



Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI) and World Sustainability Organization (WSO) Endorsed Scheme 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 listed in Schedule 1 to this Agreement, hereinafter referred to as “the Scheme”, as a sub-scope of the Global ACI Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) in accordance with Global ACI MRA-003 and this Agreement.
- 1.2 The Scheme requires Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) operating in the Scheme to be accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is a signatory to the Global ACI MRA with a main scope of product certification and a sub-scope of the relevant Scheme included in Schedule 1 to this Agreement.
- 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 5 CABs under the Schemes, the supervision of which is carried out by the ABs that are signatories to the Global ACI MRA.
- 1.5 The FOS requirements for the professional competence of personnel auditors are defined in the relevant scheme documents.
- 1.6 The FOS delegates the responsibility of supervision of the CBs it contracts with to the corresponding Global ACI ABs, noting that harmonisation 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, recognised third-party certification of processes associated with the Scheme.
- 1.8 The **Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI)** is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, process, persons, validation and verification; testing (including medical testing/examination), calibration, provision of proficiency testing,

production of reference materials, and biobanking; inspection activities and other similar programs of conformity assessment.

- 1.9 Global ACI is responsible for the harmonisation and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the ultimate goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited CABs; Certification Bodies (CBs), Verification and Validation Bodies (V&VBs), laboratories, and inspection bodies, and to support its Global ACI MRA.
- 1.10 The Global ACI MRA is established and maintained on the basis of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which Global ACI contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of conformity assessment attestations issued by accredited CABs.

2. Administration and Cooperation

- 2.1 Both Global ACI and WSO by means of this formal Agreement, have decided to develop and maintain a close cooperation between the two organisations to ensure harmonisation in the accreditation practices performed by Global ACI members for the Scheme and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the Scheme with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the Scheme's accredited CABs.
- 2.2 Global ACI and WSO shall comply with the respective requirements of *Global ACI MRA-003 Policies and Procedures for the Management and Expansion of the Scope of the Global ACI Arrangement*, operating and administering in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of CABs or ABs other than relevant technical considerations.
- 2.3 The Scheme will be open to all CABs that are accredited by signatories to the Global ACI MRA. The ABs will be signatory members of the Global ACI MRA for product certification to ISO/IEC 17065.
- 2.4 WSO will only work with ABs that are signatories to the Global ACI MRA. WSO will stop working with an AB that is no longer a signatory to the Global ACI MRA for product certification.
- 2.5 Both Global ACI and WSO shall appoint a liaison person of each organisation to act as contact persons.

3. Information Exchange

To achieve such goals both organisations have agreed upon the following:

- 3.1 WSO shall inform the Global ACI of the following:
 - a) Changes to any of the Scheme listed in Schedule 1, that may impact compliance with Global ACI MRA-003.
 - b) Any revision/extension to the Scheme's standards/documents.
 - c) Outcomes from any AB workshop held by WSO on one or more of the Scheme.
 - d) Feedback WSO may have regarding the Global ACI MRA signatory ABs.
 - e) Change in the status as recognised scheme(s).

3.2 The Global ACI shall inform WSO of the following:

- a) When a Global ACI MRA signatory with a sub-scope of the Scheme has been suspended or had their Global ACI MRA signatory status withdrawn.
- b) Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the Scheme's standards/documents.
- c) Changes in policy, procedure or documentation that may have impact on the Global ACI MRA and the Scheme's 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 organisations that made the comment.

4.2 Global ACI will be included as a stakeholder and invited during any stakeholder consultation period of the Scheme's revision process.

4.3 The Scheme's documents shall be available at no cost 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 Global ACI 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 Global ACI MRA-003. WSO accepts the process to be followed according to Global ACI MRA-003 for Global ACI MRA sub-scope inclusion of new versions of the Scheme.

4.5 The need for the development of specific Global ACI application documents shall be proposed by the Global ACI applicable Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the Global ACI MRA Committee as specified in Global ACI MRA-003.

4.6 The Scheme endorsed as Global ACI MRA sub-scopes are included in the relevant Global ACI MRA status lists. After the end of the transition period to a new scheme version the old version will not be published as Global ACI MRA sub-scopes anymore.

5. Implementation

5.1 Global ACI and WSO shall each bear their own costs.

5.2 The Scheme will be included as a sub-scope under the main scope of Product Certification, ISO/IEC 17065.

Those ABs currently providing accreditations to the Scheme will automatically be able to apply for a Global ACI MRA scope extension for the scheme through provision of a signed self-declaration through their Regional Accreditation Group (RAG) once the Agreement is signed.

- 5.3 The revision of the implementation of this Agreement is in the scope of the MRA peer evaluation to the Global ACI Product Certification MRA signatories working in one or more of the Scheme.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 Global ACI 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 Global ACI can be cancelled by either party in writing with a period of notice of three months.

SCHEDULE 1

WSO Scheme endorsed for inclusion as sub-scopes to the Global ACI MRA:

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.

End of List

Execution of the Agreement

Global ACI	World Sustainability Organization
 Brahim Houla Global ACI Chair	 Paolo Bray Founder and Director World Sustainability Organization

Date of Agreement: 14 April 2026