



IAF and World Sustainability Organization (WSO) Scheme Endorsement Agreement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The **World Sustainability Organization (WSO)** is the scheme owner of the Friend of the Sea (FOS) scheme. WSO has sought and received endorsement of their scheme(s) listed in Schedule 1 to this Agreement, hereinafter referred to as “the Schemes”, as IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) sub-scopes in accordance with IAF PL3 and this Agreement.
- 1.2 The Schemes require Certification Bodies (CBs) operating in the Schemes to be accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is a signatory to the IAF MLA with a main scope of product certification and a sub-scope of the relevant Schemes included in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (IAF MLA signatories).
- 1.3 WSO sets voluntary standards for the whole food range (seafood and agriculture), as well as non-food products and services. Its aim is to protect and improve the environment by promoting a culture of sustainable development as well as conducting online awareness campaigns. Friend of the Sea has certified around 3,550 seafood products coming from more than 1,000 different companies and from more than 70 countries. The number of commercial species certified is around 170.
- 1.4 WSO contracts at the time of this Agreement with five CBs under the Schemes, the supervision of which is carried out by the ABs that are IAF MLA signatories.
- 1.5 The FOS requirements for the professional competence of auditors are defined in the relevant scheme documents.
- 1.6 FOS delegates the responsibility of supervision of the CBs it contracts with to the corresponding IAF Accreditation Bodies, noting that harmonization of criteria applied by the different ABs is increasingly important to ensure consistency of that supervision.
- 1.7 The Schemes provide the standard and framework for independent, recognized third-party certification of processes associated with the scope of the Schemes.

- 1.8 The **International Accreditation Forum (IAF)** is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, process, persons, validation and verification and other similar programs of conformity assessment.
- 1.9 IAF is responsible for the harmonization and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the ultimate goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited CBs and V&VBs (Validation and Verification Bodies) and to support its IAF MLA.
- 1.10 The IAF MLA is established and maintained based on the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which IAF contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of certificates issued by accredited CBs and V&VBs.

2. Administration and Cooperation

- 2.1 Both IAF and WSO, by means of this formal Agreement, have decided to develop and maintain a close cooperation between the two organizations to ensure harmonization in the accreditation practices performed by IAF members for the Schemes and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the Schemes with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the Schemes' accredited CBs.
- 2.2 IAF and WSO shall comply with the respective requirements of IAF PL3 *Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*, operating and administrating in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of CBs or ABs other than relevant technical considerations.
- 2.3 The Schemes will be open to all CBs that are accredited by IAF MLA signatories. The ABs will be signatory members of the IAF MLA for product and have agreed to implement the requirements as per this Agreement. A list of IAF ABs that have agreed to implement this Agreement shall be maintained on the WSO website.
- 2.4 WSO will only work with IAF MLA signatories who have agreed to implement this Agreement. WSO will stop working with an AB that is no longer a signatory to the IAF MLA or has not implemented and maintained this Agreement.
- 2.5 Both IAF and WSO shall appoint a liaison person of each organization to act as contact persons.

3. Information Exchange

In order to achieve such goals, both organizations have agreed upon the following:

3.1 WSO shall inform the IAF of the following:

- a) Changes to any of the Schemes listed in Schedule 1, that may impact compliance with IAF PL3
- b) Any revision/extension of the Schemes' standards/documents
- c) Outcomes from any AB workshop held by WSO on one or more of the Schemes
- d) Feedback WSO may have regarding the IAF MLA signatory ABs

3.2 IAF shall inform WSO of the following:

- a) When an IAF MLA signatory with a sub-scope of one or more of the Schemes has been suspended or had their IAF MLA signatory status withdrawn
- b) Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the Schemes' standards/documents
- c) Changes in policy, procedure or documentation that may impact the IAF MLA and Scheme sub-scope

4. Mandatory Interpretation of the Scheme Documents

4.1 The Schemes' documents shall be prepared using the WSO procedure for the setting and revision of Schemes' documentation. This shall include a stakeholder consultation phase comprising of comment submissions by interested parties each lasting a specified timeframe with feedback being provided to organizations that made the comment.

4.2 The IAF will be included as a stakeholder and invited to provide input during any stakeholder consultation period of the Scheme revision process.

4.3 The Scheme normative documents shall be available free of charge on the WSO website (<https://friendofthesea.org>).

4.4 WSO will provide new draft Scheme version document(s) with a gap analysis and proposed transition plan for implementation of the new version documents to IAF as soon as a technically sound new version is available in order to make sure, that the new scheme version continues to comply with the requirements of IAF PL3. WSO accepts the process to be followed according to IAF PL3 for IAF MLA sub-scope inclusion of new versions of the Schemes.

- 4.5 The need for the development of specific IAF application documents for inclusion of publicly owned standards/normative documents in the IAF MLA shall be proposed by the IAF Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the IAF MLA Committee as specified in IAF PL3.
- 4.6 The Schemes endorsed as IAF MLA sub-scopes are included in the relevant IAF MLA status lists. After the end of the transition period to a new scheme version the old version will no longer be published as an IAF MLA sub-scope.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 IAF and WSO shall each bear their own costs.
- 5.2 The Schemes will be included as sub-scopes under the main scope of product certification, ISO/IEC 17065. Those accreditation bodies currently providing accreditations to one or more of the Schemes will automatically have their MLA scope extended to include the relevant scheme(s) once this agreement is signed.
- 5.3 The revision of the implementation of this Agreement is in the scope of the MLA peer evaluation to the IAF product certification MLA signatories working in one or more of the Schemes that have agreed to implement this Agreement.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 IAF shall hold all Confidential Information in strictest confidence and shall only use it for the purpose for which it was provided and shall not disclose or make available any Confidential Information to any third party without the prior written consent of WSO.

7. Term

- 7.1 This Agreement shall commence from the original Date of Signing and, unless terminated earlier according to clause 8, continues indefinitely.

8. Cancellation

- 8.1 This Agreement between WSO and IAF can be cancelled by either party in writing with a period of notice of three months.

SCHEDULE 1

WSO scheme(s) endorsed for inclusion as sub-scopes to the IAF MLA:

1. Friend of the Sea (FOS)

Level 4 – FOS 0001 – Certification Procedure, Revision 10, and

Audit Guidance for Friend of the Sea Standards, Revision 2.1

Level 5 – FOS Aqua inland, Revision 3



FOS Aqua Marine, Revision 2

FOS Aqua Shellfish, Revision 3

FOS-CoC, FF, FM, FO and O3 Revision 5, and

FOS Wild Standard, Revision 4.

Execution of the agreement

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.	World Sustainability Organization
 Signature of authorised person IAF Chair	 Signature of authorised person

Date of Agreement: 16 January 2025