



Austria Bio Garantie
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Certification program



Course of inspection and certification in the field of:
Section “Organic Farming”



Standards:
European Regulation on organic production and labeling of organic products (EC) 2018/848
with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended ;
Relevant national guideline/s, as amended;
as well as private, non-accredited organic-standards



The program will be published at <https://www.bio-garantie.com>

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<p>Preface</p> <p>Austria Bio Garantie GmbH as head quarter in Austria (hereinafter referred to as ABG) was founded as an organic farming control entity in 1993.</p> <p>ABG acts on behalf of the official food authorities. Its activity includes inspection and certification of organic products: from the organic raw material to the end-point processor and distributor.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 Agency according to ISO 17065 as a product inspection body since 1998. This guarantees that ABG in its role of independent, neutral and competent body is entitled to certify companies and treats any 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 continuously expanded in answer to the requirements of the customers. ABG/BG inspects and, if required, performs certification of companies in relation to the implementation of the following regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Regulation on organic production and labeling of organic products (EU) 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended • Relevant national guideline/s, as amended 	
<p>Activities of Austria Bio Garantie/Bio Garantie</p> <p>The activity of ABG/BG includes inspection and certification of organic farming products. The production process is inspected and certified at least once per year.</p> <p>If samples are collected during the inspection, these are sent for analysis in accredited laboratories.</p>	
<p>Field of application of this program</p> <p>This program (= activity of the inspection body), along with the General Terms and Conditions, represent the reference basis for inspection and certification of organic products in agricultural companies by ABG/BG.</p> <p>The program is relevant to any agricultural farms operating at any level of production, processing and/or distribution of products labeled as organic and having a signed contract with ABG/BG, including subcontractors working with materials supplied by the customer. Certified organic products are subject to the regulations of EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended and the relevant national guideline/s, as amended.</p> <p>The program can be found at the web page of ABG/BG.</p>	
<p>Personnel</p> <p>For the purpose of inspection, certification and communication, ABG/BG has experienced and objective employees. A competent inspector is selected for the respective company (production field) considering their competence and unprejudiced attitude.</p> <p>Usually ABG/BG performs inspections by itself. If the services of other control bodies are used for inspection of companies, these have to be accredited according to ISO 17065, resp. to comply with the standards subject to control. If any inspection is assigned to a subcontractor, this requires the agreement of the customer in advance. The verification of the inspection and certification results is performed by an authorized inspection person.</p>	
<p>Requirements</p> <p>The basis for manufacture of organic products in the European Union (EU), is formed by legal regulations – Regulation 2018/848 with Implementing and Delegating regulation as amended (hereinafter referred to as EU Organic Regulation) and the relevant national guideline/s, as amended. Regulations can be found on the homepage of Austria Bio Garantie/Bio Garantie.</p> <p>In addition to the common regulations for organic products in countries, further private law regulations (e.g. associations regulations) also exist; their compliance is a choice in the</p>	

hands of each entrepreneur (depending on the conditions). ABG/BG is authorized to inspect the compliance of these regulations and provide certification.

Overview of the most important common requirements

The use of production resources manufactures using genetic engineering is prohibited in all fields (excluding pharmaceutical).

Plant growing:

Plant protection is performed mainly in the form of measures for disease prevention. The use of chemicals for plant protection and artificial fertilizers is prohibited.

The purposeful humus management and the balanced rotation of crops maintain and improve the natural soil fertility.

Species and varieties suitable for the location have to be used. The seeding and planting materials must be of organic origin and must not be treated with prohibited substances.

Animal husbandry:

The humane (adapted to the species) treatment (and breeding) of animals is the supreme principle. The latter includes: sufficient freedom of movement, proper resting place, sufficiently aerated cattle-pens, sufficient light, a place for walking or grasslands, for all animals in the organic farm. Overview of the requirements can be found in the information sheets of ABG/BG.

Feed:

Organic animals must be fed with organic feeding stuff. If the market does not offer sufficient organic feed, poultry and pigs may also be fed with certain quantity of conventional foods. The use of nutritional stimulants and flour of animal origin are prohibited.

Companies manufacturing readymade foods for organic companies are also subject to mandatory control by organic inspection body. Organic companies are allowed to use only certified ready foods of verified origin.

Animal health:

Special focus in this relation is placed on prevention. Sick animals must be treated mainly using natural methods, medications are allowed only after diagnosis by veterinary. The use of medications must be strictly recorded. In such cases, the legal period of waiting prior to distribution of organic products on the market must be doubled.

Organic processing:

If all compounds are not available in organic form, conventional additives and processed supplements corresponding to the requirements of the organic regulation may be used.

Additional information regarding purchase of products, labeling and marking (identification) can be found in the catalogue of resources and manufacturing materials of Easy-cert services GmbH, which is sent by ABG to the agricultural operators annually.

Any agricultural subcontractors involved in the manufacturing process of organic products must be reported to the inspection body. These are also included in the control system.

Only after expiration of the respective conversion period in the fields of plant growing and stock-farming, the products can be labeled and identified as organic.

Required documentation for organic farming inspection

Organic inspection is a control system which requires demonstration that the organic farm complies or has complied with the EU regulations– the EU Organic Regulation, the relevant national guideline/s, as amended, and optionally the regulations of other licensing partners (e.g. associations). To allow the organic inspection to verify the compliance with the regulations and trace the “history” of the organic product, a certain minimum set of records must be kept and presented during inspection.

When a new customer is accepted in inspection procedure, the farm (company) must be able to present complete description of the manufacturing unit and/or facilities and/or activities, as well as any specific precautionary measures that have to be undertaken by the manufacturing unit and/or facilities and/or activities, in order to guarantee the compliance of the EU Organic Regulation provisions.

The presentation of respective documents (invoices, certificates, etc.) allows the company to demonstrate that after the date of signing a contract for inspection, it has purchased and used only allowed manufacturing products.










The legal purchase of animals must be documented using respective documents for delivery and invoices, and the status of the animal must be demonstrated if required via manufacturing certificate.

The production log of ABG/BG may serve as a sample of all additionally required records / documents. Any equivalent to this register records / documents are also accepted. In specific cases, the control body may require additional information and documents during inspection. The required documents must be kept in the company for a period of ten years at least.

ABG/BG guarantees that the entire information shall be treated in a confidential manner and the obtained documents of the company during inspection shall be stored in a reliable manner.

<p>Application for inspection and certification</p> <p>Interested customers may obtain information about the requirements and the course of inspection and certification in person, by phone, mail, fax, e-mail or directly from the homepage of ABG/BG</p> <p><u>Inspection of interested companies:</u> In case of issues not made clear prior to contract signing which could not be clarified, than there is an opportunity to perform and inspection of the company by ABG/BG.</p>	
<p>Information and presentation of the offer</p> <p>When interested companies are registered, they provide working data. Then, the company is sent a first information package. The first information package, among other things, includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Contracts for Control • General Terms and Conditions • Prices for operational control • List of sanctions • First information questionnaire • Selected information leaflets related to the regulations, if necessary <p>The Contract for Control and the General Terms and Conditions, among others, describes the scope of the inspections and the duration of the contract, as well as any possible sanctions, sample collection, rights and obligations of the customers and ABG/BG, the use of Bio Garantie logo, tariffs, legal responsibility and confidentiality.</p>	
<p>Application evaluation and feasibility study</p> <p>The responsible scope manager will decide on the basis of the returned documents, if the service "organic inspection" can be provided. The following points are evaluated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the details of the desired certification complete? - Is the desired certification of the product groups/activity possible according to certification requirements (EU Organic Regulation)? - Are the resources (competences) available for inspection and certification? - Are there any other differences that speak against certification? <p>If the feasibility of the certification is determined by the inspection body, the inspection contract will be signed.</p> <p>Contract signing</p> <p>Once the feasibility check has been completed, the contracts signed by the customer will be countersigned and one copy will be returned.</p> <p>If an organic certification has already been carried out by another body, the relevant documents are obtained.</p> <p>As of the signing of the organic inspection contract, the company will be deemed a organically operating company, notified to the Competent Authority as such and obliged to comply with organic provisions. The certificate will only be issued after an inspection has been successfully completed.</p> <p>Application for extension of the scope</p> <p>An extension of the product certifications desired by the company is again evaluated as described above (see application evaluation) and confirmed or rejected by the corresponding certification.</p>	
<p>Assigning the inspection / selection of inspector</p> <p>The choice of inspector for the company is taken by a specialized official person considering their competence and independency.</p> <p>The following aspects are considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in the relevant production field • Absence of regional commercial interest with / against the respective manager of the company • Absence of ties of relationship and economic relations with the manager of the company / absence of personal / business relations with the manager of the company • Rotation of the inspector in the company <p>The inspector is provided with a list of orders and inspects each order for impartiality and feasibility.</p> <p>If the inspector experiences difficulties with a company / order or the performance (e.g. quantitative) is impossible, then the inspector informs ABG/BG in written and reasonable form. The respective assignment is canceled.</p>	

<p>Course of inspection</p> <p>Two types of inspections are performed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Annually inspection</u> Comprehensive inspection of the company is performed once a year. • <u>Spot inspections / Additional inspections / Partial inspections</u> According to the EU Organic Regulation, the inspection body is obliged, using established risk model principle, to perform additional inspections of minimum 10 % of the contracted companies. Furthermore, spot inspections on suspicion are usually carried out unannounced in addition to the main checks. The customers may also require additional inspections for the purpose of additional certifications against payment. <p><u>Unannounced inspections</u> At least 10 % of all inspections and visits carried out in accordance with Article 7 (a) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/279 are unannounced.</p> <p><u>Preparation of the inspection</u> The inspector is professionally trained for the inspection based on the records of the company, resp. the basis of previous inspections. In result, the inspector agrees with the company a term for inspection or performs the inspections unannounced.</p> <p><u>On-site inspection</u> The inspector introduces himself/herself and explains the course of the procedure and the basic moments of the current organic inspection. The relevant units, resp. the relevant companies and company sections are reviewed along with the responsible person/s. The inspection is performed based on inspection check list. In case of any non-compliances, a sanction is imposed according to the sanction list.</p> <p><u>Results of inspection</u> The inspector documents the result of inspection and in case of any non-compliances describes those violations along with the sanctions imposed according to the sanction list. In result, a report from the inspection is prepared. The established violations and the required measures, including terms and conditions, are discussed, any unclear and open issued are clarified. The person in the company authorized to sign confirms the documented results of the inspection. The inspection report is sent by email or ordinary mail to the company</p>	
<p>Collection of samples / sample analysis</p> <p>According to the valid organic legislation, ABG/BG has to collect samples and present them for verification by accredited laboratories in order to demonstrate any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prohibited substances in organic farming - manufacturing processes in conflict with the requirements <p>According to the EU Organic Regulation, the inspection body is obliged, using established risk model principle, to take samples of minimum 5 % of the contracted companies.</p> <p>If any prohibited substances or procedures are established, the sanctions, after agreement with the competent authority, may include prohibition for market distribution as organic products or administrative penalties.</p>	
<p>Verification of the inspection and company certification</p> <p>The competent personnel in the office of Austria Bio Garantie/Bio Garantie verifies the inspection in terms of its traceability, resp. observation of the “four-eyes”principle. If, during the process of certification, a change in the inspection report is required, the company is provided with the amended version. The inspection report may be objected in written not later than 14 days, otherwise it is considered accepted. ABG/BG is entitled and obliged to send the results of the inspections to the competent authorities and to other authorized person if any.</p> <p>Certificate</p> <p>In case that all requirements for certification are met, then the company is issued a valid certificate. This certificate allows the company to distribute on the market the specified in the certificate products with the described identification signs. The certificate is valid up to 31st of January of the year following the next year based on the main inspection. In case of failure to pay the costs for inspection and certification, the issue of certificate may be suspended or the certificate may be revoked.</p>	
<p>Publication of certificates</p> <p>Along with partner inspection bodies, ABG/BG maintains the certification platform EASY-CERT, where certificates and other information can be found (e.g. private certification standards) for companies of ABG/BG and other control bodies. You may find this platform via our homepage, section „easy-cert”.</p>	

<p>Identification / Labeling</p> <p>In case that the relevant requirements of EU Organic Regulation and the Guideline “Organic Production”, as amended, regarding the production and conversion period of organic farming, the product may be denoted as organic.</p> <p>A product is considered organic if its labels, advertising materials or company documents leave the impression in customers that this product or its compounds are produced according to the requirements of this Regulation.</p> <p>A product which complies only partially with the requirements of Regulation cannot be declared as organic in any way!</p> <p>If any entrepreneur suggests that their product is not in compliance with the regulations, then any organic product labeling of this product must be removed until clarification of any doubts. According to the EU Organic Regulation, the company has to report to ABG/BG any complaints from third parties (higher control authorities, other inspection bodies, customers) regarding certified products, and undertake immediate measures.</p> <p>This applies to complaints which directly concern the company and are relevant to the provisions of the EU Organic Regulations or the Guideline “Organic Production”, as amended.</p>	
<p>Terms and conditions for use of Bio Garantie group logo</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;">   <p>HR-EKO-07 uzgojeno u/izvan EU</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;">   <p>RO-ECO-018 Agricultura UE/Non-UE</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;">   <p>IT BIO 001 BZ EU/nicht EU-Landwirtschaft</p> </div> </div> </div> <p>The terms and conditions for use of the logo of Bio Garantie group and the combined Bio- logo of Bio Garantie and EU describes the rules for use of the respective identifications of products and for the purpose of advertising. Furthermore, these contain the mandatory data on labels for the combined Bio Garantie-EU-Bio logo. The companies are entitled to use the logo of Bio Garantie group free-of-charge from the time of first certification for the purpose of identification/labeling of products corresponding to the EU Organic Regulation as amended, and may include in the product description the text for organic product. The Bio Garantie/EU-Bio logo cannot be used on products in conversion period.</p> <p>The logo may be downloaded in printing quality from the homepage of Bio Garantie. The regulations must be observed for the purpose of labeling and advertising. Illegal use is subject to sanctions.</p>	
<p>Control of certificates and denotations</p> <p>The legitimate use of certificates and denotations is settled in the contractual provisions. The inspection process controls the legitimate use of certificates and their denotations. All partners and control authorities have to report any established violations.</p> <p>If a misuse of valid certificate is established, respective sanction is imposed. If use of invalid certificate is established, the company shall be asked to provide a valid one. If valid certificate cannot be provided, then the sanction list applies. The authorities and the other competent bodies are informed.</p>	
<p>Measures in case of violations and additional provision of documents</p> <p>In case the inspection establishes violation, sanctions shall be imposed according to the sanction list. If any circumstance results in sanction imposed by ABG, this circumstance is reviewed in the office of the certification unit and the respective sanction is announced to the</p>	

company. Additional presentation of documents is required by the customer in written, followed by further evaluation. In general, the company may receive a certificate only after performance of the specified requirements and sanctions in reasonable time.	
<p>List of measures Croatia</p> <p>UP: Warning</p> <p>SSL: Downgrading lot status</p> <p>SSPR: Downgrading of the status of production resources</p> <p>DSC: Partial certificate suspension</p> <p>SC: Certificate suspension</p> <p>PC: Termination of the inspection contract, withdrawal of the certificate</p>	
<p>List of sanctions Romania</p> <p>Sanction type Minor:</p> <p>CA: Request of improvement, increased record keeping and reporting obligations</p> <p>AS: Warning</p> <p>CS: Additional inspection</p> <p>Sanction type Major:</p> <p>DS: Downgrading surface</p> <p>DP: Downgrade product/lot/production series; exclusion from selling products with organic status</p> <p>Sc: Certificate suspension</p> <p>RC: Exclusion from the organic system, certificate withdrawal, contract termination</p>	
<p>List of sanctions Italy</p> <p>1: Warning</p> <p>2: Supression</p> <p>3: Suspension</p> <p>4: Exclusion</p>	
<p>Complaints and objections</p> <p>Transparency is of special importance for ABG/BG. In case of unclarified issues regarding inspection and certification activities, companies may contact directly ABG/BG by phone, in written or via ABG/BG homepage.</p> <p>Companies, as well as third parties, are entitled to file complaints in written in relation to decisions taken after inspections, audits and certifications.</p> <p>Any complaints against inspection reports must be received by ABG/BG in written not later than 14 days.</p> <p>Furthermore, the company is obliged to record any complaints from third parties in relation to the inspection and certification activities, and to inform immediately Austria Bio Garantie/Bio Garantie in written, and resolve the issue. This is verified according to the case, and proper additional measures are undertaken.</p>	
<p>Changes in scope</p> <p>The company has to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform immediately ABG/BG in written on any significant changes in the company compared to the data included in the company description; • Inform immediately ABG/BG in written in case of withdraw from the control system or if the controlled company or its branch is transferred or managed to/by another legal entity; • Transfer all rights and obligations arising from the respective signed contract/s to its legal successor/s. <p>In the case of such changes, ABG/BG preserves its right to perform additional inspections.</p>	
<p>Amendment of regulations</p> <p>The company must follow the regulation at all times and guarantee that the product complies with the requirements.</p> <p>ABG/BG informs the companies on any amendments in the regulations and the measures required in this relation.</p> <p>In case of amendment of regulations, ABG/BG shall decide if amendment of the certification program is required and shall determine a deadline, up to which the companies must meet the relative requirements (if not provided in the amended regulations).</p>	
<p>Reference to this program</p> <p>The companies certified by ABG/BG and meeting the requirements of the certification program are entitled to refer to the certification program of ABG/BG.</p>	