

Short introduction: Steps to Organic Certification

(This summary applies to all the organic certification programmes IndExpo works with. In some cases, additional requirements are defined in specific documents for the respective programme)

*Steps marked with an asterisk are applicable only in the indicated cases!

	Procedure	Applicant or client	IndExpo
1	Request	Commonly, applicants present a first general request, asking about requirements, procedures, prices for certification	The applicant receives from INDEXPO a first package of information, by e-mail, often combined with individual additional information by phone. This package includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The present this document • Company profile • Terms and Condition for Product Certification • An application form. Those are available in www.indexpo.lk website
2	Formal application	Client completes application form	INDEXPO reviews application (duly filledness). In case we can offer the requested service, the application is approved.
3	Offer		Based on our daily fees and the size of the unit to be certified, complexity of the process and risk involvement, we calculate the certification fees. We submit the applicant a written offer. Normally this is a flat fee, meaning that the applicant knows definitively how much the procedure will cost, independently from how long the inspector stays on the holding. As per SL Organic requirements, we also provide an approximate estimate of travel expenses. For other certification programs, costs for travelling and accommodation are usually not included in the offer. Together with the offer.
4	Contract	Once the applicant and INDEXPO have agreed on the fees, the applicant signs the contract. By doing so, he/she is committed to fulfilling the organic standards.	In the application its mentioned. And company responsible person should sign and officially franked
5	Pre-payment	The client pays the agreed advance payment.	INDEXPO submits the client a second package of information, (if client request) Including, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant INDEXPO policies and procedure • Relevant standards, • Standard inspection program(s)
6	Working out the organic management plan	The client fills in the organic management plan (OMP). Going through the OMP is also helpful for identification of any noncompliance and correcting it. Clients, who have been certified by other certifiers before, are obliged to submit, together with their OMP, any Notice of noncompliance or Denial from	

IND-EXPO CERTIFICATION LIMITED
PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SCHEME – SL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION
STEP TO ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

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		the previous certifier, and evidence of correcting the non-compliances.	
7	OMP Review		INDEXPO reviews the OMP and informs the client about the result of this review. This step is essential for SL Organic certification, not for other organic certification programs.
8	Corrective actions	*If noncompliances are detected during review of the OMP, these should be corrected even before the onsite inspection/audit takes place. Eg:- Establishment of a clear separation system between organic and conventional products in processing companies.	
9	Scheduling inspection/ Onsite Audit	Auditor and client schedule a date for the inspection/audit. If plausible reasons exist, the client has the right to reject an auditor and ask INDEXPO to assign a different person.	
10	Inspection / Onsite Audit	The responsible persons must be present, records must be prepared. The client proposes corrective actions for noncompliances found by the auditor.	The auditor verifies, whether the management plan is consistent with the reality, and identifies any findings
11	Inspection / Audit report		Immediately after the inspection, the auditor finishes his/her report and submits it to the INDEXPO.
12	Evaluation	The client receives a copy of the inspection/onsite audit report.	The report is reviewed by the responsible evaluation officer. *Often, additional questions must be clarified with the auditor. *Whenever non-conformities are found, these normally must be corrected before a certificate can be issued.
13	Final invoice	Payment of the remaining fee according to the offer, plus travelling cost	Issues the invoice
14	Certification decision		INDEXPO makes the certification decision, normally within 4 weeks after the inspection, maximum 8 weeks. There are basically three possibilities:
			a) Client complies with the standard → Certificate is issued and sent to client
		Client corrects noncompliances and sends evidence to INDEXPO	b) Client has non-compliances which need to be corrected. This may include missing documents, or more substantial things. → INDEXPO issues Notice of Noncompliance. Certificate is issued once INDEXPO has evidence of correction of non-compliances (in some cases, this may involve an additional inspection).
			c) Client has major noncompliances which cannot be corrected in the short term → INDEXPO issues a Denial of Certification letter.



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This whole procedure is apparently very long and complicated. Nevertheless, many steps, which are presented here one after the other, in reality often take place at the same time. Clients can contribute to **acceleration** by:

- paying on time
- filling in immediately and thoroughly the necessary forms, contracts etc.
- implementing immediately necessary corrective actions.

During all of the process from application through certification and the annual renewal process, the client has the right to file complaints or appeals to INDEXPO. They will be handled according to INDEXPO internal rules and the respective standard and the client will be informed of the outcome of the complaint assessment.