Suppliers Approval Guide

Contents
Verifying your suppliers....................................................................................................................................... 2
Understanding the difference between GB Organic Standards and Soil Association Organic Standards .................................................................................................................................................................. 2
Checking organic certificates and control bodies ........................................................................................ 3
Section 1: Soil Association Certified Suppliers (GB)...................................................................................... 2
Soil Association Certificate examples............................................................................................................... 3
Section 2: Non-SA certified GB, and EU Suppliers ........................................................................................ 8
GB certificate example ........................................................................................................................................ 10
EU Certificate Example ........................................................................................................................................ 11
Section 3: Third country suppliers (Outside GB and EU) .......................................................................... 13
  • Non-UK countries recognised as having equivalent organic standards to GB, and the certification bodies that operate in these countries, as listed in the government online register recognised Non-UK countries and territories annex III. .............................................................................................................................. 13
  • Non-UK control bodies/ certifiers recognised as having equivalent organic standards to GB, who operate in countries which do not have equivalent organic standards, as listed in the online government register recognised Non-UK control bodies and authorities annex IV. ..... 13
How to use annex III............................................................................................................................................ 14
This annex lists countries and territories which have been recognised by DEFRA as having equivalent organic standards to GB. ........................................................................................................................ 14
How to use annex IV............................................................................................................................................ 14
Third Country Certificate Example .................................................................................................................. 15
Verifying your suppliers

You will need to verify the certification documents of your suppliers to ensure they
a) identify your supplier,
b) cover the type or range of products you are purchasing,
c) are valid at the time you are making the purchase.

You must make a record of these checks. The system you have in place to verify the
certification documents of your suppliers and record these checks will be verified at
inspection.

This guide will show you how to verify the certification documents of your suppliers
yourself.

Understanding the difference between GB Organic
Standards and Soil Association Organic Standards

Soil Association certifies businesses to two separate standards, you will need to know to
which standard your product can be certified to, and which suppliers have equivalent
organic standards.

- **The GB organic standards** as laid out in retained regulation 834/2007 &
  889/2008 are the baseline organic standards all organic products must meet in
  GB.
- **Soil Association higher organic standards.** This certification means the
  product has met both the baseline GB requirements and the additional
  requirements or ‘higher standards’ set out in the Soil Association standards.

Soil Association has higher organic standards in relation to:

- Meat, animal and fish products including poultry and eggs
- Ingredients from endangered species
- Palm Oil
- GMO’s
- Packaging materials
- Wine
- Use of additives, flavourings, processing aids

If you wish for your product to be certified to Soil Association higher standards and
carry the Soil Association symbol, and your product contains any of the ingredients
listed in the **Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex** please submit the supplier certificates
for review to food.drink@soilassociation.org.
Once you have read the following guidance on how to approve your suppliers, please use the Verifying your Suppliers Checklist at the end of this guide to ensure you have made the requisite checks.

**Checking organic certificates and control bodies**

**Bio C - BIO C**
This website is a register of organic businesses from countries around the world, you can use the search function within Bio C to check the validity of an organic certificate by searching the business name, postcode and country. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and does not include all organic businesses or countries and the search function can be sensitive so ensure you use correct capital letters, spacing and spellings.

**Organic register of approved UK control bodies - UK approved Control Bodies**
This is a government website listing all the organic certification bodies within the UK. You can check your supplier is certified by an approved UK certification body using this website.

**OFIS - Control Bodies from Member States**
This page allows you to check the control bodies which are registered with the EC for organic certification within the EU. You can search by the certification code found on the supplier certificate or by country or city.

The EU has a [website](https://www.soilassociation.org/certification) where you can check certification of companies within the EU and EEA countries.

**Annex III) Recognised Non-UK countries and territories - Organic Register of Equivalent Countries**

This list provides details of countries or territories outside the UK that can certify organic food for import into Great Britain.

The list shows:

- categories of food that you can import from each country or territory.
- any restrictions that apply for each product category – these are listed under ‘Limitations’ and ‘Notes’.
- Names, code numbers and websites of the control bodies and authorities that can certify food for import from each country or territory.

Simply select the country your supplier is from on the cover sheet and use the page references to navigate to the list of approved certification bodies for that country.
Annex IV] Recognised Non-UK control bodies and control authorities - Organic register of equivalent certification bodies

This list provides details of the non-UK control bodies and control authorities that can certify organic food for import into Great Britain.

The list shows:

- addresses, codes numbers and websites of the control bodies and authorities.
- countries or territories where the control bodies and authorities can certify organic food.
- categories of food that the control bodies and control authorities can certify in each country or territory.
- any restrictions that apply – these are listed under ‘Exceptions’ and ‘Notes’.
- how long the control body or authority will be recognised as equivalent to a UK control body.

If you'd like further guidance or to double check your supplier's certificate, please contact food.drink@soilassociation.org.
Section 1: Soil Association Certified Suppliers (GB)

Can I use this supplier for organic ingredients in products certified to Soil Association organic standards?

Is the certificate issued by Soil Association Certification and does it confirm the product is certified to Soil Association organic standards? See examples on following page.

No – it is a GB standard certificate, not SA

Does the product/ingredient you intend to buy have additional sourcing requirements?

- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs
- Wine
- Palm Oil or Endangered Species
- Flavourings

We may need more information to confirm the ingredient meets Soil Association higher standards before it can be used in an SA certified product. If the supplier cannot be verified as meeting the higher SA standards, you can either:

1. Switch to supplier certified to SA standards for the ingredient in question.
2. Certify the product to GB standards instead (product cannot use the SA symbol).

Ingredients from this supplier can be used in SA standard products.

Please see the Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex for more details on which ingredients have additional sourcing requirements to be suitable for use in SA standard products.
Soil Association Certificate examples

*Please note, all the company names on certificate examples have been redacted.

Soil Association Certification issues both a certificate and a trading schedule.

Certificate for a business certified to Soil Association standards

The Soil Association Symbol will be present on certificates where the products are certified to Soil Association higher standards. This does not appear on GB standard certificates issued by Soil Association Certification.

Presence of Soil Association symbol means they are certified to Soil Association higher standards.

Check certificate is in date at point of purchase.
Trading Schedule for a business certified to Soil Association standards

‘The business has been inspected and satisfies the requirements of the Soil Association organic standards.’

Page 1:

Soil Association Certification

Trading Schedule

Company Name:
Address:

Licence No:

The business above has been inspected and satisfies the requirements of the Soil Association organic standards. The named operator is certified as meeting the requirements as laid down in Retained Regulations No 834/2007 and 889/2008. This document has been issued on the basis of Article 29(1) of Retained Regulation No 834/2007 and 889/2008.

This document lists the enterprises and products that have been licensed by Soil Association Certification Limited and is valid until the date stated, unless surrendered by the business or suspended or revoked by Soil Association Certification Limited.

Valid until 31/05/2024

This document may be used to market the following licensed products only:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprises</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract packing</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exporting</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing from EU countries</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing/manufacturing</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Blend Mushroom Capsules</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mushroom Powder (Reishi, Maitake, Shiitake, Cordyceps, Chaga, Cordyceps, Lion’s Mane)</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% Dark Chocolate Drops</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% Dark Chocolate Drops with Chia Seeds</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% Dark Chocolate Drops with Turmeric and Maca</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acai Berry Capsules</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acerola Powder</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot Kernels - Sweet</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashwagandha Capsules</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashwagandha Powder</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana Flakes</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana Powder</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana Powder (Freeze Dried)</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baobab Powder</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley Grass &amp; Wheatgrass Capsules</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 2 lists activities/enterprises and products.
Certificate for a business certified to GB standards by Soil Association

Note how the GB standard certificate does not feature the Soil Association Symbol
Trading Schedule for a business certified to GB standards by Soil Association

'The named operator is certified as meeting the requirements as laid down in retained Regulations No 834/2007 and 889/2008.'

Soil Association Certification

Trading Schedule

Company Name:

Address:

Licence No:

This document lists the enterprises and products that have been licensed by SA Certification Limited and is valid until the date stated, unless surrendered by the business or suspended or revoked by SA Certification Limited.

Valid until 31/05/2024

This document may be used to market the following licensed products only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprises</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exporting</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing/manufacturing</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Blend Mushroom Capsules</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barleygrass Powder (EU)</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2: Non-SA certified GB, and EU Suppliers

Can I use another GB/EU supplier for organic ingredients in products intended to be certified to **GB standards**?

- **Does this certificate confirm certification to: Article 29 (1) of Retained Regulation No 834/2007 and 889/2008 or 2018/848?**
  - see example certificate on following page.

- **NO**
  - Without further verification from the certifier or from Soil Association certification this may not be used as a supplier for organic products in GB.

- **YES**
  - This supplier can be used for ingredients in products that are certified to GB standards. Make sure you have verified their certification documents as per standard 5.7.2.
Non-SA certified GB, and EU Suppliers cont.

Can I use another GB/EU supplier for organic ingredients in products intended to be certified to Soil Association higher standards?

Does this certificate confirm certification to: Article 29 (1) of Retained Regulation No 834/2007 and 889/2008 or 2018/848? see example certificate on following page.

YES

We may need more information to confirm the ingredient meets Soil Association higher standards before it can be used in an SA certified product. If the supplier cannot be verified as meeting the higher SA standards, you can either:

1. Switch to supplier certified to SA standards for the ingredient in question.
2. Certify the product to GB standards instead (product cannot use the SA symbol).

Does the product/ingredient you intend to buy have additional souring requirements?

- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs
- Wine
- Palm Oil or endangered species
- Flavourings

YES

NO

This supplier can be used for ingredients in products that are certified to Soil Association standards.

Please see the Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex for more details on which ingredients have additional sourcing requirements to be suitable for use in SA standard products.
GB certificate example

Certificate for a **GB** supplier certified by another certification body, to GB standards.

Please note the key statement:

“This certificate has been issued on the basis of Article 29(1) of regulation (EC) 834/2007 and Regulation (EC) 889/2008”
EU Certificate Example
Certificate for an EU/NI supplier certified to the EU Standards (recognised as equivalent to GB standards).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate pursuant to Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part I: Mandatory elements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1 Document number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L2 Operator type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panel of operators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name or group of operators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISO Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L4 Competent authority or Control body</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISO Code</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part II: Category or categories of products as referred to in Article 35 (7) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council and production methods:**
- (a) Processed agricultural products, including aquaculture products, for use as food
  - Production method:
    - Production of organic products
- (b) Other products listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 or not covered by the previous categories
  - Production method:
    - Production of organic products

**Part II: Date and place**
- **Date:** 30 April 2023
- **Place:** Zwolle (NL)

**Part III: Issuance**
- **Certificate valid from:** 12/09/2023 to 30/12/2024

Certification code is that of the certification body.
Correct legislation is referenced.
Certificate must be in date at point of purchase.
Please note, it is no longer compulsory for EU certificates to list individual products. However, many certification bodies continue to do so. You will need to ensure the product or product category you intend to buy is listed on the certificate.
Section 3: Third country suppliers (Outside GB and EU)

- **Non-UK countries** recognised as having equivalent organic standards to GB, and the certification bodies that operate in these countries, as listed in the government online register recognised Non-UK countries and territories annex III.

- **Non-UK control bodies/ certifiers** recognised as having equivalent organic standards to GB, who operate in countries which do not have equivalent organic standards, as listed in the online government register recognised Non-UK control bodies and authorities annex IV.

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**Is this supplier from a country outside GB, and is the product category and certification/control body listed in annex III?**

*See how to use annex III.*

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If **NO**

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**Is the certifier issuing the certificate a recognised non-UK certification body, operating in that country, and certifying the product category specified in annex IV?**

*See how to use annex IV.*

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If **NO**

**The product/ingredient cannot be sold or distributed with reference to organic in the UK.**

If **YES**

---

**This supplier can be used, provided you have validated their certification documents as per standard 5.7.2.** Make sure the consignment has a certificate of inspection, endorsed by the certifier of export, the port health authority where the goods enter the UK, and the first consignee.

---

If **YES**

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How to use annex III

This annex lists countries and territories which have been recognised by DEFRA as having equivalent organic standards to GB.

1. Is the supplier certified in a country listed in annex III (Recognised non- UK countries and territories?) *Check the ‘Table of contents’ page to see if the country is listed. Then, go to the corresponding numbered tab.
2. Does the supplier certificate show the name of a certifying body that is listed in annex III under the numbered tab for that country/area?
3. If the supplier certificate shows a certification code, does this correspond to the code in annex III? (as listed under the country/area's numbered tab, next to the corresponding certification/control body)? *Please note, not all certificates will show the certification code.
4. Is the category of product you intend to buy listed as ‘recognised’ for that country? *At the top of each numbered tab for the country/area, the recognised categories for that country/area are listed, e.g., A,B,C,D,E,F. For definitions of each category, go to the ‘Cover_sheet’.
5. If the certificate has an expiry date, is the certificate in date at the point of purchase? *Certificates from some countries do not have expiry dates e.g., Japan and United States.
6. Does the trading schedule/annex list the ingredient/product/product category (s) which you intend to buy?

How to use annex IV

This annex lists control bodies which operate in third countries and have been recognised by DEFRA as having equivalent organic standards to GB.

1. Is the supplier certified by a certification/control body listed in annex IV (Recognised non- UK control bodies and control authorities?) *CTRL+F to search for the certification/control body on the ‘Control bodies’ tab.
2. Is the country of the supplier listed under that certification/control body in annex IV? *Go to the ‘codes’ tab and find the certification/control body in question. Then check that the supplier’s country is listed underneath.
3. If the organic certificate displays a certification code, does this match the code listed in annex IV under the ‘codes’ tab. Check the code is listed under the correct certifying body and next to the correct corresponding country? *CTRL+F to search for the code straight away.
4. Is the category of product you intend to buy listed as ‘recognised’ for that certification body in that country? Details of the categories are listed on the ‘cover sheet’.
5. If the certificate has an expiry date, is the certificate in date at the point of purchase? *Certificates from some countries do not have expiry dates e.g., Japan and United States.
6. Does the trading schedule/annex list the ingredient/product/product category (s) which you intend to buy?

**Third Country Certificate Example**

Certification body is listed in Annex IV as an approved certification body operating in that country with equivalence to GB standards for certain categories of products.
Check certificate is in date and not passed expiry.

Equivalent product categories listed.

Correct EU legislation referenced.

Certification code matches the code listed in annex IV for this certification body operating in that country.