



## OCEAN APPROVED® Label Rules of Operation

### 1 – Preamble

The Ocean is both the main climate regulator and the planet's lungs, and it is home to more than 80% of the Earth's biodiversity. Vital to us humans, for our health and our development, it is also vital to the development of the economy and therefore to companies. To preserve and use its resources sustainably, action by all is essential: citizens, states, and companies.

To support companies and given them the means to act, Fondation de la Mer has built the Ocean Framework. Its development, in collaboration with the French Ministry of Ecological Transition and with the Boston Consulting Group, involved a wide range of players and recognized experts from the scientific, institutional, political, and economic worlds. It was built with and for companies, which use it in increasing numbers.

A world first, and freely available on the "[Ocean Approved](#)" web platform, this tool enables companies of all sizes and in all sectors to take up SDG 14 by evaluating all their interactions with the Ocean. The Ocean Framework adapts to each company, allowing it to define objectives and identify the most relevant concrete actions, depending on the materiality of the issues and on its strategy.

The OCEAN APPROVED® Label, built on the basis of the Ocean Framework, offers companies the opportunity to commit to a continuous improvement process and to make this commitment visible to all their stakeholders.

The OCEAN APPROVED® Label is in line with the Foundation's action logic: faced with the climate emergency and the deterioration of Ocean life, Fondation de la Mer supports all types of players in order to accelerate and amplify their actions in favour of a healthy Ocean. It also develops its own projects to protect marine biodiversity, fight against pollution at sea, support research, promote innovation, and inform the public as well as raise general awareness.



## **2 – Objectives of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label**

The Label aims to distinguish companies that are committed to continuous improvement of their impact on the Ocean, beyond mere compliance with current regulations.

Based on holistic identification of all their interactions with the Ocean thanks to the Ocean Framework, the Label represents the promise of actions taken by the company to avoid or reduce its negative impacts, and to develop its positive impacts wherever possible.

The Label promotes the continuous improvement of the company. It is itself subject to a cycle of revisions and improvements, leading to periodic updating of the Label standard whenever necessary.

The Label enables companies to make their commitment visible to all stakeholders and interacting actors: customers, distributors, suppliers, partners, employees, regulators, and investors.

The Label is open to all companies, regardless of their size, sector of activity, or country of operation.

It is awarded to a company for a specific activity and geographic area, both precisely defined upon application for the Label.

## **3 - Governance**

The governance of the Label is organised around three committees: two advisory committees for the definition and evolution of the operating rules of the Label, and a decision-making committee for awarding the Label.

### **Advisory committees**

The construction and evolution of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label – standard, audit grid, etc. – are based on the input from the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Ocean Framework, and from the Label Governance Committee.

- The Scientific and Technical Committee of the Ocean Framework



- Composition: chaired by Françoise Gaill, Emeritus Director of Research at the CNRS, and made up of recognised experts from the CNRS, IRD and IFREMER.
  - Mission: to guarantee the scientific rigor, robustness, and exhaustiveness of the Ocean Framework.
- The Governance Committee
- Composition: chaired by Sabine Roux de Bézieux, President of Fondation de la Mer, and composed of representatives of the Ministry of the Sea, the Ministry of Ecological Transition (CGDD), BPIFrance, the EPE (Enterprises for the Environment) group, France Invest, and Bureau Veritas Certification.
  - Mission: to issue recommendations concerning the functioning and governance of the Label, and its compliance with the principles of the charter of CSR labels, as described in the report submitted to the Ministry of the Economy, Finance, and Recovery published in February of 2021.

### **Decision-making committee**

- The Labelling Committee

Composition of the Labelling Committee: The members of the Labelling Committee are bound by total confidentiality of the information provided and processed, and undertake to not use the said information in their professional or personal activities.

Mission: The committee is the decision maker for the award, withdrawal and renewal of the Label.

Decisions on labelling are taken with the absolute majority of the labelling committee, on the basis of the audit report provided by the evaluating body. In order to guarantee the independence of the labelling committee, the presented report is anonymous.

### **4 – General principles**

OCEAN APPROVED® is a voluntary label for companies of all sizes and in all sectors.

The certification process is based on the evaluation of the actions undertaken, and the analysis of the governance implemented in the company.



The organisation's certification process presupposes that it has mastered and effectively used the Ocean Framework.

- Levels of certification

The OCEAN APPROVED® Label is a **general** label, with **two levels**:

Level 1 "Committed": Commitment of means

- The company has analysed all of its potential interactions with the Ocean using the Ocean Framework;
- The materiality study and risk mapping have been completed;
- The main tools for action have been identified, an action plan has been defined by the company, measurement indicators will be implemented, and the company commits to quantified improvement objectives.

Level 2 "Advanced": Obligation of results

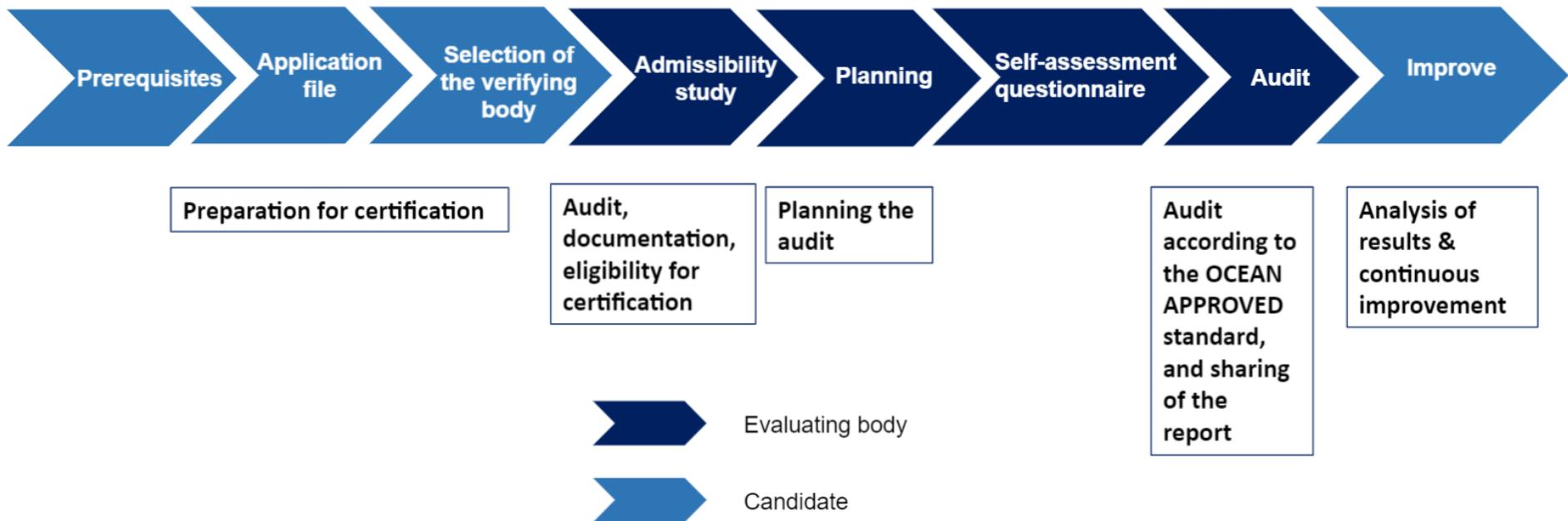
- The company has analysed all of its potential interactions with the Ocean using the Ocean Framework;
- The materiality study and risk mapping have been completed;
- The main tools for action have been identified, an action plan has been defined by the company, measurement indicators will be implemented, and the company commits to quantified improvement objectives.
- The company has undertaken priority actions to improve its impact on the Ocean;
- Concrete results are measured and demonstrate this improvement over two years (N-2 and N-1) in comparison with the reference year (N).

- Duration

The OCEAN APPROVED® Label is awarded on the basis of certification. The label is awarded for a duration of **three years** and can be renewed. The list of labelled companies will be regularly updated on the Label website and available at the following address: <https://oceanapproved.org/>

### 5 – The labelling process

The labelling process – key stages:





- **PREREQUISITE**

Certain conditions must be met in order to apply for the Label.

The conditions are the following:

- Declaration on the candidate's honour:
  - Compliance with the local regulations in force  
*Regulatory context*  
It is the responsibility of each organism wishing to benefit from the Label to keep itself informed of the regulatory and normative texts it must comply with, and to commit to conform to them.  
In no case does this assessment replace regulatory controls.
  - Compliance with tax and social obligations
  - No conviction of the company for environmental damage in the previous two years
- To have precisely defined the perimeter (activity + geography) for which the company wishes to apply;
- To have carried out a materiality analysis and risk mapping of its impact on the Ocean, based on the Ocean Framework for the activity for which the company wishes to apply;
- To have established an action plan to reduce its major impacts on the Ocean.

- **THE APPLICATION FORM**

The application form can be downloaded from the [oceanapproved.org](http://oceanapproved.org) website.



The applicant must complete it, attach required documents, and send it to the evaluating body of their choice so the latter may study the admissibility of the application.

The application folder is composed of all the elements listed in the prerequisites paragraph, along with the following information:

- General information on the organization (Siret, contact person...);
- Name of the auditing body chosen by the applicant organization.

### ***Special cases***

- **Multi-activity and / or multi-country**

If the organisation wishes to apply for several of its activities, and / or an extended geographical scope (across several countries), the organization will contact Fondation de la Mer to determine the application modalities on a case-by-case basis.

- **Multi-site**

Multi-site groups can have two typologies:

- the same legal entity for all the central structure and the sites;
- different legal entities (eg: network, franchises, etc).

They can submit an application for joint labelling if they can present:

- A common and centralised organisation implementing the following:
  - common procedures concerning the interventions and the global service, including an internal audit procedure following the current applicable standard and carried out across all sites,
  - the organisation, execution, and consolidation of internal audits carried out on all sites, as well as the follow-up and consolidation of corrective actions,
  - feedback from all sites on training plans and improvement plans,
  - feedback from all sites on the period controls implemented, and the monitoring and consolidation of corrective actions,



- A legally enforceable link (e.g., contract) between the assessing organization and the sites,
- A link (e.g. contract) between the sites and centralized structure (e.g. head of the franchise network, head office, etc.) which allows the centralized structure to prescribe or impose corrective or improvement actions on the various sites.

For these organisations, the Label is issued to all sites, under condition of the application of a sampling rule.

In both cases, the central structure (head office or network head) is systematically audited during each audit campaign.

- **EVALUATING BODY**

The evaluation is a prerequisite for any labelling. It is carried out at the expense of the applicant organization. Only assessors approved by Fondation de la Mer may provide a final assessment report for the award of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label.

A list of assessors approved by Fondation de la Mer can found on the website [www.oceanapproved.org](http://www.oceanapproved.org).

The duration and cost of the evaluation linked to the Label – for the applicant and approved evaluator to agree upon – are a function of the scope of the label, and the number of sites concerned.

- **ADMISSIBILITY STUDY**

The assessing body chosen by the candidate receives and analyses the application folder.

It verifies the presence of all requested documents:

- The materiality analysis
- The risk map
- The action plan to reduce major impacts

The evaluating body confirms via email the admissibility of the application to the applicant, and offers audit dates. An email confirming the selected date will be sent to the applicant.



- **Case of an inadmissible application:**

In the event that non-compliance with certain prerequisites is noted during analysis of the application (e.g. missing materiality analysis, no action plan, no compliance with tax and social obligations), the assessing body will contact the applicant to explain the blocking points.

Following this exchange, the assessing body justifies in writing the non-admissibility of the application, in a summary sent to the application via email.

The candidate sends the missing elements as soon as possible to remove these non-conformities. Once the non-compliance resolved, the applicant may renew their application for the Label.

• **AUDIT**

The stages of an evaluation mission are the following:



### The process of the audits

- 1 Signature of the contract for the assessment between the applicant and the assessment body
- 2 Planning of the audit
- 3 Sending of the self-assessment grid
- 4 The completed grid is sent back to the assessment body at least two weeks before the planned audit date
- 5 The audit is carried out
- 6 Drafting of the pre-report, sent out to the applicant



- 7 Integration, if necessary, of immediate corrective measures to be implemented by the applicant that allow to lift these measures required by the Label Standard.
- 8 Evaluation report in its final version, complete and validated by the applicant.

The evaluating body sends the final report to the applicant and sends an anonymised copy to the Labelling Committee for the decision to award the OCEAN APPROVED® Label.

The initial audits will generally be carried out, at least in part, on site. The portion carried out on site may depend on the activity of the company.

The follow-up audits will be carried out remotely.

- **AWARDING THE LABEL**

The labelling committee will meet periodically to decide whether or not to award the label with an absolute majority, on the basis of the anonymized audit report presented by the auditor.

- 1 Award of the Label – Levels 1 and 2

The awarding of the label follows two possible cases:

- Absence of non-compliance: immediate award of the level 1 or level 2 label.
- Presence of one or more major non-conformities: deferred issuance after transmission of the elements by the client to the assessing body, and removal of the major non-conformities within a maximum period of three months.
- Presence of one or more minor non-conformities: issuance of the Label and control of the removal of these minor non-conformities during the 18-month follow-up audit.



Fondation de la Mer will award the Label to the organization after receiving and verifying the audit report and the elements for the removal of non-conformities.

## 2 Follow-up – Levels 1 and 2

Mid-term review with monitoring audit

A mid-term monitoring audit will be carried out remotely **18 months in**.

The objective of the mid-term audit is to measure the degree of progress made in implementing the improvement plan to which the company committed at the initial audit and to remove minor non-conformities.

If, during the audit, the non-resolution of minor non-conformities by the company is found, the latter will be suspended from the right to communicate on the Label as long as these non-conformities are not removed.

### Renewal

At the end of the Label's validity duration (three years), the organization wishing to renew its label must submit a new application. The labelling process will follow the same procedure as for an initial labelling. It will be possible for the organization to choose a different evaluating body from the one that carried out the previous assessment.

### Non-renewal

#### Level 1

The Applicant awarded Level 1 certification commits to improvement. Renewal of Level 1 is therefore not possible.

If the Applicant is not eligible for Level 2 at the end of the first three years, it may lose its OCEAN APPROVED® Level 1 Label (except in exceptional circumstances as convened by the Labelling Committee).



## Level 2

If, at the end of the three years the commitments to improvement defined by the Applicant in its action plan and validated by the initial audit have not been fulfilled, the Applicant may lose its OCEAN APPROVED® Level 2 Label (except in exceptional circumstances as convened by the Labelling Committee).

- **APPEAL**

If the company disagrees with the issuance, withdrawal or renewal of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label, the labeling committee intervenes at the first level of appeal.

The appeal must be written and motivated, indicating the specific point(s) for which the applicant concerned considers the opinion of the assessing body to be poorly or unfounded.

The Labelling Committee will approach the evaluating body concerned and may ask for a new examination of the points which motivated the appeal.

If the disagreement remains at the end of this new examination, a second appeal will be possible with Fondation de la Mer, owner of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label.

- **WITHDRAWAL OF THE LABEL**

The OCEAN APPROVED® Label awarded may be revoked, even before the end of the three-year period of Label validity.

Withdrawal may occur :

- In the event of non-compliance with the assessment deadlines
- In the event of non-compliance with the regulations governing the use of the brand
- Or any other case deemed detrimental to the OCEAN APPROVED® Label



Prior to the withdrawal, Fondation de la Mer will have sent a signed and registered letter to the labelled organization concerned to inform it of the situation, and ask it to remedy within a maximum delay of two months.

After this delay, the withdrawal may be pronounced. This decision will systematically give rise to public information. In this specific case, the withdrawal will preclude any further labelling within a period of one year.

## **6 – Use and confidentiality of the information provided**

The information and documents submitted to the Labelling Committee are anonymised and kept by Fondation de la Mer for statistical purposes in order to feed the various reports published by Fondation de la Mer.

## **7 – Communication**

The awarding of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label systematically gives rise to public information on the part of Fondation de la Mer, notably via its website, [OceanApproved.org](http://OceanApproved.org). On the other hand, no communication by name will be made about the candidates for whom the Labelling Committee has decided to postpone or refuse the award.

Any organisation awarded the Label must communicate on its labelling, in accordance with the terms of the Label awarded, at least in its next annual report and on its institutional website. Public communication must in no way alter or distort the opinions formulated by the evaluating body that carried out the audit or the terms of the Label used by Fondation de la Mer, and in particular must not distort the scope of the label.

The Label is evidenced by the use of a logo and a certificate setting out the service commitments. Fondation de la Mer sends the label certificate and the rules for using the OCEAN APPROVED® brand to the certified organization.

Mention of this Label may be made in all the organisation's communication media in accordance with the rules of use of the brand.



Fondation de la Mer expressly reserves the right to withdraw at any time the authorization to use the OCEAN APPROVED® brand from organisations that have been awarded a certificate of conformity if the conditions for use of said brand are no longer met. If the organization whose right to use the brand has been withdrawn continues to use it, Fondation de la Mer reserves the right to seek redress through any legal means.

## **8 – Pricing and conditions of access**

The cost of the OCEAN APPROVED® Label is made up of a fee paid to the owner of the Label (Fondation de la Mer) and the cost of the audits (initial and follow-up) carried out by the assessment bodies approved by Fondation de la Mer.

Cost of the fee:

To make the Label accessible to all organisations, the annual fee paid to Fondation de la Mer amounts to 0,05‰ of the labelled organisation's turnover, ranging from €1,500 to €12, 000.

For multi-activity organisations, the annual fee is capped at €50, 000.

Cost of audits:

The cost of the audits will depend on the size of the company.



Approximate duration over a 3-year cycle including the admissibility study, the on-site and / or remote audit and the drafting of reports

MONO-SITE - 1 activity	Workforce - employees																	
	between 1 and 50			between 51 and 100			between 101 and 200			between 201 and 500			between 501 and 1000			more than 1001		
Minimum time in days including preparation, audit and report writing	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report	on site	offsite	Preparation and Report
<b>Admissibility study</b>		0,5			0,5			0,5			0,5			0,5			0,5	
<b>Initial audit - on site</b>	1		0,5	1,5		0,5	1,5		0,5	2		0,5	2		0,5			
<b>Surveillance audit - remote</b>		0,5	0,5		0,5	0,5		0,5	0,5		1	0,5		1	0,5			
<b>Renewal audit - on site</b>	1		0,5	1,5		0,5	1,5		0,5	2		0,5	2		0,5			
																		upon request

MULTI-SITES - 1 activity Representative square root sampling of N - N = number of sites	Workforce - employees					
	between 1 and 50	between 51 and 100	between 101 and 200	between 201 and 500	between 501 and 1000	more than 1001
Minimum duration in days including the on-site audit - preparation and report to be added						
<b>Admissibility study</b>	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	
<b>Initial audit - on site</b>						upon request
- Central system	1	1	1	1	1	
- Sampled sites	1	1	1,5	1,5	2	
<b>Surveillance audit - remote</b>						
- Central system	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	
- Sampled sites	0,5	1	1	1	1,5	
<b>Renewal audit - on site</b>						
- Central system	1	1	1	1	1	
- Sampled sites	1	1	1,5	1,5	2	

**EXAMPLE :**

**example for a multisite audit:**

1 central site

4 sites - 2 sites for sample (square root of 4)

	Admissibility study	Initial audit	Preparation and Report	Surveillance audit	Preparation and Report	Renewal audit	Preparation and Report
central site 1 day (122 people)	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5
sample site 1 - 30 people		1		0,5		1	
sample site 2 - 80 people		1		0,5		1	
<b>Subtotal - days</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Total - days</b>	<b>9,5</b>						

**MULTI-ACTIVITY** – upon request

**9 – Annexes or Related Documents**

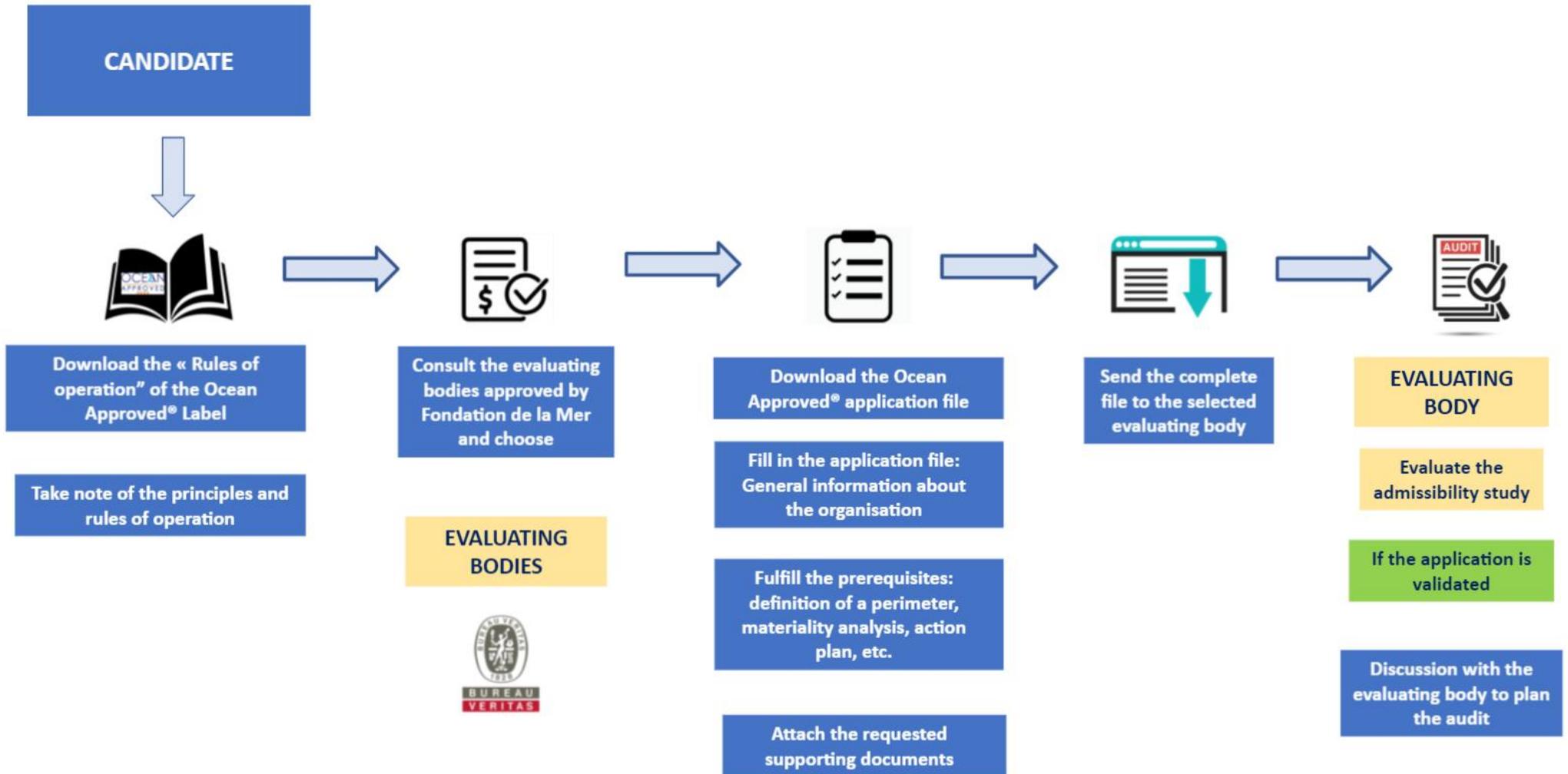
Documents available on the Ocean Approved website : <https://oceanapproved.org/>

- **Materiality analysis and risk mapping**
- **Action plan**
- **Application form**

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