



[Sophyto Organic Skin Care and Soil Association Organic Standards](#)

by julena

OK, I do confess that I haven't heard about the Soil Association Organic Certification before. Which is understandable. It's a UK association, and I'm all the way on the other side of the ocean in the Great White North.

So when I heard about this new company, [Sophyto](#), who chose not to certify with the certification I actually know (BDIH), I was confused and asked them why...

(My question essentially was why did you certify with SA which is not known too well, as opposed to BDIH which is a popular choice for some really high quality organic brands.)

I've got a very lucid response from Sophyto, the excerpt of which I would like to share with you.

"BDIH is actually a strict certification, but it certifies products as natural not organic. That doesn't mean a BDIH certified company does not include certified organic ingredients but they might not reach a minimum of 90% certified organic ingredients.

Many companies decide to get the BDIH certification instead of Soil Association because this way they will be able to include more wild active ingredients and still get a certification. Guam is a BDIH certified company and there is no way they could get an organic certification because they mainly use seaweed and that is something that can't be obtained organically. BDIH is their only option, they certify them as natural and free of toxic chemicals.

BDHI is popular because there are so many brands in the market certified by them, even though this certifying body has its headquarters in Germany. Being more popular does not necessarily mean it is better. Soil Association is established in the UK and most of the certified beauty companies are also based in the UK but they are also available in the US.

There are just a few cosmetic companies certified by UK Soil Association and that is another reason for not being better known.

Soil Association has the most stringent cosmetic standards known today, making it difficult for most companies to be certified by them. I can personally tell you that I know of some companies that started their certification process with Soil Association but then switched to BDIH because Soil Association did not approve their formulations.

One of the main obstacles in getting Soil Association certification, besides being free of toxic chemicals/processes, is that formulations must contain at least 90% certified organic ingredients. Many companies claim to be organic and they just contain 30% organic ingredients. In order to make sure consumers are not being green washed, Soil Association created the strictest standards to avoid anyone getting a certification.”

Don't know about you, but it does sound impressive to me.

I did some more digging and found some information about beauty product requirements in an actual Soil Association Organic Standard publication.

Here is a sample of some sections I found particularly interesting. You can read the whole list [here](#). It's a pretty long document, but beauty product standards are limited to sections 50 and 51.

50.2.2

Organic health and beauty products should:

- be fit for their purpose
- have as high as possible proportion of organic ingredients
- be clearly identified, traceable and separate from non-organic products at all stages of manufacturing
- not be tested on animals
- not be harmful to human health and the environment in manufacture and use
- be produced in line with our ethical trade standards (chapter 70), and
- be labelled to give clear and accurate information to the consumer.

50.4.1

You (the manufacturer – my clarification) should:

- extract as much of the herb as possible, and
- use extraction methods that extract the biologically active parts of the plant material while retaining maximum activity.

50.4.10

You may not use:

- aroma enhancers
- ionising radiation, or
- electron beaming.

50.6.2

You may label your product as ‘organic’ if more than 95% of the ingredients are organically produced.

You must calculate the organic percentage as follows:

- the calculation is of the finished product
- you must exclude any added water from the calculation, including floral waters
- for an ingredient that itself includes water, you must exclude the water part from the calculation, and
- for an ingredient of mixed organic and non-organic origin, either as a mixture or arising from a chemical reaction, you must use the relative proportions in the calculation.

It appears that these guidelines are really designed to give the consumer what they expect when shopping “organic”. And given the high standards, it’s no wonder so few companies meet them. Which is a pity.

Organic should be the way of life.

So, well done, Sophyto...

Now, how about some samples? 😊