

# ORGANIC CERTIFICATION STANDARDS



There are several independent and trustful organic certification bodies that create their own set of rules and specifications that a product and manufacturer must meet in order to be certified organic.



Organic certification labels are meaningful insurance of product quality and compliance with organic certification bodies' standards. These specifications are evaluative documents that are continuously updated and improved based on the evolution of technological capabilities and government regulations.

Hereafter you will find all the information needed to understand the different organic and fair trade certification standard and labels currently available.

***You may follow the links embedded on the organizations below.***

- Ecocert
- Soil Association
- Cosmebio
- Agriculture biologique
- BDIH
- Austria Bio Garantie
- Demeter
- Nature et Progrès
- Natrue
- USDA Organic
- Ecocert équitable
- Max Havelaar

## **ECOCERT**

Ecocert is a French organic certification body approved by the Department of Industry. Ecocertified manufacturers have their ingredients and processes audited twice in a year by Ecocert to ensure it is complying with all the rules of the organic certification standard.

## **Ecocert organic certification standards**

**95%** minimum of all ingredients are from natural origin

**10%** minimum of total product by weight (including water) must be organic

maximum of synthetic content is allowed. All non natural ingredients must belong

**5%** to the harmless synthetic ingredients positive list created by Ecocert.

All processes (including harvest, extraction methods, etc.) are audited and Ecocertified.

No synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances

No animal testing at all.

Only animal by-products that do not directly question animals' lives and whose use do not adversely affect the ecological balance can still be used (bee wax, honey, milk, etc.).

More information: [www.ecocert.fr](http://www.ecocert.fr)

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## **COSMEBIO**

Cosmebio is a French organic certification label and is certified by Ecocert.

There are two levels of Cosmebio certification: the organic label BIO for organic cosmetics and the natural label ECO for eco-friendly and natural beauty products.

## **Cosmebio organic certification standards**

**95%** **95%** minimum of all ingredients are natural or from natural origin

**95%** **50%** minimum of all agricultural ingredients are from organic farming

**10%** **5%** minimum of total product by weight (including water) must be organic

No GMO, synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances.

All non natural ingredients must belong to a harmless synthetic ingredients positive list and be explicitly mentioned on product packaging.

No animal testing at all.

Only animal by-products that do not directly question animals' lives and whose use do not adversely affect the ecological balance can still be used

(bee wax, honey, milk, etc.).

Raw material sourcing, transformation processes, packaging design and manufacturing,... must follow strict environmental standards regarding biodiversity, biodegradability, recycling and waste management issues.

No genetic engineering or radiation in the production and processing of agricultural products.

More information: [www.cosmebio.org](http://www.cosmebio.org)

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## **BDIH**

Created in 1951, BDIH was a forerunner by creating the world's first organic body care certification.

BDIH is the Federal Association for medicines, dietary products, nutritional supplements and personal care German companies. It includes a working group on natural cosmetics that has set specifications for the manufacturing of natural beauty products.

### **BDIH organic certification standards**

**100%** of ingredients belong to the authorized ingredients BDIH list

BDIH organic certification requires manufacturers to use organic content wherever possible

No GMO, synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances.

All non natural ingredients must belong to the harmless synthetic authorized ingredients BDIH list and be explicitly mentioned on product packaging.

Eco-friendly packaging

More information: [www.kontrollierte-naturkosmetik.de](http://www.kontrollierte-naturkosmetik.de)

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## **AUSTRIA BIO GARANTIE**

Austria Bio Garantie (ABG) was founded in 1993 and is the first certification body for organic products in Austria. Their activities cover inspection and certification of organic products throughout the whole chain - ABG is operating on behalf of the food and cosmetics safety authorities.

ABG is a non-profit organization attaching great value to best quality and best services achieved by highly-qualified staff and experienced inspectors.

### **ABG organic certification standards**

**100%** of ingredients belong to the authorized ingredients ABG list

**95%** minimum of the botanical ingredients are from certified organic cultivation

No GMO, synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances.

Proven Manufacturing & Control of Processing: sustainable and environmentally friendly

No animal testing with the finished product or ingredients

More information: <http://www.abg.at>

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## **NATURE ET PROGRES**

Nature et Progrès is a French association gathering together consumers, farmers and organic cosmetics manufacturer that aims at promoting organic farming, biodiversity respect and agricultural tradition know-how without progress rejection.

The goal is to develop products that respect people, animals, plants and the planet. Nature et Progrès is the most demanding organic certification body. The products must meet all certification standards and the manufacturer must sign the Nature et Progrès environmental, social, economic and human Charter.

### **Nature et Progrès organic certification standards**

**100%** minimum of all agricultural ingredients are from organic farming or sustainably wild-harvested

No GMO, synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances.

All processes (including harvest, extraction methods, etc.) are eco-friendly.

No animal testing at all.

Only animal by-products that do not directly question animals' lives and whose use do not adversely affect the ecological balance can still be used (bee wax, honey, milk, etc.).

More information: [www.natureetprogres.org](http://www.natureetprogres.org)

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## USDA ORGANIC



At the moment the USDA organic seal is only approved for products that meet their acceptable edible food standards. Organic certified products must be grown, produced and processed in accordance with the NOP standards and are certified by USDA accredited agents.

There are three different organic certifications in the United States: "100% organic", "Organic" and "Made with certified organic ingredients".

			<b>American organic certification standards</b>
"100% Organic"	"Organic"	"Organic Ingredients"	
<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>70%</b>	minimum of all ingredients are from organic farming (see product label / packaging)
			No genetic engineering or radiation in the production and processing of agricultural products.
			No synthetic ingredient.
			All other ingredients should be part of national positive list containing non-agricultural authorized substances and agricultural substances not available from organic farming or in sufficient quantity and quality.

More information: [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop)

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## SOIL ASSOCIATION

The Soil Association is the main organic certification body in the UK. It was created in 1946 by a group of farmers, nutritionists and scientists.

The Soil Association charter requires that organic products contain a maximum of organic ingredients that have undergone a minimum of processing.

		<b>Soil Association organic certification standards</b>
"Organic"	"Made with x% of organic ingredients"	
<b>95%</b>	<b>x%</b>	minimum of all ingredients are from organic farming (with a 70% minimum) Soil Association requires all of its certified products to show the organic percentage on the packaging.  No GMO, synthetic fragrances, colors, petroleum derivatives, polymers, parabens or other potentially harmful substances.  Ingredients must be obtained through simple physical or chemical processes with no use of synthetic molecule.  No animal testing at all.  Wild-harvested ingredients are authorized with biodiversity respect limits, in particular regarding endangered species.

More information: [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

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## AGRICULTURE BIOLOGIQUE

Organic certification label managed by the French Department of Agriculture and only approved for products that meet their acceptable edible food standards

AB stands for **Agriculture Biologique** ("Organic Farming") that is a set of agricultural practices that avoid the use of synthetic chemicals in favor of naturally occurring pesticides, fertilizer, and other growing aids.

### **AB organic certification standards**

**95%** minimum of all ingredients are from organic farming

Agronomic practices and farming are respectful of the natural balance of the environment and animal welfare.

Compliance with the current French law.

No GMO.

No synthetic ingredient.

More information: [Agriculture biologique](#)

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DEMETER

Demeter is the biodynamic certification body.

Organic and biodynamic are very similar; both are grown without chemicals and GMOs. However, biodynamic goes one step further. It is a holistic practice where all things are considered living inter-related systems - animals, plants, and the solar system.

### **Biodynamic farming mission**

heal the soil

renew, shape and maintain landscapes

provide people with a healthy diet

promote a specific approach of life and understand the role of humans

improve and shorten the links between producers and consumers

More information: [www.bio-dynamie.org/index.htm](http://www.bio-dynamie.org/index.htm)

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## **NATRUE**

NaTrue is a new non-profit standard from Europe started by German organic beauty manufacturers. They originally created a 3 star system to segregate “natural cosmetics” from “natural cosmetics with organic content” from “organic cosmetics” but gathered them all in a single seal for more simplicity.

This logo is valid for all Natrue certified products.

To find out the level of certification it is now necessary to connect to the Natrue website [www.natrue.org](http://www.natrue.org).

This seal can also be accompanied by one of the following:

"Natural cosmetics" - former 1 star NaTrue seal.

"Natural cosmetics with certified organic ingredients" - former 2 stars NaTrue seal.

"Organic cosmetics" - former 3 stars NaTrue seal.

### **Natrue organic certification standards**

<b>X</b>	the minimum content for raw natural ingredients and the maximum content for ingredients of natural origin are set for each category of cosmetics.
<b>70%</b>	minimum of all ingredients are from organic farming or wild-harvested. It also requires a higher content for raw natural ingredients than 1 star Natrue seal.
<b>95%</b>	minimum of all ingredients are from organic farming or wild-harvested. It also requires a higher content for raw natural ingredients than 2 stars Natrue seal.  only water, natural ingredients, ingredients of natural origin or nature-like ingredients (with strict limits) are authorized  Nature-like ingredients are allowed for conservation purpose or when natural ingredients are not available in sufficient quantity and/or quality.

More information : [www.natrue.fr/accueil.html](http://www.natrue.fr/accueil.html)

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## **ECOCERT EQUITABLE**

The ethical and organic certification standards "ESR - Equitable, Solidaire, Responsable" have been developed by Ecocert and apply to food, cosmetics and fashion items that meet both the criteria of organic farming and fair trade. The "Ecocert Equitable" seal ensures transparency on both organic and fair trade products.

### **Ecocert Equitable organic and fair trade certification standards**

- 5%** minimum of total ingredients are fair trade for cosmetics
- 25%** minimum of total ingredients are fair trade for food
- 70%** minimum of total ingredients are fair trade for garment and clothes

Ethics criteria : insurance for producers to sell at a guaranteed minimum price, and for workers to receive a fair living wage

Social criteria: decent working conditions, collective organization, the establishment of a development fund for the financing of technical, economic and social benefits towards the producers groups.

Health and Environment: natural resources and farmers or workers' health respect.

Development: the process involves a long-term partnership with buyers and producers' empowerment.

More information: [www.ecocert.com/equitable](http://www.ecocert.com/equitable)

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## **MAX HAVELAAR**

Fairtrade / Max Havelaar is an international fair trade certification body which brings together NGOs and representatives of producers. It aims at using trade to empower farmers and workers to fight poverty.

Fair Trade is a simple concept: here, you buy certified products whatever the brand. There, poor workers improve their income, respect the environment and unite to work on their future.

The Max Havelaar fair trade seal is managed by the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO), that sets the standards and conditions for the fair trade certification. FLO is itself a member of FINE, the major global fair trade federations group : WFTO, News, Efta and FLO.

## **Max Havelaar fair trade certification standards**

*Minimum price:* Max Havelaar defines a minimum purchase price for each raw material in consultation with producer. It must first cover the cost of production, taking into account environmental issues. Second, it must ensure the basic needs of his family: food, hygiene, education, health ...

*Longterm relationship:* fair trade buyers build longterm relationships. Many importers choose to commit on a regular basis with their suppliers. This allows to have confidence in the future and make investment decisions when necessary.

*Pre-financing:* generally, producers may ask fair trade buyers up to 60% of the value of their future crop early in the season.

*Professionalization:* to build a sustainable business and be out of any charity logic, producers must provide products that meet the quality requirements of the consumer.

*Development:* the development premium is usually around 10% of the price of the goods paid to the cooperative. This money is managed collectively by producers and allows investment to the benefit of all.

*Respect of the environment:* for each industry, the Max Havelaar standards set a detailed list of banned pesticides. Minimum criteria require the reduction of all chemical inputs and the introduction of organic manure.

*Resource management:* Max Havelaar standards require producers to implement management plans for land, water and fire use to preserve resources, especially in fragile ecosystems.

*GMO:* GMO are banned from the Max Havelaar fair trade standards.

More information: [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)