

Austria Bio Garantie GmbH
Königsbrunnerstraße 8
2202 Enzersfeld



Certification program



**Department processing
trade, import and subcontracting
national and international**



Standards:

EU organic reg. 2018/848, its Implementing and Delegating regulations as amended as well as national and private, non-accredited organic standards such as Bio Suisse, Naturland, Bioland and other services in the organic sector.



pictures: AMA, ABG, pixabay, BMDW

This program will be published on www.bio-garantie.com



Table of content

Preface.....	3
Accreditation	3
Scope of application	3
Requirements	3
Activities of ABG/BG.....	4
Employees	4
Application process for inspection and certification.....	4
Feasibility check	4
Signing the contract.....	5
Basic requirements to qualify for the inspection procedure.....	5
Necessary records for organic inspection	5
Documents for inspection	6
Purchase of raw materials	6
Declaration/labelling	6
Terms of use of the Bio Garantie logo.....	7
Inspection assignment/selection of the inspector	7
Inspections.....	7
Risk model for determining the inspection frequency.....	7
Inspection procedure	7
Sampling/analysis.....	8
Creating the report.....	8
Handling of deviations and late submissions.....	8
Certificate.....	9
Publication of the certificates	9
Monitoring of certificates and logos	9
Sanction 1 warning (HR: UP,)	9
Sanction 2 Increased obligation to record and report (HR: UP, RO:CA)	9
Sanction 3 additional, fee-based inspection (HR: UP, RO: CS, AS).....	9
Sanction 4 Exclusion of the affected batch of goods from marketing labelled as a certified product in accordance with the legal basis (HR: SSL, SC, DSC, RO: DP, DS, SC).....	9
Sanction 5 Exclusion of the company or termination of the inspection contract (HR: PC, RO: RC).....	9
Changes of the scope.....	10
Keeping and storing the records.....	10
Appeals, complaints and objections	10
Change of the guidelines	10
Marketing the program.....	10

<p>Preface</p> <p>Austria Bio Garantie GmbH (ABG) was founded in 1993 as an organic inspection body. The task is to inspect and certify biological products: from the organic primary product to the final processor. The ABG works on behalf of the food authorities. Products that are certified by the ABG have the inspection body code AT-BIO-301. The branch Austria Bio Garantie GmbH Enzersfeld Sucursala Bucuresti (hereinafter referred to as ABG Romania) was founded in 2008. It passed all requirements for application as national and European inspection body for Romania in 2009 and acts under the approval of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture. The subsidiary Bio Garantie d.o.o. (BG Croatia) was founded in 2010. It passed all requirements for application as national and European inspection body for Croatia in 2012 and acts under the approval of the Croatian Ministry. The subsidiary Bio Garantie GmbH (Bio Garantie IT) came in our company group in 2020. It passed all requirements for application as national and European inspection body for South Tyrol and acts under the approval of the official authorities.</p>	
<p>Accreditation</p> <p>ABG has been accredited by the Austrian Accreditation Service as a certification body for products in accordance with ISO 17065 since 1998. This ensures that, as an independent, neutral and competent body, it certifies the companies and treats all information confidentially. The Austrian Accreditation Agency is covering over the head quarter of ABG in Austria as well our location in the countries Romania as well South Tyrol with its accreditation. The Croatian Accreditation Agency as well according to ISO 17065 is covering since 2021 the accreditation for the subsidiary in Croatia.</p> <p>The scope of accreditation is constantly being expanded for the benefit of customers. ABG inspects and, if necessary, certifies companies for compliance with the following accredited guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended 	
<p>Scope of application</p> <p>In addition to the general terms and conditions of ABG, this program forms the basis for the inspection and certification of organic products for processing companies, including subcontractors, and allows them to market and label the certified products as organic products. There is trust in companies and consumers when ABG has assessed and certified it as an independent, neutral and competent body. The requirements are specified in the respective guidelines. In this program, reference is only made to the requirements according to the EU Organic Regulation. Organic products may be advertised as such in accordance with the requirements of the ABG certification program.</p> <p>The program applies to all companies that are active in any stage of the production, processing and/or distribution of products with reference to organic production. It applies to certified organic products in accordance with EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended, such as: organic food, organic feed and organic cosmetics.</p> <p>All customers who are in this area of application have access to this program via the ABG/BG homepage.</p> <p>All certificates can be accessed daily via the ABG homepage https://www.easy-cert.com/htm/zertifikate.htm</p>	
<p>Requirements</p> <p>The basis for the production of organic products in the European Union (EU) is generally determined by EU organic reg. 218/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended. It can be downloaded from the ABG/BG homepage.</p> <p>In addition to the general legal provisions applicable to organic products, there are also private law guidelines. Every company can decide if they also want to become certified according to those guidelines.</p> <p>Most of these additional guidelines can be inspected and certified by ABG/BG.</p> <p>The main general requirements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incoming goods: origin of all raw materials. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All agricultural ingredients, with a few precisely defined exceptions, come from certified organic agriculture - Only processing aids and additives may be used that are listed in the annex 3 and 5 of EU organic reg. 2021/1165 and annex 9 of EU organic reg. 889/2008 as amended. - Precise checking of the incoming goods and the accompanying documents - Genetic engineering: precise checking of all additives and processing aids to be GMO-free (by checking declarations of compliance from the suppliers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspected companies are obliged to disclose recipes and the processes used. During the inspection the entire manufacturing process of the organic product is traced. • Production/processing/recipes: organic food must be produced, processed and packaged separately from conventional one. • Storage: organic food must be stored separately from conventional one. • Marking/labelling: the special requirements of EU organic reg. 2018/848 as amended on form and formulations must be met • Documentation obligation: The organic production process must be fully documented using certain documents and information. 	
<p>Further information can be found on the ABG homepage.</p>	
<p>Activities of ABG/BG</p> <p>The activities of ABG/BG include inspections and certifications for the mentioned standards. The entire production process is checked at least once a year to ensure the completeness of the results. Usually ABG/BG carries out the inspection itself. If other inspection bodies are needed, they must be accredited in accordance with ISO 17065 or meet the requirements of the standard to be inspected. If an inspection is outsourced, the customer's consent is obtained in advance. If samples are taken as part of the inspection, these are sent to accredited laboratories (ISO 17025) only.</p>	
<p>Employees</p> <p>ABG/BG employs experienced and impartial staff for inspection and certification. The respective inspector is selected for the respective company or the respective industries, considering the competence and impartiality. The inspection results are checked according to the four-eyes principle: once the inspection has been carried out, the certification is carried out by another competent, impartial person.</p>	
<p>Application process for inspection and certification</p> <p>Interested customers can find out more about the requirements and the inspection and certification process on the ABG/BG homepage. When interested customer register, the operating data is recorded in writing on the "checklist for new customers". The request can be made by telephone, post, e-mail or directly via the homepage. The company then receives information material (or the information where it can be found on the homepage) and the offer according to the current tariff scheme.</p>	
<p>Feasibility check</p> <p><u>Positive feasibility:</u></p> <p>The completed "checklist for new customers" (= registration form) is forwarded to the scheme coordinator for a feasibility check. He/she checks the feasibility of the service based on the available data. Any additions and/or ambiguities will be added by the scheme coordinator after consultation with the interested customer. The scheme coordinator must evaluate the information received to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the information about the customer and the product is sufficient to carry out the certification process; b) all known differences in understanding between the certification body and the customer are resolved, including the agreement on standards or normative documents; c) the scope of the desired certification is defined; d) the means are available to carry out all evaluation activities; 	

<p>e) the certification body has the competence and ability to carry out the certification activities.</p> <p><u>Negative feasibility:</u> If it is not feasible, the scheme coordinator enters "NOT OK". The reason for the negative feasibility is also entered. The company will be informed about this by the scheme coordinator.</p> <p>In this checklist, it is also asked (in the case of new customers interested in an organic inspection/certification) whether the company previously received organic certification and if so by which inspection body. If the company was already certified by another inspection body, the inspection reports including measures and violations, or the official notifications of the last three years are obtained from this inspection body.</p>	
<p>Signing the contract</p> <p>If the company decides in favour of the offered service, it will receive the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection contract • General terms and Conditions • Tariffs for inspections • Sanction catalogue <p>The fees for inspection and certification are invoiced by hour. The inspection contract regulates the scope of the inspection and the duration of the contract; any sanctions and sampling are also described. The scope of inspection, the rights and obligations of the customer and those of ABG, the use of the ABG logo, fees, liability, confidentiality, etc. are described in the General Terms and Conditions.</p> <p>As soon as the inspection contract is signed, the company is considered as an organic company and is reported as such to the food authority. Thus, the companies are obliged to comply with the organic regulations for the production of organic products. Proof of certification is only issued after the organic inspection has been successfully completed. From this point in time, the organic products may be marketed in accordance with the scope of application mentioned above.</p>	
<p>Basic requirements to qualify for the inspection procedure</p> <p>If the company is included in an inspection procedure, the company concerned must create a complete description of the unit and/or the facilities and/or the activities and define all concrete measures to be taken at the level of the unit and/or the facilities and/or the activities are to ensure compliance with the provisions of the organic regulation. This information must be kept up to date for the inspection.</p>	
<p>Necessary records for organic inspection</p> <p>In order to check compliance with the legal regulations within the framework of the organic inspection and to be able to understand the "history" of the organic product, a certain minimum of records must be kept and kept ready for the inspection.</p> <p>On the occasion of the inspection, which takes place at least once a year, the company has to prove that it complies with the guidelines of EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended and, if applicable, the guidelines of other license partners (associations or country-specific organic guidelines). A central point of this inspection is the traceability and flow of goods. The company must prove that sufficient organic raw materials (or possibly raw materials that meet other private law standards) have been purchased in order to manufacture the corresponding organic products. This check is carried out considering recipe proportions, yields and warehouse inventories. For the certification of organic products, this comparison must be feasible and consistent. The main requirement for carrying out a traceability and flow of goods is the complete availability of the above-mentioned documents. IT-based goods accounting or a manually created overview of raw material purchases and product sales as well as</p>	

<p>production records can greatly reduce the effort required for traceability and flow of goods and help to save inspection costs.</p>	
<p>Documents for inspection</p> <p>The following documents must be collected and, if necessary, kept up to date in overview tables:</p> <p>A list of all purchased agricultural products as well as the additives and processing aids used together with the names and addresses of the respective suppliers as well as proof that the purchased products are organic or a permitted conventional product. The valid organic certificate of the supplier at the time of purchase, product labels and accompanying documents, which must contain the organic information in the prescribed form and the code number of the inspection body, serve as proof:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery notes or invoices • Recipes • Production records are used to track the processed quantity of the individual raw materials. 	
<p>Purchase of raw materials</p> <p><u>Ingredients from certified organic production:</u></p> <p>In principle, a processed organic product may only contain agricultural products that themselves come from certified organic production. In practice, the valid certificate issued by an organic inspection body serves as proof of the certified organic origin.</p> <p><u>Ingredients of conventional agricultural origin and ingredients of non-agricultural origin - additives and processing aids:</u></p> <p>Despite the principle that an organic product may only contain agricultural ingredients from organic agriculture, according to the EU regulation it is permitted to use certain ingredients of conventional quality as well as certain additives and processing aids for the production of an organic product.</p> <p>Further information can be found in the relevant legal material.</p> <p><u>Web supplier management:</u></p> <p>Upon request, customers can maintain their organic suppliers on the web and automatically receive the relevant certification results (e.g. web supplier management for dairies).</p>	
<p>Declaration/labelling</p> <p>The declared aim of EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended is the EU-wide uniform regulation of organic agriculture. "Organic" products are considered to be "organic" if the product, its ingredients or the feed materials are labelled in the labelling, advertising or business papers, which give the buyer the impression that the product, its components or the feed materials comply with the mentioned regulation.</p> <p>The labelling of an organic product or a product with organic ingredients is therefore precisely defined by EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended. A product that does not fully meet the requirements of the regulation must therefore in no way be declared with a reference to organic agriculture!</p> <p>Further information can be found in the information sheets on the ABG/BG homepage</p>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	

<p>Terms of use of the Bio Garantie logo</p> <p>Processing companies may use the Bio Garantie logo free of charge from the conclusion of the inspection contract for the identification/labelling of products that are specified in EU organic reg. 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended are regulated and may include a reference to organic production in the sales description.</p> <p>The terms of use of the Bio Garantie and the combined Bio Garantie/EU organic logo specify how the Bio Garantie logo may be used on products and in advertising. In addition, the mandatory labelling information of the EU organic logo is recorded. The Bio Garantie/EU organic logo may not be used on certain products (e.g. in-conversion goods, fertilizers, etc.)</p> <p>The logos can be downloaded from the homepage in print quality. The regulations must be complied with both in terms of labelling and advertising material, and any improper use will be punished.</p>	
<p>Inspection assignment/selection of the inspector</p> <p>The selection of the inspector for the respective company is made by the scheme coordinator considering his competence and impartiality.</p> <p>The following aspects are considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in the respective production field • No regional market interest with/against the respective company • No family or economic relationships with the respective company/no personal, economic bias towards the respective company • Rotation of the inspector on the company <p>The inspector receives the order list and checks the individual orders for impartiality and feasibility. If the inspector is biased with a company/order or if it is not feasible (e.g. quantitative), he/she shall inform the ABG/BG of the reasons in writing. The respective order will be withdrawn.</p>	
<p>Inspections</p> <p>Three types of inspections are carried out by competent, impartial staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Main inspection</u> Complete inspection of the production/processing units or other locations once a year. These inspections are usually announced. • <u>Spot checks</u> The number of spot checks is determined for each company in accordance with the EU organic regulation and relevant national guidelines; the inspections are usually carried out unannounced. • <u>Additional inspection</u> The additional inspection is an inspection outside of the risk model due to negative inspection results or other reasons. They are usually announced. <p><u>Recurring inspections</u> They are carried out in the new inspection season of the following year.</p>	
<p>Risk model for determining the inspection frequency</p> <p>A main inspection takes place every calendar year. Any additional inspections (i.e. additional inspections or spot checks in the current year) are based on our sanction model and national requirements (sanction 3 and sanction 4).</p> <p>The evaluation takes place during certification and always has an effect on the following year. Other service or project-specific inspection frequency models are excluded from this standard regulation.</p> <p>Additional inspections</p> <p>Irrespective of the spot checks mentioned based on the “risk-based model for determining of inspection frequency”, additional inspections are carried out based on negative inspection results (see sanction model sanction 3 and 4) or other reasons.</p>	
<p>Inspection procedure</p>	

<p><u>Inspection preparation</u> The inspector makes an appointment with the company. ABG/BG sends an appointment confirmation (or appointment agreement) including an audit plan and a corresponding overview for preparation (inspection-relevant documents) to the company. The inspector prepares himself professionally for the inspection.</p> <p><u>On-site inspection</u> The inspector introduces himself and explains the procedure and focus of the current inspection and refers to confidentiality. The inspection is carried out using a checklist. Comments on the individual checklist points are made.</p> <p>Usually a documented traceability and flow of goods must be carried out for each main inspection. The necessary information relating to stock levels, incoming goods, production records, outgoing goods, ... must also be available. This includes positive documentation/objective evidence regarding checking stock levels, which documents were checked as a basis, checking EDP system etc. If anything is unclear, the inspectors can refer to the training documents on the ownCloud at any time.</p> <p>In the event of any deviations, sanctions will be applied according to the sanction catalogue. The relevant units or relevant companies and facilities are inspected together with the responsible persons.</p> <p>During the inspection, it is also checked whether the customer has received complaints or complaints from third parties and whether measures have been taken immediately. According to the inspection contract, the company is obliged to report any complaint by third parties (higher-level authority, similar testing agency, consumer) about its products certified by ABG/BG and to take immediate action. This concerns complaints that are addressed directly to the company and relate to a test criterion.</p> <p><u>Inspection result</u> The inspector documents the inspection result and any deviations from the sanctions according to the sanction catalogue in the checklist. The inspection report is then created in digital form. The detected deviations and necessary measures, including deadlines, are discussed with the company, ambiguities and open points are clarified. The company takes note of the documented inspection results with his signature. The report is sent to the company via e-mail. If the company so wishes or if an e-mail address is not available, the report will also be sent by post. The report is also available to the company in its customer portal of ABG.</p>	
<p>Sampling/analysis According to current organic legislation, ABG/BG is obliged to take samples and have them analysed in accredited laboratories in order to detect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any substances that are not permitted in organic production, • non-compliant production processes • traces of agents that are not permitted in an organic product. <p>The number of analyses must correspond to at least 5% of the number of companies subject to organic inspection.</p>	
<p>Creating the report The inspection is checked by a competent certifier in accordance with the four-eyes principle in technical terms for its traceability and correctness.</p> <p>In the event of a change that occurs as part of the certification, an updated report is actively brought to the attention of the customer again. This inspection report can be objected to in writing within 14 days, otherwise it is deemed to have been accepted.</p>	
<p>Handling of deviations and late submissions</p>	

<p>Should deviations occur during the inspection, sanctions are assigned according to the sanction catalogue. If a result occurs that leads to higher sanction, these are processed immediately. Late submissions from customers must be made in writing and assessed again. In principle, a certificate can only be issued after the specified requirements and sanctions have been met in a timely manner.</p>	
<p>Certificate</p> <p>If all requirements are met, the company receives an updated certificate (or more). The certificate can either not be issued or can be withdrawn retrospectively if the inspection and certification costs are not paid. ABG/BG is entitled to transmit the inspection results to the competent authority and, if necessary, to other authorized persons. The certificate is valid until 31.01. of the following year, based on the main inspection.</p>	
<p>Publication of the certificates</p> <p>ABG/BG operates the EASY-CERT certificate platform together with partner inspection bodies. Clients and consumers can download the current certificates free of charge from the homepage https://www.easy-cert.com/htm/zertifikate.htm under the menu item "online tools". Certificates and further information on certified companies of ABG/BG and other inspection bodies including their partners as well as approvals for private standards can also be accessed via this platform.</p>	
<p>Monitoring of certificates and logos</p> <p>The proper use of the certificates and logos is defined in the general terms and conditions. Clients are required to inform ABG/BG immediately of all changes in the company and of the products. During the inspection activities, the correct use of the certificates and the logos is monitored. All ABG/BG employees and inspectors are obliged to report any abuse they discover.</p> <p>If the improper use of a valid certificate is found, an appropriate measure will be taken based on the sanction catalogue. If the use of an invalid certificate is found, the company is requested to submit a valid certificate. If a valid certificate cannot be provided, sanctions will be applied in accordance with the valid sanction catalogue.</p>	
<p>Sanction 1 warning (HR: UP,)</p> <p>This warning is issued if minor violations take place and usually contains a deadline.</p>	
<p>Sanction 2 Increased obligation to record and report (HR: UP, RO: CA)</p> <p>This sanction calls for an improvement of records/transparency or submitting of documents. This sanction usually has a deadline.</p>	
<p>Sanction 3 additional, fee-based inspection (HR: UP, RO: CS, AS)</p> <p>This fee-based additional inspection can be issued if the transgressions under sanction 1 and 2 repeat themselves. This sanction is useful for deficiencies with a time limit that demand an additional inspection. This sanction can also be issued for serious deficiencies that do not demand an exclusion of the product batch.</p>	
<p>Sanction 4 Exclusion of the affected batch of goods from marketing labelled as a certified product in accordance with the legal basis (HR: SSL, SC, DSC, RO: DP, DS, SC)</p> <p>This sanction is issued when a product or a company is being excluded from merchandising with reference to the legal basis. The duration of this merchandising ban for the product or the company must be arranged with the authorities.</p> <p>A proposal for the sanctioning is sent to the competent authority of the responsible federal state and processed further in consultation with them. After the decision of the competent authority has been received, the conditions are assessed.</p>	
<p>Sanction 5 Exclusion of the company or termination of the inspection contract (HR: PC, RO: RC)</p> <p>The company terminates the inspection contract, or the licensee has an unsolvable situation in accordance with the inspection contract or very serious deficiencies were found during the inspection. The company then receives the following information in writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "You may no longer refer to your product with regard to any norm/standard/guideline mentioned above during either marketing, labeling, declaration or advertisement. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The signet, the code number and any other reference of inspection/certification from/carried out by ABG/BG may no longer be used. • An organic certificate or a certification standard used in advertisement loses all its validity and may no longer be used. • The certificate is invalid, the original must be returned to us. <p>According to our general terms and conditions, we reserve the right to take legal steps if the certificate and/or labels are misused after termination of the contract</p> <p>The Food Authorities as well as possible licensed partners/standard implementers will be notified about the termination of this contract.”</p> <p>The termination is documented in the address and certification database and the products are no longer published on the EASY-CERT certificate platform with immediate effect. The certificate loses its validity (if the certificate has already been sent) or a new certificate is not issued.</p>	
<p>Changes of the scope</p> <p>The company undertakes to notify the ABG/BG immediately in writing of any significant changes in the company compared to the information in the company description.</p> <p>The company undertakes to inform ABG/BG immediately in writing if it withdraws from the inspection system or if the company or part of the company to be inspected is transferred or operated by another legal entity.</p> <p>The company further undertakes to transfer all rights and obligations from the respective concluded contract(s) to the legal successor(s).</p> <p>ABG/BG takes further steps (possibly another inspection and certification) and issues a new certificate if necessary.</p>	
<p>Keeping and storing the records</p> <p>The companies are obliged to keep records and to keep the documentation in the form prescribed by ABG/BG and the content described by it. These are to be kept for a period of at least ten years.</p> <p>ABG/BG guarantees that all information is treated confidentially and that the records are stored securely.</p>	
<p>Appeals, complaints and objections</p> <p>The transparency of the activities is very important to ABG/BG. If there are any ambiguities regarding the inspection and certification activities, the company can contact ABG/BG verbally, in writing or via the homepage.</p> <p>The companies as well as third parties could lodge objections and complaints in writing against decisions made during inspections, audits and certifications. The case will be checked again using the four-eyes principle. Further processing is carried out by independent persons. The person who made the decision may not have a leading role in the further decisions.</p> <p>For legal reasons, specific objections or complaints must be received by us in writing within 14 days.</p> <p>In addition, the company is obliged to record complaints from third parties regarding the inspection and certification activities and to report these immediately in writing to ABG/BG and resolve them. This is checked or, depending on the situation, further measures are taken.</p>	
<p>Change of the guidelines</p> <p>The company must always meet the product requirements and ensure that the product meets the requirements.</p> <p>ABG/BG informs the companies about changes to the guidelines and the associated changes for the companies.</p> <p>If the guidelines change, ABG/BG decides on the necessity of changing the certification program and setting the deadline by which the relevant requirements must be implemented by the companies (if this is not mentioned in the changed guidelines).</p>	
<p>Marketing the program</p> <p>Companies that are certified by ABG/BG and meet the certification requirements may refer to the ABG/BG certification program.</p>	