the accreditation expires.

3.5.2. Monitoring and Surveillance

1) The Accreditation Board is responsible for on-going monitoring of accredited CBs in compliance with the COR requirements including Part 13 of SFCR, ISO 17065, the COR Operating Manual and the CFIA directives and memos. The annual report is a requirement of accredited CBs as part of the surveillance requirements of the COABC AB as a CVB.

3.5.3. Annual Report Requirements

1) Accredited CBs shall submit an Annual Report to the COABC Accreditation Board.

2) Information included in the annual report submitted to the COABC Accreditation Board shall include:

   a) A complete list of operations certified during the period covered by the annual report with the relevant certification program identified;

   b) A complete list of operations certified to the terms of the US/Canada import/export equivalence arrangement including name, address and phone number of the certified entity, the type of the operation certified;

   c) Changes in staff or certification committee assignments;

   d) Details by operator category, of the number of certificates newly issued, renewed, suspended and withdrawn under each certification program (COR, BCCO Low Risk- Regional Program);

   e) A list of any changes in standards, procedures, forms and/or internal governing regulations adopted by the body during the period covered;

   f) A description of all appeals filed relative to certification decisions;

   g) A copy of the CBs complaints register, i.e. complaints from operators and general public, including all reported misuse of the COR Logo received by the CB;

   h) A report (with supporting documents) on measures adopted to meet accreditation conditions.

   i) Findings from the internal audit and management review output (in years not visiting);

   j) Brief financial report, including details of application, inspection and certification fees set during the period covered;

   k) A list of the names of the directors of the Society;

   l) The name of the director appointed to COABC as well as an alternate representative;

   m) COABC membership fees in the amounts determined by the membership of the COABC.

3) Authorized personnel must sign the certification body's annual report.

4) The annual report must be submitted to the Director during the first quarter of every year.

3.5.4. Continuation of Accreditation

1) Upon receipt of the annual report and/or surveillance report, the Director shall draw up a report for the accreditation board determining the level of compliance with accreditation conditions, steps taken by the certification program to comply as well as all actions that might change accreditation status.

2) Upon receipt of a surveillance report and/or annual report, the Accreditation Board shall inform the CB of the results by issuing a letter indicating that the CB continues to maintain its compliance with the COR. A copy of this letter will be sent to the CFIA.

3) The AB may conduct additional assessments as a result of complaints or significant changes that have affected the CB operations at the expense of the CB, at any time during the accreditation period, or upon its own initiative.

3.5.5. Frequency of On-Site Surveillance Visits

1) The frequency and scheduling of evaluation visits are as per the COR requirements and Part 13 of the SFCR, ISO 17065, COR Operating Manual, and the CFIA directives and memos. Accredited CBs must undergo a full evaluation visit initially, then at least once every five years.

2) After initial accreditation an on-site surveillance must take place within twelve months of the initial accreditation date.

3) In the years between full evaluation visits, surveillance visits may take place at the discretion of the Accreditation Board but shall be no later than two years following the date of the most recent on-site visit. These are generally more limited in scope, or as necessary to verify that corrective actions have been taken as required.

4) All premises from which one of more key activities is performed by a CB shall be assessed by the COABC Accreditation Board, within 12 months from the initial accreditation date and no later than two years following the dates of the most subsequent surveillance and reassessment visits.

5) The COABC Accreditation Board may conduct additional assessments as a result of complaints, concerns, significant changes that have affected the CBs operations, or at its own discretion.

6) Prior to conducting an on-site surveillance audit the COABC shall request from the CB updated information, on a date specified by COABC and review it. Material provided for a follow-up or surveillance visit may be limited to documents relevant to the scope of the audit. At a minimum, the information from the CB shall include the following:

   a) Changes in the CB information;

   b) Major changes to the CB policies, procedures and protocols;

   c) Information on complaints and appeals;

   d) The most recent internal audit report'

   e) The most recent management review report;

   f) All reported misuses of the Canada organic logo received by the CB;

   g) All changes in the CB certification personnel that are critical to the operation of its certification activities;

   h) Complete list of certified operations in the COR including name, address and phone number of the certified operation, the type of the operation certified (crops, livestock, processing, wild crop). If provided via a directory on the internet, it is acceptable to provide the URL to the directory;

   i) Complete list of operations certified to the terms of Canada's organic equivalence arrangements including name, address and phone number of the certified operation, the scope of certification and their locations. If provided through a directory on the internet, it is acceptable to provide the URL to the directory.

7) Over the length of the accreditation cycle, for each surveillance visit, the evaluator will examine a number of files, proportional to the number of operators registered with the certifying body concerned and based on the table provided in Part B of the COR Manual.

8) Upon identification of non-conformities or opportunities for improvement, the COABC AB will inform the CB and request corrective actions. Non-conformities must be addressed in order for compliance with COR to be maintained (See COR Accreditation Manual Part A, section 3.5.9).

9) Upon completion of surveillance activities, COABC will inform the CB that compliance with COR is maintained. A copy of this letter will be sent to CFIA.

3.5.6. Witness & Verification Audits

1) Over the length of the accreditation cycle witness audits shall be conducted according to the tables provided in Part B of the COR Manual.

2) Over the length of the accreditation cycle verification audits shall be conducted. The number per cycle is based on the table provided in Part B of the COR Manual.

3) The COABC Accreditation Director, shall choose the operators where the verification and witness audits shall be conducted. The Director may consult the auditor in this selection. In selecting the operator for witness audits, the CB schedule of on-site inspections will be taken into consideration.

4) The purpose of the verification audit visit is not to re-inspect the operator for the purposes of a certification decision, but rather to verify the application of program monitoring procedures and the certification process relative to the management of this specific case. It is also to assess the performance of the verification officer.

5) The auditor shall verify, among other things:

   a) The operator has on hand a copy of the CBs requirements, as well as any requests for corrective measures submitted to the operator by the CB;

   b) That the inspection report adequately describes the production system;

   c) That the inspection was able to adequately identify areas of non-compliance regarding prescribed standards;

   d) There should be comments on the VO's familiarity with the standard and their investigative ability and whether the process was in line with the policies and procedures of the CB;

   e) The CB must provide the auditor with copies of the procedures, the operator application, the most recent certification decision documents and a farm map or plan of the facility as well as any instruction to the VO;

   f) The auditor and any other observer to the process present should remain silent during the course of inspection. If the auditor has questions for the VO, they should be done in private after the audit is completed.

3.5.7. Remote Audit Process

1) A full remote audit may be conducted in the following possible situations:

   a) The CB has the capacity and technical resources (good internet connection) to be assessed remotely and secure access to the CB intranet for reviewing documentation can be granted;

   b) The CB has a good certification system in the previous 3 years based on information provided in Annual Reports such as complaints, appeals, number of operators etc.;

   c) The climatic or socio-economic conditions are unfavourable and/or make the audit impossible (e.g. Safety reasons: pandemics, country at war, conflict or instability, extreme weather condition);

d) Low number of clients for its accreditation scope;

e) This is not an initial audit.

2) There shall be no more than 2 consecutive remote audits.
3) All requests for documentation MUST be available during the audit appointment. All personnel that may be requested for interviews will be available as specified.
4) The COABC will determine the format of the remote audit. I.e. whether the CB must be online or whether the auditor works alone in the audit plan.

3.5.8. Reporting

1) The auditor shall record the findings from the on-site visit, the witness audits and the results from verification audits. The Accreditation Board shall inform the CB of the results from the surveillance activities by issuing a letter indicating that the CB continues to maintain its compliance with the COR. The Accreditation Board shall send a copy of this letter to the CFIA.

3.5.9. Reassessment

1) Reassessment takes place every five years following the requirements of the initial assessment outlined in this manual in Sections 1 to 3.5

3.5.10. Corrective Action & Non-Compliance

1) If corrective actions are required as a result of findings during audits or other surveillance activities, the CB and COABC AB shall follow the process as outlined in Appendix E of the COR Operating Manual (current version).

2) Corrective action response must be received by the COABC AB within 30 working days following receipt of decision from the COABC AB. Failure to comply shall result in proceeding with the process that would recommend suspension or cancellation of accreditation to the CFIA. (see Part A, sections 3.5.10-3.5.11 of this manual).

- **See Additional Procedure:**
  AB-PRO-703C COR CB Management of Non-Conformities & Findings

3.5.11. Recommendation for Grounds for Suspension and Suspension of Accreditation

1) In severe cases of non-conformity, the Accreditation Board may recommend to the CFIA suspension of accreditation, in accordance with the steps outlined in Part 13 of the SFCR and B.7 of the COR Operating Manual. Such action may be triggered by audit findings, repeated failure to fulfil conditions, or findings resulting from complaints.

2) The AB can recommend to the CFIA grounds for suspension of the CB if:

a) The CB does not have any operators after two consecutive surveillance assessments in an Accreditation cycle

b) The CB has failed to effectively implement the corrective actions or where the surveillance activity reveals that the CB has failed to effectively implement the corrective actions related to conditions that have previously been considered fulfilled.

c) The CB is issued NCs from Compliance Implementation Monitoring (CIM).

3) The Accreditation Board must first issue a warning by sending a report for grounds for suspension with a time frame for a response by the CB and ensure it has been received. The report shall also be sent to the CFIA. The report shall include:

   a) A full explanation of reasons for the proposed recommendation and necessary action to prevent it;

   b) An invitation to the CB to explain why the suspension should not be imposed.

4) The warning period from receipt of the report shall allow 15 working days for the CB to take corrective action. The AB may grant one extension period upon request from the CB supported by justification. The length of the extension period will be at discretion of the AB, and shall not be longer than 60 working days.

5) During the period of warning the suspension is not in force and is not made public.

6) At the end of the period, the recommendation for suspension can be implemented or lifted. In the case that the AB is satisfied that the CB has resolved the issues, the AB shall notify the CFIA and recommend continuation of accreditation. In the case that the AB is not satisfied that the CB has resolved the issues, or that the CB did not submit corrective actions within the given timeframe, the AB shall notify the CFIA and recommend suspension.

7) If the CFIA decision is to issue suspension, the CB shall receive written notice of suspension. The CB cannot provide certification under the Canada Organic Regime as long as the suspension is in effect. The CB must submit the following to the AB upon receipt of suspension notice:

   a) List of operators within 15 working days;

   b) Corrective actions within 30 working days.

8) If the AB is satisfied with the corrective actions received from the CB, the AB shall recommend lifting the suspension to the CFIA. If the AB is not satisfied with the corrective actions received from the CB, or the CB did not submit within the given timeframe, the AB shall proceed as detailed in Part A, 3.5.11 of this manual.

3.5.12. Recommendation for Withdrawal of Accreditation

1) For serious non-conformities and failure to take appropriate corrective actions during the warning and suspension period, the COABC Accreditation Board shall recommend to the CFIA cancellation of COR accreditation. See also COR Accreditation Manual Part A, section 3.7.3.

2) The CFIA shall issue a notice to the CB of grounds for cancellation and will allow the CB 20 working days for opportunity to be heard.

3) Withdrawal of accreditation will result in cancellation and recall of the CFIA accreditation letter and accreditation agreements. The CB must surrender the CFIA accreditation letter and COR and BCCOP Equivalent accreditation agreements or file a written appeal within 10 working days from receipt of the COABC AB recommendation decision.

4) A CB, which has had its accreditation withdrawn by the CFIA, must recall all certificates referencing the COR & BCCOP Equivalent programs.

3.6. Amendments to Certification Body Program

3.6.1. Annual Report Requirements

1) Any changes to the certification program of an accredited CB must be submitted in writing to the COABC Accreditation Board for review at least 60 days before the proposed effective date of the changes. Requests for amendments must include a clear description of the proposed changes. Substantive changes may require additional document and onsite compliance audits as determined by the COABC Accreditation Board of Directors.

3.6.2. Extension or Reduction of Accreditation Scope

1) The accreditation board shall, in response to an application for an extension or reduction of scope, including the exclusion of a type of certification (e.g. group certification) of an accreditation already granted, undertake the necessary activities to determine whether or not the extension or reduction of scope may be granted. The CB must state the objectives and the reasons associated with this request.

2) When applying for an extension of its scope of accreditation, the CB must also supply documents relative to the policies, procedures and monitoring measures intended to be implemented as to support this extension.

3) Extensions or reductions of accreditation scope under COR will be recommended to the CFIA by the COABC without undue delay.

4) At any time during the accreditation cycle the CB may request from the COABC AB to extend the scope of accreditation.

5) CBs that request to add the aquaculture standard to their scope and are currently are in good standing with their COR accreditation shall undergo the process as outlined in the COR Manual B 3.18.2.

The CB must be in good standing to request an addition to geographical scope or addition of an accreditation category. There must be no outstanding non-compliances.
The CB can request an application for additions to scope or category from the COABC.

3.6.3. Application

1) A CB can apply for an extension of scope or addition of accreditation category of the COR Accreditation Program through the COABC by submitting the duly completed application form together with the review fee. The certification body must forward all the required documentation. At a minimum, the documents should include all policies, procedures and forms that support the extension of scope/category.

2) A CB requesting the extension must submit a completed Application Form, accompanied by a non-refundable initial application fee of $1000. Applications forms are available upon request from the COABC office.

3) The COABC shall acknowledge receipt of the application within 10 working days and shall notify the CFIA about the application.

3.6.3.1 Preliminary review of Application

1) Upon receipt of the application, the Director shall determine whether the documentation submitted is sufficiently complete to proceed to the analysis stage. If this documentation is deemed inadequate, the Director shall so inform the applying certification body, specifying the missing documents.

3.6.4. Review of File

3.6.4.1 Application Analysis

1) The Director, or an evaluator assigned by the Director, shall review all documentation and prepare a document review report which indicates any non-conformities (NCs) and opportunities for improvement (OFIs) with the requirements and requests for further information, if necessary. The report will be submitted to the Accreditation Board who shall determine whether the accreditation program criteria have been met for the extension of scope/category applied for. In addition, the application must confirm availability and the training of the verification officers and CB staff involved in the extension processes having the required expertise. The Accreditation Board, shall establish, if applicable, points of non-conformity and write its recommendations within a reasonable period.
2) The AB will determine whether to recommend the scope/category extension to the CFIA or to deny the scope/category extension for major non-compliances revealing that the CB's program cannot support the extension.
3) Upon receiving a recommendation from the AB to grant the extension, the CFIA will make the final decision to grant the scope extension and will amend the accreditation letter accordingly.
4) During the next planned CB office audit, verification of how the new scope/category is managed by the CB will be assessed. This may include interviewing key personnel and a review of the first operator's file.
5) At any point in the application, if there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour, the COABC AB shall reject the application or terminate the assessment process.
6) In the case of a refusal, the Accreditation Board shall inform the CB as to the necessary corrective measures so that it may reapply for accreditation.

3.7. Disciplinary Measures

3.7.1. Complaints

1) If an investigation, because of a complaint or other information results in a decision to apply disciplinary measures to an accredited body, the Accreditation Board may, at its discretion, impose the following disciplinary measures:

    a) Issue a warning letter;

    b) Impose new conditions and demand specific corrective measures;

    c) Require that a monitoring procedure be carried out within the next 12 months;

    d) Recommend to CFIA that COR accreditation be suspended and the associated consequences without undue delay;

    e) Impose any other disciplinary measure.

3.7.2. Legal Action & Penalties

1) Whenever a major misdemeanour or fraud occurs, the Director shall supply the COABC Board of Directors with any pertinent information or documentation. Following a study of the case, the COABC Board of Directors shall make recommendations to the COABC Accreditation Board in order carry out effective proceedings.

2) Where there is evidence of fraudulent behavior, or the CB intentionally provides false information or conceals information, the AB shall initiate its process for withdrawal of accreditation.

3.7.3. Withdrawal of Accreditation

1) The COABC Accreditation Board may recommend accreditation be withdrawn to CFIA of a CB for any of the following reasons:

   a) Failure to maintain system in compliance with referenced standards and approved procedures;

   b) Failure of suspended CBs to meet conditions for reinstatement within required timeframes.

2) CBs that have had their accreditation suspended or withdrawn will have their names and program information removed from all official lists of accredited programs.

4. Accredited Program Profile & Public Information

4.1. Public Profile

1) Once an accreditation status has been established, the Board shall draw up a descriptive profile of the accredited certification body.

2) In order to maintain adequate transparency, the Board shall ensure that information be included in its databank and be available for public consultation. For each certified operation, these elements include the following:

   a) Name and address of manager, as well as facilities (if multiple);

   b) Scope(s) of certification (e.g. product certification, labelling and packaging certification or attestation of compliance);

   c) Generic list of certified products for each operation & house brand names;

   d) Name of the certifier;

   e) Date of entry within certification program;

   f) Date of first certification;

   g) Certification status.

4.1.1. Records on Accredited CBs

1) The accreditation board shall maintain records on CBs to demonstrate that requirements for accreditation, including competence, have been effectively fulfilled.

2) The accreditation board shall keep the records on CBs secure in accordance with its procedures for records and document control.

3) Records on CBs shall include:

a) Clearly defined scope of accreditation;

b) Relevant correspondence;

c) Assessment records and reports;

d) Records of committee deliberations, if applicable, and accreditation decisions;

e) Copies of the CB's quality manual and relevant associated documents,

f) Copies of accreditation certificates;

g) A contract to fulfil the requirements for accreditation and other obligations of the CB.

4) The COABC Accreditation Board shall provide annually to the CFIA an updated list of all accredited CBs including information concerning their corporate entity, name and business addresses and a list of the CB's countries of operation.

4.1.2. Public Disclosure

1) Conformity assessment and accreditation services are designed to provide confidence in the ability of the CB to provide credible product certification services. All quality manuals submitted by applicants and maintained by the COABC Accreditation Board secretary are available for public inspection and are subject to complete disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Any portion of the program documentation that the applicant considers proprietary must be identified to the COABC Accreditation Board at the time the information is submitted along with written justification why said documents should not be released to or reviewed by the public. If, upon review of the information, the Board agrees that the identified information is indeed proprietary and that protecting the information from public review will not hinder public confidence in the system, the Director will make appropriate provisions to protect the information from disclosure to the extent possible under existing Federal/Provincial laws.

5. Additional Requirements

5.1. Requirements when a CB changes CVB under COR

1) See Part B 12 of COR operating manual.

5.2. Requirements for Voluntary Withdrawal of CFIA Accredited CBs under COR

1) See Part B 13 of COR Operating Manual

5.3. Requirements when a CB goes out of business

1) See Part B 14 of COR Operating Manual

Part B. Accreditation Criteria

Note: this section is a compilation of the requirements of ISO 17065 and the Canada Organic Regime Operating Manual.

1. Scope

1.1. General Requirements

1) This section specifies general requirements that a third-party organic certification program shall meet if it is to be accredited under the COR Accreditation Program. These requirements aim to give confidence to all interested parties.

2) The term “certification body” or “CB” is used to cover any body managing a product certification system. In organic agri-food production, the term certification system is understood to include certification of the compliance to production standards relative to organic production systems.

3) In 1SO 17065 the word “product” can be read as “processes” and “services” but readers should be aware that under the COR it is the actual product that is certified not the process; the word “standard” is used to include other normative documents such as specifications or technical regulations.

1.1.1 Fees and Levies

1) Membership fees and certification fees shall be levied in accordance with a schedule described in the certification body’s Certification Manual.

1.1.2 Certification Scope and the Chain of Custody

1) The CB shall not allow the use of its certification mark or issue certificate for any product unless it is assured of the chain of custody of the product.

2) Any entity in the chain of custody that has produced or prepared an organic product shall have been certified. Contracted production shall have been inspected. Where steps in the production chain have been certified by other CBs, all previously certified products or ingredients shall have been certified under the COR requirements by a CB recognized by the COR.

3) CBs shall conduct a risk assessment to determine the necessity for, or frequency of, inspection of all storage facilities in order to protect organic integrity. Where this risk assessment reveals a need for inspection to protect organic integrity, inspection shall be done.

4) The CB shall require that the party owning the product at the point of transport shall be responsible for maintaining the organic integrity in the transport process, unless transport operations are certified in their own capacity.

1.2. References

1) Current version of Canada Organic Regime Operating Manual

2) Safe Food for Canadians Regulation (SFCR) Part 13 (under the authority of the Safe Food for Canadians Act)

3) ISO/IEC International Standard 17065 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

1.3. Definitions

1) For the purposes of these criteria, the relevant definitions given in COABC Accreditation Operating Manual apply, together with the following definitions:

2) Supplier: The party that is responsible for ensuring that products meet and, if applicable, continue to meet, the requirements on which the certification is based.

   a) Every supplier claiming that the products it markets meet the requirements covering designation “Canada Organic” and “Biologique Canada”. In this document, the terms “supplier” or “operator” or “client” are used interchangeably and refer to a person or company;

   b) Suppliers of certified products (operators) and approved service providers can be distinguished as follows: certified product suppliers have full control over and are responsible for the production or manufacturing process, supplying of the raw materials and the sale of certified products. Service providers only carry out a particular activity (packaging, transportation, slaughtering, etc.) within the production or manufacturing chain, according to specifications provided by the supplier (operator), who maintains legal ownership over the product throughout the entire process.

3) Certification requirement includes requirements imposed on the supplier by the CB or the certification scheme e.g. completing the agreement, paying fees, providing information and access.

4) Product requirement is a requirement specified in CAN/CGSB 32-310/311/312 or regulations relating directly to a product.

2. Certification Bodies

2.1. General Provisions

2.1.1 Legal Entity

1) The CB shall be a legal entity such that the legal entity can be held responsible for all its certification activities. (Note that COABC is only authorized to provide accreditation services to not for profit societies registered in British Columbia)

2.1.2 Access to Program (Ref: ISO 4.4)

1) The policies and procedures under which the CB operates shall be non-discriminatory and shall be administered in a non-discriminatory manner. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicants, other than as provided for in the Accreditation criteria of the organic program. Speeding up or delaying the processing of some applications are considered hidden discrimination.

2) The CB shall make its services accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within its declared field of operation. There shall not be undue financial or other conditions. Access shall not be conditional upon the size of the supplier or membership of any association or group, nor shall certification be conditional upon the number of certificates already issued.

   Note: A CB can decline to accept an application or maintain a contract for certification when demonstrated reasons exist such as client participating in illegal activities or having a history of repeated non-compliances with certification/product requirements.

2.1.3 Clarity of Scope

1) The criteria against which the products of a supplier are evaluated shall be those outlined in CAN/CGSB CAN 32.310 & CAN/CGSB 32.311 (current versions). If interpretation is required as to the application of these normative documents for a specific certification program, it shall be formulated by relevant and impartial committees or persons possessing the necessary technical competence.

2) The documents pertaining to product conformity requirements shall be understandable by the supplier, the certification body, and all interested parties.

3) When a subjective judgment is required to determine compliance, the CB shall document explanatory information, assuring consistent and uniform application of the requirements and certification decisions.

4) The CB shall confine its requirements, evaluation and decision on certification to those matters specifically related to the scope of the certification being considered.

2.2. Management of Impartiality (Ref: ISO 4.2)

1) The CB shall be responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality.

2) The CB shall manage impartiality according to the requirements of IS0 17065 4.2.1 – 4.2.12.

3) The CB shall not offer or provide consultancy or management system consultancy to its clients. Specific advice given to the client (by the CB or VO) should be limited to explanations of the standards or certification requirements. This information shall not be offered for additional fees and shall not prescribe solutions. CBs may provide general information (training, newsletters, seminars, advice concerning regulatory requirements etc.) for additional fees, provided this service shall be offered to all operators in a non-discriminatory manner. CBs may provide a list of certification consultants (not employed by the CB) as a service to their members.

4) Within a period specified by the CB, personnel (employees or contractors) shall not be used to review or make a certification decision for a product or operation where they have provided consultancy. The period should be long enough so impartiality is not compromised (2 years is recommended).

2.3. Liability & Financing

1) The CB shall have adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations and/or activities.

2) The CB shall the financial stability and resources required for the effective management of its certification system.

2.4. Structural Requirements (Ref: ISO 5)

1) Certification activities shall be structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality and foster confidence.

2.4.1 Documented Structure

1) The CB shall document its organizational structure showing duties, responsibilities and authorities of management, other personnel and any committees.

2) The CB shall identify the board, committee, or person having overall authority and responsibility for:

   i. Formulation of policies relating to the operation of the certification body;
   ii. Supervision of the implementation of its policies;
   iii. Supervision of the finances of the body;
   iv. Development of certification activities;
   v. Development of certification requirements;
   vi. Evaluation;
   vii. Review;
   viii. Decisions on certification;
   ix. Delegation of authority to committees or individuals as required to undertake defined activities on its behalf;
   x. Contractual arrangements;
   xi. Provision of adequate resources for certification activities;
   xii. Responsiveness to complaints and appeals;
   xiii. Personnel competence requirements;
   xiv. The management system of the CB

3) The CB shall have formal rules and structures for the appointment and operation of any committees which are involved in the certification process; and shall retain authority to appoint and withdraw members of the committees. Such committees shall be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures that might influence decisions. A structure where members are chosen to provide a balance of interests where no single interest predominates will be deemed to satisfy this provision.

4) Where decisions are taken by a committee comprising, among others, representatives from one or more clients, the operational procedures should ensure the representatives do not have significant influence on decision making e.g. by a distribution of voting rights.

(Note that program administrators shall not act as verification officers or make decisions pertaining to certification.)

2.4.2 Mechanism for Impartiality (Ref: ISO 5.2)

1) The CB shall have a mechanism for safeguarding impartiality. In this context a mechanism is a committee or group of persons that provides input on: policies and principles relating to impartiality of its certification activities; any tendency on the part of the CB to allow commercial or other considerations to prevent consistent impartiality; and matters affecting impartiality and confidence in certification including openness.

2) The committee shall be formally documented to ensure a balanced representation of significantly interested parties such that no single interest predominates. A CB shall identify and invite significantly interested parties such as clients and customers of clients, representatives of industry trade associations, NGOs and government, conformity assessment experts. Internal and external personnel of the CB are considered a single interest.

3) The committee shall have access to all the information necessary to enable it to fulfil its functions.

4) If the top management does not follow the input of this committee, the committee shall have the right to take independent action such as informing accreditation bodies or stakeholders while respecting confidentiality requirements. Input that is in conflict with the operating procedures of the CB or other mandatory requirements should not be followed and the reasoning behind the decision to not follow the input documented.

2.5. Resource Requirements

2.5.1 Certification Body Personnel

1) The CB shall employ, or have access to, a sufficient number of personnel (includes employees, volunteers, and contracted Verification officers) having the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for performing certification functions relating to the type, range and volume of work assigned to them.

2) The persons of the CB shall be competent for the functions they perform, including making required technical judgements, framing policies and implementing them.

3) Clearly documented instructions shall be available to the personnel describing their duties and responsibilities. These instructions shall be maintained up to date.

4) The CB shall require its personnel involved in the certification process to sign a contract or other document by which they commit themselves:

    a) To comply with the rules defined by the CB, including those relating to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other interests.

    b) To declare any prior and/or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with a supplier of products, a provider of services or an operator of processes to the evaluation or certification of which they are to be assigned, and to reveal any situation known to them that may present them or the CB with a conflict of interest. CBs shall use this information as input to identifying risks to impartiality.

5) The CB shall establish, implement and maintain a procedure for the management of competencies of personnel. The procedure shall require the CB to:

    a) Determine criteria for competence for each function in the certification process;

    b) Identify training needs and provide as necessary training programs relevant to the certification scheme requirements;

    c) Demonstrate that personnel have the required competencies for the duties and responsibilities they undertake;

    d) Formally authorize personnel for functions in the certification process;

    e) Monitor the performance of personnel.

6) Additional requirements for Verification Officers

    a) Verification Officers shall be members in good standing of the International Organic Inspectors Association. This requirement ensures that VOs have relevant professional training or experience in compliance with the certification program requirements. The CB shall ensure minimal qualifications include training with respect to the Canada Organic Regime;

    b) The verification officer must have signed a formal agreement to refuse any work that would create a conflict-of-interest situation with the operation that is applying for certification, either because of a family link, or because of a business relationship with the applicant during the twelve months preceding its application to the certification body.

7) The CB shall maintain information on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each member of the personnel involved in the certification process including:

a) Name and address;

b) Organization affiliation and position held;

c) Educational qualification and professional status;

d) Experience and training in each field of the certification body's competence;

e) The assessment of competence;

f) Performance monitoring;

g) Authorizations held within the CB;

h) Date of most recent updating of records.

2.5.2 External Resources (Subcontracting/Outsourcing)

1) The CB shall outsource evaluation activities only to bodies that meet the applicable requirements of the relevant international standards and/or as specified in this document. This can include outsourcing to other CBs. Use of external personnel under contract is not considered outsourcing.

2) When a CB decides to outsource/subcontract work related to certification (e.g. testing or inspection) to an external body or person, a legally binding document covering the arrangements including confidentiality and conflict of interest shall be drawn up. This should include the requirement to comply with all relevant aspects of these criteria.

3) The CB may issue certificates based on certification transfers, through the approval of certification decisions made by another CB, insofar as that organization has been approved by a recognized accreditation body in the Canada Organic Regime.

4) The CB shall:

   a) Take full responsibility for any subcontracted work and maintain its responsibility for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending or withdrawing certification, including when the body uses work done by another CB to which it is linked through an agreement, in order to guarantee its own certification;

   b) Ensure that the body providing services and its personnel are not involved directly or through any other employer in such a way that the credibility of results could be compromised;

   c) Have documented policies, procedures and records for the qualification, assessing and monitoring of all bodies providing outsourced services;

   d) Maintain a list of approved providers of outsources services.

2.6. Management System Requirements (Ref: ISO 8)

2.6.1 Certification Body Personnel

1) The CBs top management shall establish, document and maintain policies and objectives for the consistent fulfillment of the requirements outlined in this manual and shall ensure that they are understood, implemented, and maintained at all levels of the organization.

2) The CB shall operate an effective management system in accordance with the relevant elements of these criteria and appropriate for the type, range and volume of work performed.

3) The CBs top management shall provide evidence of its commitment to the development and implementation of the management system and its effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

4) The CB shall designate a person who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have defined authority for:

   a) Ensuring that the processes and procedures needed for the management system are established, implemented and maintained in accordance with these criteria,

   b) Reporting on the performance of the management system to top management for review and any need for improvement.

2.6.2 Documentation Requirements (COR C.8 and 9)

1) The management system shall be documented, and the documentation shall be available for use by the CB personnel in the form of a manual, handbook or other appropriate means.

2.6.3 Summary of Documentation Requirements

1) A brief description of the legal status of the CB, including the names of its owners and, if different, names of the persons who control it (board of directors or any other entity created for this purposes);

2) The names, qualifications, experience and terms of reference of the senior management and other certification personnel, both internal and external;

3) A description of the organization of the CB in the form of an organization chart showing lines of authority, responsibility and allocation of functions stemming from the senior executive;

4) Administrative procedures including document control;

5) The operational and functional duties and services pertaining to quality so that the extent and limits of each person’s responsibility are known to all concerned;

6) The procedure for the recruitment, selection and training of CB personnel and monitoring of their performance;

7) A list of its approved contractors/subcontractors and the procedures for assessing, recording and monitoring their competence which may include provision for the periodic witnessing of activities undertaken by VOs;

8) Procedures for conducting internal audits, based on the provisions of IS010011-1 and procedures for handling nonconformities in the CB's management system and for assuring the effectiveness of any corrective and preventive actions taken;

9) The policy and procedures for conducting management reviews;

10) The procedures implementing the certification process, including:

   a) The conditions for issue, retention and withdrawal of certification documents, with regard to audit and evaluation procedures;

   b) Procedures to address cases when an operator does not renew a certification of its products from a previous year to ensure the CB shall formally notify the operator in a timely manner that its certification is withdrawn;

   c) Controls over the use and application of documents employed in the certification of products;

d) More specifically, these procedures shall include rules to be applied for inspection, and in particular:

i. verification officer selection;
ii. grounds on which an applicant might refuse this choice;
iii. terms defining the verification mandate;
iv. minimal requirements for the verification procedure;
v. frequency and estimated duration of verification, taking into account the intensity of the production system, the production type, the company's size, the results of the previous verification, complaints received, parallel production;
vi. minimum requirements for any audit trail, in relation to traceability;
vii. sampling and testing requirements (when applicable);
viii. deadlines for presentation of verification report.

11) The policy and procedure for dealing with appeals, complaints and disputes that are compliant with the COR Operating Manual.

2.6.4 Internal Audits

1) The CB shall conduct periodic internal audits covering all procedures in a planned and systematic manner, to verify that the management system is implemented and is effective.
2) The audit program shall be planned to take into consideration the importance of the processes and areas to be audited as well as the results of previous audits.
3) Internal audits shall normally be performed at least once every 12 months or completed within a 12-month time frame.
4) The CB shall ensure that:

a) Internal audits are conducted by personnel knowledgeable in certification, auditing and the requirements of the COR program;

b) Auditors do not audit their own work;

c) Personnel responsible for the area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;

d) Corrective action is taken in a timely and appropriate manner;

e) Any opportunities for improvement are identified and that;

f) The results of the audit are documented.

2.6.5 Management Review

1) The CBs management with executive responsibility shall review its management system at least once a year to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness in satisfying the requirements of these criteria and the stated policies and objectives. Records of such reviews shall be maintained.

2) The review shall include:

a) An analysis of complaints and appeals;

b) The results of external and internal audits;

c) The status of preventive and corrective actions from various audits and management reviews;

d) Feedback from clients and interested parties;

e) Feedback from the mechanism (committee) for ensuring impartiality;

f) Follow up actions from previous management reviews;

g) The fulfillment of objectives;

h) Changes that could affect the CB's management system, (for example changes in internal policy, external regulations, or criteria for accreditation).

3) Outputs from the management review shall include decisions and actions related to:

a) Improvement of the effectiveness of the management system and its processes;

b) Improvement of the CB related to the fulfillment of requirements of the COR;

c) Resource needs (i.e. human, financial, etc.).

2.6.6 Corrective & Preventive Actions

1) The CB shall establish procedures for the identification and management of non-conformities and potential non-conformities in its own operations and take action to eliminate the causes and prevent recurrence.

2) The procedures shall define requirements for identifying the nonconformities, determining their cause, and implementing the actions needed for correction of nonconformities or preventing reoccurrence; recording the results of actions taken and reviewing their effectiveness.

2.7. Information & Documentation (Ref: ISO 4.6, 8.3)

2.7.1 Publicly Available Information

1) The CB shall provide (through publications, electronic media or other means), update at regular intervals, and make available on request, the following:

a) Information about the authority under which the CB operates;

b) A documented statement of its product certification system, including its rules and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending or reducing scope of, suspending, withdrawing and/or refusing certification;

c) Information about the evaluation procedures and certification process related to each product certification system;

d) A description of the means by which the organization obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to suppliers of certified products;

e) A description of the rights and duties of applicants and suppliers of certified products, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the certification body's mark and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;

f) Information about procedures for handling complaints, appeals and disputes.

2) The certification body shall maintain and make publicly available, information on certified products which contains as least:

a) Identification of the product;

b) The program and standards to which conformity has been certified;

c) The identification of the supplier/client.

Note: COABC requires listings to be publicly available on the COABC website and retains the right to require additional information.

3) The CB shall provide information upon request about the validity of a given certificate.

2.7.2 Document Control

1) The CB shall establish and maintain procedures to control all documents and data that relate to its certification functions.

2) The procedures shall define the controls needed to:

   a) Approve documents for appropriateness before use;

   b) Review and update as necessary and reapprove document;

   c) Ensure that changes and the current revision status are identified;

   d) Ensure that relevant versions of applicable documents are available at points of use;

   e) Ensure documents remain legible and readily identifiable;

   f) Ensure documents of external origin are identified and their distribution controlled;

   g) Prevent the unintended use of obsolete documents and to apply suitable identification to them if they are retained for any purpose.

3) A listing of all appropriate documents with the respective issue and/or amendment status identified shall be maintained.

2.8. Records

2.8.1 Maintenance & Retention (COR C.9)

1) The CB shall establish a system to maintain up-to-date records which demonstrate that all certification process requirements have been effectively fulfilled. Such records include certification applications, inspection reports and any other documents relative to granting, maintaining, extending, suspending, or withdrawing certification.

2) Records shall be identified, stored, managed, transmitted, transferred and disposed of in such a way as to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

3) The CB shall possess policies and procedures for maintaining records over a period compatible with contractual, legal or other obligations. Record access shall be consistent with confidentiality requirements.

4) CBs shall retain records for a minimum of five years and must require operators to retain records and relevant supporting documents concerning the inputs, preparation and handling of crops, livestock and organic products that are intended to be sold labelled or otherwise represented as organic in accordance with CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for at least five years.

2.8.2 Confidentiality & Proprietary Information (Ref: ISO 4.5)

1) The CB shall be responsible through legally enforceable commitments for the management of all information obtained or created during its certification activities. Except for information the client makes publicly available or when agreed between the certification body and the client (e.g. for the purpose of responding to complaints, transferring from one CB to another) all other information is considered proprietary and shall be regarded as confidential. The CB shall inform the client in advance of the information it intends to make public.

2) Where the law or contractual arrangements require confidential information to be disclosed to a third-party, the client shall be informed of the information provided unless notification is prohibited by law for a specific case.

3) Information obtained about the client from sources other than the client (e.g. complainants, regulators) shall be treated as confidential.

2.9. Certification Operations

2.9.1 Conformance to Standards

1) The CB shall take all steps necessary to evaluate conformance with the Canadian Organic Standard (CAN/CGSB CAN 32.310, CAN/CGSB 32.311 and CAN/CGSB 32.312).

2) Should the certification apply standards that are beyond the scope of the Organic Regime, such standards shall be documented and provided to clients. The CB shall not have undocumented or hidden standards.

3) In conducting its certification operations, the CB shall specify, as appropriate, the requirements for the suitability and competence of the body(ies) or person(s) carrying out testing, inspection and certification to ensure these functions are managed in a manner which provides confidence in the results and are in accordance with the requirements of COR Operating Manual.

2.9.2 Conditions & Procedures for Awarding Certification

1) The CB shall specify the conditions for granting, maintaining and extending certification and the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total.

2) The CB shall have procedures to:

   a) Grant, maintain, withdraw and, if applicable, suspend certification, and;

      In the case of suspension, the CB shall require, at the date of notification of the suspension, and during all the following period, that the supplier makes no misleading claims as to the status of certification and ceases to use the certification mark on the products covered by the suspension. If relevant, the CB may require in addition that no certified product is put up for sale and that potentially nonconforming existing product be subject to a corrective action, including product recall and label correction.

   b) Extend or reduce the scope of certification;

   c) Re-evaluate, in the event of changes significantly affecting the product's design or specification, or changes in the standards to which compliance of the product is certified, or changes in the ownership, structure or management of the supplier, if relevant, or in the case of any other information indicating that the product may no longer comply with the requirements of the certification system.

2.10. Standards

2.10.1 CB Obligations

1) The CB must send a copy (or link to a copy) of the standards to an applicant at the time they apply for certification.

2) A CB's own standards shall be reviewed on an on-going basis according to need and in accordance with established procedures put in place for this purpose.

3) Organizations or individuals responsible for reviewing or interpreting standards shall possess competency necessary to do so, and their competency must be documented.

4) Certified operators and applicants for certification must be advised of amendments to standards within 2 months of publication.

5) The CB shall allow a period of up to 12 months after the publication date of an amendment to CAN/CGSB 32.310, CAN/CGSB 32.311 and CAN/CGSB 32.312 for applicants to come into compliance with any changes to the requirements.

6) If at any point during the certification cycle of an operator where both parties agree there is a need for interpretation or clarification from the Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC), the issue that is the subject of the request will be set aside by the CB (the nonconformity will be placed on hold) until a response from the SIC is received.

7) When a CB is unsure of an interpretation it must initially direct the question to the COABC office. If the COABC Accreditation Board cannot provide an interpretation or the CB does not agree with the interpretation provided by the Accreditation Board, the Accreditation Board will forward the request to the SIC on behalf of COABC Accredited CBs.

8) In these cases, between the times when the interpretation request to the SIC is submitted and the response from the committee returned, any certification work affected by the interpretation shall proceed as normal, up to and including the issuance of certification documents.

9) When the response from the SIC is received, the outstanding issue shall be revisited and appropriate actions taken by the CB, or the operator or both as required.

10) If changes are required by the operator to comply with the interpretation of the SIC, the CB shall not suspend or withdraw any certification it has issued that is affected by this interpretation as long as the operator has made the required changes in a time frame that is no less than the time permitted for any other non-conformance issued by the CB.

11) In cases where the CB and the operator do not agree that the issue needs an interpretation, the CB shall rely on CAN/CGSB 32-310 section II – General Principles of Organic Production and Par.1.4.1 when interpreting the issue. The operator is still able to make a complaint to the CVB about the CB and/or ask the SIC for an interpretation and request a consideration of the issue at a later date.

2.11. Appeals, Complaints & Disputes Regarding Certification

2.11.1 CB Appeal Process

1) A CB shall have policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints, appeals to certification decisions and disputes received from suppliers or other parties about the handling of certification or any other related matters:

   a) Appeals, complaints and disputes brought before the CB by suppliers or other parties shall be subject to the documented procedures of the CB;

   b) Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal the CB shall confirm whether it relates to certification activities for which it is responsible;

   c) The CB shall acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint or appeal;

   d) The CB shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to progress the complaint or appeal to a decision;

e) The decision resolving the complaint or appeal shall be made by or reviewed and approved by persons not involved in the certification activities related to the complaint or appeal;

f) Whenever possible the CB shall give formal notice of the outcome and end of the complaint process to the complainant;

g) The CB shall give formal notice of the end of an appeal process to the appellant;

h) The CB shall keep a record of all appeals, complaints and disputes and remedial actions relative to certification;

i) The CB shall document the action taken and its effectiveness.

3. Certification Procedures

This section provides information about the certification cycle, including application for certification, evaluation, decision on certification and continuation of the certification under the Canada Organic Regime (COR). It also provides requirements on the CB. The COABC Accreditation Board shall verify that the CB meets these requirements during every initial, surveillance or reassessment audit conducted.

3.1 Information on the Procedure

3.1.1 Information for Applicants

1) The CB shall provide to applicants an up-to-date detailed description of the evaluation and certification procedures, appropriate to each certification scheme, and the documents containing the requirements for certification, the applicants' rights and duties as suppliers of certified products (including fees to be paid), and a current version of the Canadian Organic Standard or any other standards to which the applicant wishes to be certified.

2) The CB shall inform the applicant that the initial application for field crops, in ground greenhouse crops and maple products must be received 15 months before the day on which the product is expected to be marketed (SFCR Part 13 Division 4 344(3)).

3) When the desired scope of certification is related to a specific system or type of system operated by the CB, any explanation needed shall be provided to the applicant.

3.1.2 Contractual Requirements of Applicant Operators (Ref: ISO 4.1.2.2.)

1) The CB shall have a signed agreement with each operator that specifies the rights and responsibilities relevant to its certification activities. The CB shall require that the applicant:

   a) Always fulfils the certification requirements including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the CB;

   b) Makes all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the evaluation, including provision for examining documentation and access to all locations, areas, records, personnel and sub contractors for the purposes of on-site evaluation and the investigation of any complaints directed towards them, and for the participation of observers when applicable;

   c) Makes claims regarding certification only in respect of the scope for which certification has been granted;

   d) Does not use its product certification in such a manner as to bring the CB into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its product certification which the CB may consider misleading or unauthorized;

e) Upon suspension or cancellation of certification, and also in the case of voluntary surrender, discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto and returns any certification documents as required by the certification body;

f) When providing copies of certification documents to others, the documents are reproduced in their entirety or as specified by the certification program;

g) In making reference to its product certification in communication media, such as documents, brochures, or advertising, complies with the requirements of the certification body and the COR;

h) Complies with any requirements that may be prescribed by the COR that relate to the use of marks of conformity on the product and on information related to the product;

i) Keeps a record of all complaints relating to certification requirements and makes it available to the CB when requested; takes appropriate action with respect to any complaints or deficiencies found in the products when they affect compliance and documents the actions taken;

j) Informs the CB without delay of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements e.g. changes of ownership or management, modification to product or production methods, changes to contact address, and production sites, and major changes to the management system;

k) Does not put up for sale any product for which it has requested certification and bearing the word organic or its derivatives and the certification body's mark, until it has been informed by the CB that the products are certified;

l) Reveals beforehand to the CB the identity of any other company for which it intends to manufacture products under license, and thus as a result can use the certifier's mark (name and logo) on the label of the products that the other company intends to market under its own brand name even though it does not hold a compliance certificate for those products;

m) Allows representatives from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the COABC Accreditation Board to access during normal working hours, documentation and sites used to produce certified products, for the purposes of examination and copying within the framework of accredited certifier evaluation;

n) Pays the corresponding fees requested by the CB.

3.1.3 Sub-Contracted Production & Processing for Certified Operations

1) The CB shall have policies and procedures for regulating subcontracted production or processing, where the subcontractor is not required to be certified in their own right.

2) This shall preclude the sub-contractor from marketing certified products themselves and require the manufacturing process, the raw materials supply, and the sales to be under the control of the licensee. This shall normally mean that the sub-contractor does not take title of the product.

3) The CB shall require that the certified licensee shall be held fully responsible for the sub-contracted production and be subject to sanctions in the event on non-compliance of the subcontracted parties.

4) The CB shall require that there be a contract between the licensee and the sub-contractor that includes clauses regarding compliance to the standards, obligation to provide information and access to the certification body.

5) The CB shall ensure that each sub-contracted operator has the current version of the applicable standards and a general description of the certification.

3.2 The Certification Application (Ref: ISO 7.2)

3.2.1 Application Form

1) The CB shall require completion of an official application form, signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant, in which or attached to which are the following:

   a) The scope of the desired certification;

   b) A statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the requirements for certification and to supply any information needed for evaluation of products to be certified.

2) The applicant, as a minimum, shall provide the following information:

   a) Corporate entity, name, address, legal status, physical locations (of the facilities involved with the production and storage of organic products) and contact personnel;

   b) A description of the products upon which the application is based, and indicating their nature as selected from one of the following:

      i) tangible products to be certified relative to the certification system and also the standards against which each product must be certified, to the best of the applicant's knowledge;
      ii) services (intangible products) to be approved, consisting of operations to be carried out by a supplier at the request of a client, within the framework of an activity applied to a tangible product, in order to ensure or to maintain its conformity to prescribed standards;

      iii) inputs to be approved, consisting of non-edible substances used in the organic production process that will not remain within the processed product;

      iv) in the case of an agricultural product containing more than one agricultural product, a statement setting out the percentage by weight of each of those products and the percentage by weight of each of them that are organic products;

   c) Production and/or preparation specifications for products to which the application applies (see CAN/CGSB 32.310. Section 4 Organic Plan);

   d) Maps and site plans;

   e) List of inputs (ingredients and agricultural substances);

   f) Evidence that the site(s) where operations take place and from where products mentioned in the application are produced are indeed operated by the applicant, and if not, the names of the other companies involved in the production of the products, along with a description of the business connections linking them and the applicant, and transaction flows between them (i.e. information concerning all outsourced processes used by the client that will affect conformity to requirements);

   g) Names of CBs to whom prior applications for certification, approval, or evaluation were submitted by the applicant within the previous years, including all details pertaining to processing the application, and the resulting decisions.

3) In light of the presented documents the CB shall verify that the substances and the materials used in the production of organic products comply with CAN/CGSB21.211 and CAN/CGSB-32.312 as applicable to the nature of the product and production system. The CB must maintain a procedure and documentation to support its determination about the status of input compliance.

4) In determining input compliance, the CB may proceed as outlined in the COR Operating Manual under Part C 2.2 .

5) In light of the presented documents, the certifier shall determine whether or not the certification applicant is truly a product supplier, within the meaning provided in these criteria, or if other suppliers must in addition to, or instead of, apply for certification of the products they are marketing and that are included in the application concerned.

6) The CB shall exchange information with other CBs and/or CFIA to verify the validity of information on an operator in cases where the operator has changed CBs.

3.3 Preparation for Evaluation (Ref: ISO 7.3; COR C2.2)

3.3.1 Review of Application

1) The CB shall send acknowledgement of receipt of the application before proceeding with the assessment.

2) Before proceeding with the evaluation, the CB shall conduct, and maintain records of, a review of the application for certification to ensure that:

   a) The information about the client and the product is sufficient for the certification process to proceed;

   b) Any difference in understanding between the CB and the applicant is resolved;

   c) The scope of the certification sought is stated clearly;

   d) The CB has the competence and capability to perform the certification service with respect to the scope of the certification sought and, if applicable, the location of the applicant's operations and any special requirements such as the language used by the applicant. (See also IS0 17065 7.3.2, 7.3.3 - for requirements when a certification body has no prior experience of the certification requested).

3) The CB shall decline to undertake a specific certification if it lacks any competence or capability for certification activities it must undertake.

4) The CB shall verify that the applicant does not hold more than one certification under the Canada Organic Regime for any given operation site (i.e. products from one location cannot be certified by 2 different certifiers).

5) The CB shall ensure that the applicant pays the fees for certification according to the CB's contract for services and in accordance with the CB's fee schedule.

3.3.2 Evaluation Activities (Ref: ISO 7.4)

1) The CB shall prepare a plan for its evaluation activities to allow for the necessary arrangements to be managed and assign personnel to perform each evaluation activity. Evaluation activities include:

   a) An evaluation of the applicant regarding its admissibility to the certification program as a supplier;

   b) An evaluation of the documentation accompanying the application, including specifications for the production or preparation that the supplier submitted to the certifier against the requirements of the certification scheme and the scope of the certification. Transmission of relevant remarks to the applicant shall follow within a reasonable deadline;

   c) The assignment of a VO once an examination of the attached documentation confirms that operations carried out by the supplier seem to comply with the certifier's specifications. The CB

shall ensure that the operator is contacted to arrange the logistics for an inspection of the production site(s) and the supplier's premises.

2) The CB shall only rely on evaluation results related to certification completed by another body prior to the application for certification where it takes responsibility for the results and satisfies itself that [the body that performed] the evaluation fulfils the requirements specified by the certification scheme.

3.3.3 Site Visit Considerations (Ref: COR C2.2 Timing of on-site inspections)

1) For pre-certification, certification or any service for which approval is requested, the CB must conduct an initial inspection of each production unit, building or site (including vehicles) where production or preparation of agricultural and food products is carried out.

2) When the application concerns ingredients approval or the verification of ingredients within a non-certifiable product or even an input approval, the CB may omit the visit if it considers a document evaluation is sufficient for control purposes.

3) The timing of the site inspection must be determined according to the following parameters:

   a) In cases involving producer operations, it must take place during the production season [time of active management]. This period begins as soon as operations subject to inspection (seeding, tapping, etc.) begin and ends with the packaging or placing in containers for storage of products to be certified;

   b) In cases involving processing operations, inspections may be carried out any time during the year.

4) For separated production (i.e., when both certifiable and non-certifiable products are manufactured at the same facility), the inspection must be carried out a time when the products that are targeted for certification are being processed. If the CB determines it is not possible to conduct the inspection while organic product is being processed, the CB shall record the reason(s) supporting this determination. The CB shall then arrange for the inspection to be carried out at a time when the facilities and activities that demonstrate compliance or capacity to comply can be assessed. There shall be no more than two consecutive years without an inspection when organic product is being processed.

3.3.4 Access Required

1) The CB and its designated verification officer must have access to the premises, documents or person in charge for whatever is referenced in the certification application.

3.3.5 Assignment of VOs

1) The CB shall assign verification officers appropriately qualified to perform the tasks for the specific evaluation and record the VO selection for a given inspection.

2) VOs shall not be assigned if they have been previously involved in or been employed by an operation supplying products within a time period which could conflict with their impartiality.

3) Operators shall have neither the right to choose nor to recommend verification officers. Except for cases of unannounced visits, operators shall have the right to be informed about the identity of the verification officer before the inspection visit. Operators have the right to raise objections based on conflict of interest. The CB shall rule whether the reasons are acceptable.

3.3.6 Documentation of VOs

1) To ensure that a comprehensive and correct evaluation is carried out, the VO shall be provided with the appropriate working documents. They shall include, among others:

   a) Production description;

   b) Maps and plans;

   c) List of inputs (ingredients and agricultural substances);

   d) A copy of production and/or handling specifications;

   e) Remedial actions required by the certifying body during the previous certification cycle, as well as any corrective measures implemented by the operator concerning these requests.

3.4 Preparation for Evaluation (Ref: ISO 7.4; COR C2.2)

3.4.1 Access to Standards

1) The CB shall evaluate the products of the applicant against the standards covered by the scope defined in the application against all certification criteria.

3.4.2 Site Inspection Requirements (COR Part C 2.2)

1) The CB shall ensure that the inspection covers the entire agricultural production system being managed by the operator, even if only part of the operator's operations were targeted by the certification application.

2) The inspection of an operation site shall cover all production and processing operations, including packaging and labelling pertaining to the product.

3) The systems and facilities upon which a firm relies to produce and/or prepare each product included within its application shall be visited by the verification officer to ensure that the standards are fully applied and correspond to the submitted production or preparation specifications.

4) The CB shall ensure that the assigned VO conducts an introductory meeting with a representative of the operator.

5) The land, premises and equipment not included in the certification application shall be identified and inspected and shall at a minimum include the following: crop areas or harvesting zones; harvest storage locations; preparation, processing and packaging sites; application dates for phytosanitary products.

6) Regular inspection shall include:

   a) Verification that prohibited substances have not been, and are not being, applied to the operation [in violation of the standard];

   b) A review of the record keeping verifying that the organic plan previously submitted to the CB accurately reflects the operation and is in compliance with the Canadian Organic Standard. This includes an examination of records related to production (e.g. inventory, sales, and purchases) and to management (e.g. complaints); as well as appropriate product packaging and labelling;

   c) A visual examination of each production unit (e.g. fields, crops plants. Livestock, buildings, facilities and vehicles) where production or preparation of agricultural and food products are carried out;

d) Witnessing the way the operator proceeds at a given point within the production cycle, thus implying that the inspection shall be carried out when grounds, premises, and activities subjected to compliance requirements may be observed;

e) Non-organic units where there is reason to suspect undeclared split production of similar products, and in any situation revealing high risk of cross contamination;

f) Where agricultural producers carry out split production, visual determination of what is being planted in all cultivated fields within the production unit;

g) Identification and investigation of areas of risk (e.g. potential contamination from neighbouring farm, flooding);

h) For producers, an estimate of the potential yield for the coming year, as well as an audit of the balance in the quantities produced and sold over the previous period, and including amounts still in inventory during this same period;

i) For applicants performing operations related to food preparation (processing and/or packaging), the VO calculates the input/output balance for acquired commodities, and for the corresponding commodities included in the products sold and on inventory. The calculation sample shall include more than one run of the product and at least one prominent commodity. The VO shall strive to review different commodity every year, if applicable. However, if justified, the VO may include a different or additional commodity in the calculation. This justification shall be recorded in the inspection report;

j) Trace back audits applying to certain products taken from the supplier's (i.e. the producer or processor) inventory or from a commercial outlet where its products have been placed for sale;

k) Verification that changes to the standards and requirements of the CB have been effectively implemented by the operator;

l) Verification that previously imposed conditions have been fulfilled;

m) Interviews people knowledgeable with the current operation.

7) The CB shall require pre-harvest or post-harvesting testing of any agricultural input used or agricultural product to be sold, labelled or represented as being in compliance with the requirements of the Canada Organic Standards when there is reason to suspect that the agricultural input or product has come into contact with a prohibited substance, method or ingredient in the production and handling or organic products.

8) The CB shall ensure that when samples are taken by the VO that the VO shall provide the operator with a receipt for each sample.

9) The CB shall require sampling and testing in an event of a complaint concerning the use of, or contamination with, prohibited substance, as a part of the investigation of the complaint.

10) The CB shall investigate if it has suspicion that an organic product contains even a trace amount of a GMO. The CB shall require sampling and testing in the event of suspicion of the presence of GMO.

11) The VO shall:

a) Conduct a closing meeting (exit interview) at the end of the visit intended to inform the operator's management of observations made concerning the compliance with certification requirements, without any corrective action request from the VO;

b) Provide the opportunity for the producer/handler to confirm the accuracy of the information collected during the inspection;

c) Provide a summary in writing of this review to the operator;

d) The summary should address the need for any additional information as well as any issues of concern.

3.4.3 Less than 70% Organic Products

1) Operations using less than 70% of organic ingredients do not require certification, nor do their ingredients require evaluation by a verification officer.

3.5 Evaluation Report & Notification

3.5.1 Reporting Procedures

1) The CB shall adopt reporting procedures that suit its needs but, as a minimum, these procedures shall ensure that:

   a) VOs shall submit to the CB a report outlining verification results and findings as to the conformity with all the certification requirements, and including the following data as a minimum;

      i. date, time and duration of inspection;
      ii. names of interviewees;
      iii. identification of land and premises visited on the production/handling site;
      iv. types of documentation audits performed (in/out balance sheet, yields/sales, audit trails by batches, etc.)
      v. inspection results
      vi. list of findings identified by the VO.

   b) When the CB has reason to believe, based on a review of the information, that an applicant for certification is not in compliance with the certification requirements, a full report on the outcome of the evaluation shall be issued to the applicant by the CB, within a reasonable length of time, indicating all non compliances that must be eliminated in order to comply with all of the certification requirements. This report, serving as a written notification of non-compliance addressed to the applicant, shall provide among other things:

      i. the description of each non-compliance;
      ii. the facts upon which the notification of non-compliance is based;
      iii. the request for remedial actions for each non-compliance;
      iv. the date by which the applicant must demonstrate that the non-compliance no longer exists or that remedial actions were taken.

2) The CB shall inform the operators of the following:

   a) The operator must respond within 30 days of receiving the non-conformity report issued by the certification body;

   b) The response shall either provide evidence of corrective action taken to address each NC or present a plan with milestones as to how each NC will be addressed. This plan shall include a completion date not exceeding 90 days from receipt of the NCs;

   c) The CB may accept timelines greater than those stated for the closure of a non-conformance as long as they are justified and documented.

3) The CB shall provide information to the operator regarding additional evaluation tasks needed to verify that the nonconformities have been corrected

4) The CB shall ensure that corrective actions aiming to address all nonconformities have been implemented by the operator by conducting an on-site or other appropriate form of verification.

5) If the applicant agrees to continuing the evaluation process and can show that remedial action has been taken to meet all the requirements within the specified time limit, the CB shall repeat only the necessary parts of the initial procedure, meaning that it must ensure, based on submitted documentation and if necessary, an on-site inspection, whether or not non-conformities were corrected.

3.5.2 Interruption of Certification Process

1) At any point within the certification cycle preceding the certifier's decision, the applicant may request that the processing of its application be stopped. The applicant shall, however, be liable for the costs of services provided up to the time of withdrawal of its application. In such case, the CB shall not issue a decision regarding the products that were the subject of the certification request.

2) If a CB has reason to believe that an applicant for initial certification has wilfully made a false statement regarding its production system and operations related to the products included in the application, the CB may deny certification, without issuing a notification of non-compliance.

3.5.3 Review (Ref: ISO 7.5)

1) The CB shall assign at least one person to review all information and results related to evaluation in order to make the certification decision. This review shall be carried out by person(s) who have not been involved in the evaluation (verification/inspection) process.

2) Recommendations for a certification decision shall be documented unless review and certification decision are completed concurrently by the same person.

3.6 Decision on Certification (Ref: ISO 7.6)

3.6.1 Sole Authority for Decision

1) The CB shall not delegate authority for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending or withdrawing certification to an outside person or body.

3.6.2 Basis for Decision

1) The decision as to whether or not to certify a product shall be taken by the CB on the basis of the information gathered during the evaluation process and any other relevant information. The certification decision shall be carried out by a person or group of persons not involved in the process for evaluation [i.e. inspection and verification]. The person(s) who make(s) the decision shall have a level of knowledge and experience sufficient to evaluate the information obtained.

3.6.3 Approval of Certification (Ref: COR C2.4)

1) The decision to certify a product shall be taken if the CB determines that all procedures and activities contained in the production or preparation plan are in compliance with requirements and that the applicant is able to conduct operations in accordance with this plan and after the corrections of all non-conformities. This decision is valid until the results of the next annual evaluation are known and a new decision is made or unless the CB is made aware of information to cause the CB to act (e.g. suspension or withdrawal). This information can come from an external source or from the CB's own efforts.

2) The CB shall issue a written notice of approval of certification to any applicant for whom it accepts to certify the products, specifically with the intention of issuing a license authorizing the operator to use

the certifier's certification mark (name/logo) under the conditions as specified in the contract or any other special documents. It shall specify in this notice or in any other appropriate document the limits of the use of its mark.

3) The CB must notify the COABC Accreditation Board of any approval of certification (i.e. update listings on COABC website).

3.6.4 Denial of Certification

1) The CB shall issue a written notice of denial of certification to any applicant to whom it denies certification, either because operations leading to production are still noncompliant with requirements or simply because the applicant did not respond to the notification of non-compliance. This notice must state the reason(s) for denial and the applicant's right to:

   a) File an appeal of the denial with the CB;

   b) Reapply for certification to any accredited CB, including the one who denied certification.

2) The CB must inform the applicant, of any:

   a) Notice of non-compliance that would prevent the immediate acceptance of certification;

   b) Decision to refuse certification once review and appeal deadlines have expired.

3.6.5 Certification Documentation (Ref: ISO 7.7; COR C2.4)

1) The CB shall provide to each supplier offering certified products, formal certification documents such as a letter or a certificate signed by an officer who has been assigned such responsibility and mentioning the name, the address and the phone number of the CB. These formal certification documents shall permit identification of the following:

   a) The name and address of the supplier whose products are the subject of certification;

   b) When applicable, the certificate or document should also include the name of the holder who commonly does business under, or the name which the holder is commonly known by in the marketplace;

   c) The certificate cannot bear the names of multiple legal entities. A parent company and any of their subsidiary companies are separate legal entities;

   d) The scope of the certification granted, including, as appropriate:

      i. the products certified, which shall be identified by type or range of products including their specific name and if applicable, the one or more trademarks under which they are being marketed;
      ii. product names on certificates should coincide with label/shipping bill/import-export documentation
      iii. the product Standards or other normative documents concerning the program under which each product or product type is certified (CAN/CGSB 21.310 or CAN/CGSB 21.312);

iv. the applicable certification system with the type(s) of operations and subject of the evaluation by the certification body, among the following:
- crop production;
- livestock production;
- grain production;
- maple syrup production
- specialized production (honey production, etc.);
- food processing;
- subsequent packaging (labelling modification following an operation of breaking down or regrouping on products already certified);
- brokerage

e) In the case of a multi-ingredient food commodity; whether at least 70% of its contents are organic products or whether at least 95% of its contents are organic products;

f) The date on which the certification was granted;

g) The date by which the operator must submit application for subsequent annual inspection;

h) And as applicable, an indication of its duration (i.e. 12 months for packaging and labelling certification under the SFCR);

i) The location of operations covered by the certification (town, province/state, and country).

2) Certification documents shall also identify any private labels under which the certified product is to be marketed.
3) Packaging and labelling activities certificate shall include the period of validity, the type(s) of organic products to which the certification applies

4) Certification documents shall only be issued after the decision to grant or extend the scope of the certification has been made, certification requirements have been fulfilled and the certification agreement has been signed.

3.6.6 Amendment of Certificate

1) In response to an application for amendment to the scope of a certificate already granted, the CB shall decide what, if any, evaluation procedure is appropriate in order to determine whether or not the amendment should be made and shall act accordingly.

3.6.7 Transaction Certificates

1) In addition to the compliance certificate, the certifier may issue, upon request, other documents proving the certification of products and insuring better traceability, e.g. transaction certificates.

3.6.8 Certificate or Licence

1) No certificate shall be issued to a company when it has no products for sale that are compliant with the prescribed standards, either because its production system is not yet operational, or because the operator is currently inactive. In these cases, the certificate shall only be issued following an inspection of the system once the firm begins its operations, thus validating the certification decision.

3.6.9 Terms of Certificates

1) Under the Canada Organic Regime, the certificate remains valid until a renewal certificate is issued or the CB revokes it. If a renewal application is not received by the date stipulated on the certificate/the time prescribed in the SFCR Section 346, the CB shall initiate suspension or cancellation.

2) The CB shall follow the SFCR requirements for cancellation under Section 350 in case of voluntary withdrawal by the operator.

3.6.10 Annual Renewal

1) The possession of a certificate is not, by itself, a guarantee of certification. The CB will have a procedure in place that meets the requirements in the COR Operating Manual Section C 2.5. The CB shall issue a new certificate in each year following the process for annual certification decision.

3.6.11 Revocation of Certificate

1) When a CB issues a notice of cancellation or revocation, the certificate is by that act, invalidated. The CB must notify the Accreditation Board when a certificate is cancelled or revoked.

3.7 Withdrawal of Certification Status

3.7.1 Voluntary Withdrawal

1) Operators must inform the CB of the withdrawal from the certification program of any production unit or processing facility due to use of a prohibited practice or material. If conditions exist for which the producer, processor or handler anticipates the use of prohibited practices or materials, the CB strongly recommends consultations with the appropriate experts and the CB Certification Committee, close monitoring of the actions and the effects, and detailed documentation.

2) The CB shall follow the SFCR requirements for cancellation in case of voluntary withdrawal by the operator.

3.7.2 Suspension

1) When a supplier is not in compliance a CB may decide to suspend certification. Procedures for suspension of certification status for non-compliance shall be according to section 349 of the SFCR as amended from time to time. If certification is suspended the CB shall communicate to the client, the actions needed to end suspension and restore certification (see 3.5.1b & c)

3.7.3 Decertification

1) Assigned to operations, which were certified, but no longer meet the CB's production or processing standards and the certificate is revoked. The CB shall cancel the certification if the holder of the certification has not implemented the required corrective measures with the period specific or in cases where the applicant has provided false information (fraud). Cancellation is subject to Section 350 of the SFCR.

2) The CB shall make all needed modifications to certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks etc. to ensure it provides no indication that the product continues to be certified. If it is the scope of the certification that is reduced this shall be clearly communicated to the client and described in certification documents and public information. *(see ISO 17065, 7.11.3)*

3.7.4 Reporting Suspensions & Cancellations

1) The CB shall report to the COABC all suspensions and cancellations it issues on or before the 25th of each month. All suspension and cancellation reports shall include the name of the operator, the date of issue and the reason for the action.

2) For entities operating within the Canada Organic Regime the CB shall reinstate suspended certification only after the CFIA has been notified and the date of the certification reinstatement is posted on the CFIA published list of suspended and cancelled organic certifications.

3) The CB shall not grant certification to an operator who had its certification previously cancelled and whose name appears on a CFIA published list of suspended and cancelled organic certification unless the operator has submitted an application for certification of agricultural product to a CFIA accredited CB as per section C2, has completed the organic certification process and the CB has received a confirmation from the CFIA that the date of certification reinstatement is posted on the CFIA list.

4) The CB shall submit to the CFIA a request for having the date of the certification reinstatement posted on the CFIA list of suspended and cancelled organic certifications with in 5 working days from the certification decision (and the CFIA will post the reinstatement within 5 days of the request).

4. Surveillance (Ref: ISO 7.9)

4.1. Surveillance Program & Inspections

4.1.1 Documented Surveillance Program

1) The CB shall have documented procedures to enable surveillance to be carried out in accordance with these criteria.

2) The CB body shall document its surveillance activities, and in particular:

   a) The controls of requirements stipulated by the CB following the evaluation;

   b) All inspection visits made to suppliers;

   c) Investigations made to find evidence pertaining to a complaint regarding a supplier.

4.1.2 Unannounced Inspections (Ref: COR C2.6)

1) There shall be a documented procedure covering the use, frequency and selection criteria for unannounced on-site inspections.

2) In addition to the annual inspection the CB shall plan and conduct unannounced inspections representing 5% of other operators (minimum one) to which it grants certificates for products under the Canada Organic Regime. Reference Table 7 in the COR Manual for number of unannounced inspections required when there is exception to the 5% rule.

3) CBs shall secure the rights to conduct unannounced inspections.

4) In cases where it is not possible to conduct an announced inspection (e.g. for reasons related to site access or other factors supported by a justification), advance notice may be given providing that this notice period does not allow time to cover up non-compliances that might exist. In any case it shall not be more than 24 hours. The CB shall document the reasons for any advance notice.

5) Unannounced inspections may be limited in scope and may cover only certain aspects of the operation. The operators chosen for unannounced inspection may be random, risk based or as a result of a complaint or investigation. The CB is not obliged to disclose to the operator the reason for any unannounced or additional inspection.

6) The CB shall consider the following examples when developing risk-based criteria for unannounced inspections, as a minimum:
   - 6.3 Type of operator (producer, processor, packager)
   - 6.4 New or experienced operator (categories for number of years' experience can be used)
   - 6.5 Size and complexity of operation (e.g. Total are under production, complexity of value chain)
   - 6.6 Type and value of product (e.g. Short supply, high price, susceptibility to disease or pests, ratio of price to quality)
   - 6.7 Number of parcels of land or animal units under transition
   - 6.8 Local geography (e.g. Lay of land, buffer areas, water supply, presence of neighbours and types of neighbouring land uses, nearby spray operations)
   - 6.9 Only organic, split operation or parallel production
   - 6.10 Total quantity of products produced and/or processed
   - 6.11 Rapid increase in production versus stable production levels
   - 6.12 Compliance history (non-conformities in previous inspections)
   - 6.13 Complaints received
   - 6.14 Suspicion of fraud
   - 6.15 Quality of information (information supplied in certification process)
   - 6.16 Economic fraud risk (multiple contracted suppliers, group certification)
   - 6.17 Detection of chemical residues or signs of prohibited substances
   - 6.18 Irregularities in mass balance calculations and traceability records
   - 6.19 Number of new suppliers
   - 6.20 Number of changes to management team
   - 6.21 Change in ownership
   - 6.22 Brand names (number produced under the operation, processor not using own name)
   - 6.23 Higher risk animal production systems

7) The CBs shall apply a checklist of risk-based criteria when evaluating the risk to which the integrity of organic products can be compromised. The CB shall define individual scores that can be applied to each risk criteria. These scores should be added to calculate a total score for each operator. Based on the scores, the CB will determine which operators are selected for unannounced inspections.

8) The CB shall comply with any requests from the CFIA or the CVB that additional inspections be conducted by the CB when the compliance of the operation is in doubt or for other valid reasons.

9) A record of unannounced inspections shall be maintained.

4.2. Changes Affecting Certification

4.2.1 Changes in Certification Requirements

1) The CB shall give due notice of any changes it intends to make in its requirements for certification. It shall take account of views expressed by interested parties before deciding on the precise form and effective date of the changes. Following decision on, and publication of, the changed requirements, it shall verify that each supplier makes any necessary adjustments within such time as, in the opinion of the CB, is reasonable.

2) Requirements pertaining to the granting of certification include:

   a) Standards to which the product must be compliant;

   b) Control plan;

   c) Procedures related to certification granting.

3) The CB shall notify the applicant of any changes to the certification requirements (regulations or the standards) within two months after the publication of the amendments.

4.2.2 Changes in Production System

1) The CB shall require the supplier to inform the CB about any of the changes to its production, such as intended modification to the product, manufacturing process or, if relevant, its quality system, which could affect the conformity of the product. The CB shall determine whether the announced changes require further investigations, re-evaluation, or revision of certification documentation etc. If such is the case, the supplier shall not be allowed to release certified products resulting from such changes until the CB has notified the supplier accordingly.

2) Records shall include the rationale when no evaluation, review or decision activities are deemed necessary.

4.3. Certification Renewal (Ref: COR C2.5)

4.3.1 Continuing Product Scrutiny

1) Where the CB authorizes the continuing use of its mark on products of a type which have been evaluated, the CB shall annually evaluate operations resulting in the marked products in order to confirm that they continue to comply with standards.

2) To allow the CB to re-evaluate the product concerned, the operator must submit within the periods stipulated by the CB, a certification renewal application, pay annual certification fees, and submit all information requested by the CB including a mandatory updated production or preparation system plan.

3) The CB shall initiate suspension or cancellation in cases where the renewal application is not submitted within the time prescribed (i.e. before the date stipulated on the certificate-see 3.6.5.1d)

4) The CB shall verify that all requirements for certification are met and shall make a decision either to maintain certification or to initiate suspension and cancellation as outlined in 3.7.2 & 3.7.3. The renewal certificate is issued when the certification decision is made.

5) The CB re-evaluations shall include, at a minimum, the following rules:

   a) An on-site inspection must be made to each location where each supplier is operating, at least once per calendar year, (except in the case of risk-based inspection frequency as in 4.1.2 (3) and (6)), to verify compliance with the applicable requirements as outlined in 3.4.2;

   b) If an on-site inspection visit must occur on a date beyond a period of twelve months following the inspection from the previous year, this postponement shall not exceed six months, shall be justified and shall be documented;

   c) When the interval between two regular inspections has exceeded twelve months, the CB must make sure that subsequent inspections restore the parity between the number of calendar years and the number of regular inspections over a given period.

5. Use of Licences, Certificates & Marks of Conformity (Ref: ISO 4.3)

5.1.1 CB Authorization

1) The CB shall exercise proper control over ownership, use and display of licenses, certificates and marks of conformity and any other means for indicating a product is certified.

2) Every firm using the certification mark of the CB for products it has ownership of, shall first get authorization from the CB through a license.

3) The CB shall ensure that the certification mark is not affixed on its own or used to imply that a product, process or service (or any part of it) has been certified or approved by the COABC or CFIA.

4) The CB shall advise the COABC when there are changes in certification status of their members and ensure that all public information is updated accordingly.

5) The CB shall ensure that all certified products are labelled in accordance with the SFCR.

5.1.2 Withdrawal of Licence

1) The license agreement must be withdrawn if the operator:

   a) Ceases doing business with the CB; or

   b) Ceases to supply, as affiliated operator, a customer whose products are certified by the CB; or

   c) Ceases, if it sells private label products without itself owning a certificate, to purchase from suppliers whose products are certified by the CB; or

   d) Cannot demonstrate that it is able to comply with the applicable standards for operations included in its certification application.

5.1.3 Monitoring of Certification Mark

1) The CB shall have procedures to monitor products being sold on the market using its certification mark, its name and the certification program symbols to detect any improper or fraudulent use of their mark, the COR or fraudulent use of the CB name and certificates.

2) The CB shall advise certified members of all the requirements for references to accreditation and the reproduction of Certification Marks.

5.1.4 Control of Mark

1) The CB shall possess written rules authorizing the use of its mark (including the approval of product labels on which it will be displayed) and is responsible for delivering compliance certificates.

2) The CB shall have written procedures allowing it to process cases of abusive use, particularly those involving false statements regarding a product's certification or the incorrect use of its certification marks. The CB shall have procedures ensuring that its clients do not allow its certification mark or certification program symbols to be used in any way likely to lead to confusion among consumers.

3) Incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of the CB's licenses, certificates or marks, found in advertisements, catalogues, etc., shall be dealt with by suitable action. Such provision could include remedial actions, withdrawal of certification, publication of offence, and if necessary, any other legal action.

6. Additional Requirements

6.1 Requirements when an Operator Changes CB under COR

1) See COR manual C10

6.2 Requirements when a CB issues an Attestation of Compliance

1) Only products can be certified under the Canada Organic Regime but a CB may provide a formal "Attestation of Compliance" to service providers who perform contractual work for operators with certified product and where the service is not eligible for certification under Appendix C of the SFCR; for example livestock slaughter facilities, transportation and custom services such as seed cleaning where the ownership of the product remains with the primary producer. It is not mandatory that operators obtain an attestation but if requested the requirements of the COR Manual C.11 apply and the CB shall have documented procedures.

6.3 Requirements for Grower Group Certification of Organic Product under COR

1) See the COR Manual C12

7. Additional Accreditation Policy & Procedure

1) Additional policy and procedure documents are available on the COABC website or by request to the COABC office.

7.1 Additional Policy & Procedure List

AB-POL-800 Complaints against CBs & Operators

AB-PRO-800 Complaints against CBs & Operators

POL-80 Complaints against the COABC

AB-PRO-701 Annual Report &Accreditation Renewal

AB-PRO-700C COR & BCCOP Equivalent Accreditation Flowchart

AB-PRO-703C COR CB Management of NCs & Findings

Policy 10A Fees

Policy 10B Refunds

Policy 15 Transitional Labelling

Policy 16 Conflict of Interest

Policy 3 Recognition of Accreditation/Certification Programs

Policy 6 Risk Assessment

Policy 9 Label Use Between CBs