Section 4

QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.A.P.) Certification Scheme

Certification Process – IndG.A.P.

Section 4
Certification Process

1. OBJECTIVE

To ensure an objective assessment and certification of the IndG.A.P. produce at the farm, promotion of uniformity in the operation of the certification scheme and the interaction between the Certification Bodies (CBs) and the producers seeking certification.

2. SCOPE

This document covers the certification process of IndG.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practices) to achieve certification under any one of the two options described under point 3 below.

This document is supplemented by the document on Group Certification process (IndG.A.P.-4 A) which also applies to Individual certification with implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS).

3. CERTIFICATION OPTIONS FOR GAP CERTIFICATION

Applicants can apply for certification under any of the 2 options (individual or group certification). The options are based on the constitution of the legal entity applying for certification. The CB shall complete all the steps as mentioned in the Scheme requirement before carrying out any IndG.A.P. certification (accredited or non-accredited). The following options shall be available for certification:

3.1. Option 1 Individual Certification

Individual producer applies for certification and gets certification.

Note- The producer is defined as a person (individual) or a business (individual or) who is legally responsible for production of products and who has the legal responsibility for the products sold by that farming business.

3.1.1. Multisite without implementation of QMS

Individual producer or one organization owns several production locations or Production Management Units (PMUs) that do not function as separate legal entities, applies and gets certification without implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS). In case of an Option 1 multisite with no QMS, all production sites where a registered product is produced shall be inspected before the certificate can be issued.

3.1.2. Multisite with implementation of QMS

Individual producer or one organization owns several production locations or Production Management Units (PMUs) that do not function as separate legal entities, applies and gets certification with implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS).

Note- Details of certification process for QMS implementation is given in IndG.A.P.Section 4 A

3.2. Option 2 Group certification

A producer/farmer group applies for group certification and the farmer group, as legal entity gets certification.

Note- Details of group certification is given in Group Certification process (IndG.A.P. Section 4 A)

3.3. The Scheme is open to all farmers/producers or organizations engaged in IndG.A.P. implementation who are legal entities in India or country of production.

3.4. The information on how to obtain certification for Good Agricultural Practices is also available on the website of QCI (https://qcin.org/india-good-agriculture-practices).

3.5. The certification shall be carried out by the Certification Bodies (CBs) duly accredited for the certification scheme as per ISO/IEC 17065 by NABCB. To operate under the Scheme, the CBs will require an extension of scope within the accreditation for ISO/IEC 17065.

4. CERTIFICATION PROCESS - OPTION 1 FOR INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION

4.1. Registration/Application for certification

4.1.1. Any farmer/producer/organization who is a legal entity can apply for certification to an approved CB.

Note- Option 1 will cover all elements described under clause 3.1 except 3.1.2 which will be treated in line with group certification

4.1.2. The application shall be made before harvesting of the crops.

4.1.3. All relevant information concerning farmer/producers applying for certification shall be recorded for the farmer/producer to become registered. This information will be used to supply the registered party with a unique client number, which will be used as a unique identifier for all certification activities.

4.1.4. The information required is consistent with the information of Certification Agreement signed between the farmer/producer and the CB. The following information is required for each farmer/producer wishing to be registered:

i. Name of producer/farmer to be certified,
ii. Annual Area under production,
iii. Farm produce to be covered,
iv. First harvest or further harvest details/timings.

4.1.5. The CB shall maintain and make publicly available accurate information describing its certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing,

suspending or withdrawing certification, and geographical areas in which it operates. The information shall include reference to the

i. Certification Criteria,
ii. procedure for obtaining certification,
iii. an application form,
iv. list of documents required to be submitted along with the application,
v. information on fee for application, initial certification and continuing certification,
vi. documents describing the rights and duties of certified clients, and
vii. information on procedures for handling complaints and appeals.
viii. The producer has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered to be confidential. In this case the information will have to be present during the on-site inspection.

4.1.6. The CB shall respond to all enquiries received from prospective applicants for certification with complete information for facilitating a registration of an applicant, within seven days of receipt of the query.

4.1.7. The prospective applicant shall apply to the CB on the Application form prescribed by the CB, and provide as minimum information on:

i. the name and address of applicant with contact details (Both physical and postal Address shall include name of city, District, State and country, postal code and also the contact and fax numbers if available)
ii. proof of legal entity,
iii. Production location and total land held at location,
iv. whether land is held under ownership or lease,
v. produce being Produced /handled,
vi. relevant certification criteria and option of IndG.A.P. against which certification is sought,
vii. Details of Produce handling (shall include name of produce handling unit, full address with name of city, District, State and country, postal code and also the contact and fax numbers and email and GLN / Sub GLN if available)
viii. number and competence of manpower (multisite or group farming) to be registered with CB which in turn will share details with IndG.A.P. Sectt. It is the responsibility of the producer and CB to update the data.
ix. area under cultivation non covered crop, first harvest and further harvest
x. area under cultivation covered crop, first harvest and further harvest
xi. Since when the area is under cultivation
xii. Any registration with government department
xiii. Email of applicant (if available)
xiv. GLN (if available)
xv. Latitude and Longitude of Legal entity (+ - 10 m accuracy)
xvi. Full name of Responsible person on behalf of legal entity with contact number full address, fax, email as per availability

xvii. Details on parallel production and parallel ownership (If any). Parallel production is allowed only if the crop can clearly distinguished by an average consumer at harvesting stage (eg: red apple and green apple).

xviii. Details of sub contracted operations (if any)

xix. Details of Certification bodies if any other products registered with other CBs

xx. Countries/ Group of countries of destination of produce

xxi. Harvest can be excluded from the scope of certification only if the produce is sold before harvest and the ownership of produce is no more with the certificate holder, part of the harvest cannot be excluded. And this information shall be available in the application the producer has to declare that PHI is complied with and pass on that information to buyer.

xxii. Inclusion of harvest is mandatory as long as the produce under harvest is under the ownership to the producer during harvest even if harvest is a sub-contracted operation. A written contract shall be executed between the producer and buyer mentioning the IndG.A.P. requirement for harvest exclusion. During application if the producer is not sure of buyer/buyers then a declaration stating that the information will be passed on to the CB as soon as the buyer is identified, the buyer also has the responsibility of handling the produce not just harvesting.

xxiii. If produce handling is included then whether certified and non certified produce handled in the same produce handling unit.

This information shall be updated whenever it changes latest it shall be updated before renewal.

Note:- Produce handling includes any operations after harvest including storage, chemical treatments, trimming, thinning, washing, packing or other operations were the produce will have physical contact with other substances or materials. Any specific processes for produce shall be captured in the check list

4.1.8. The prospective applicant shall along with the application, pay all applicable fees, declare any judicial proceedings relating to their operations/product, any proceedings by any regulatory body or suspension/cancellation/withdrawal of any certification/approvals under any regulations or otherwise.

4.1.9. Certification is granted only against the relevant certification criteria. The CB shall review all applications for the above and ensure the same.

4.1.10. All applications for certification shall be reviewed by the CB for adequacy and deficiencies observed, if any, shall be informed to applicant within seven days of receipt of application. Review of applications shall be done by a competent person. Records of review shall be maintained.

4.1.11. The applications found to be complete and supported with all documents sought shall be accepted and registered in order of receipt with a unique identification number, acknowledged and records maintained. Registration should be done within seven days of receipt.

4.1.12. Antecedents of applications shall be verified. If punished under the law, the application from the same person/organization will not be entertained during the period of punishment and in any case for at least one year from the date of punishment.

4.1.13. Applications from farmers/producers who have earlier either misused the Certification/ certification mark, or whose earlier certificate was cancelled because of violation of terms and conditions/misuse of certification mark shall not be entertained within one year of cancellation of the certificate by any CB.

4.1.14. Applications from farmer/producer found to be misusing the Certification/certification Mark while their application is being processed for grant of certificate, shall not be processed any further, and rejected after giving a due notice of 15 days. Fresh applications from them shall be treated as per clause 4.1.13 given above.

4.1.15. Requests for grant of certificates from ex-applicants shall be processed like a fresh applicant and the entire procedure for grant of certificate be adhered to.

4.1.16. Certification Bodies shall reject or close an application under the following conditions:

- If Initial Evaluation is not carried out within six months of registration of application,
- If the follow up evaluation carried out after organization has confirmed necessary corrective actions is not satisfactory
- Lack of competent personnel for production/cultivation and handling,
- If farmer/producer shows no progress towards completion of corrective actions within three months of Initial Evaluation and six months of Registration of application,
- Misuse of Certification/certification mark, Evidence of malpractice and
- Voluntary withdrawal of application.

4.1.17. In the event of closure/rejection of an application, the application fee submitted with the application may be refunded as decided by the CB.

4.1.18. An applicant:

4.1.18.1. May not register the same product more than once with different CBs or under different certification options.

4.1.18.2. May register different products with different CBs and/or under different certification options (e.g.: It is possible to register apples under Option 1 and cherries under Option 2, apples with one CB and cherries with another CB or both crops with the same CB). The application of the CB requires the applicant to confirm that there is no duplication in terms of seeking certification.

4.1.18.3. May not register production sites or group members in different countries with any CB. The IndG.A.P. Secretariat may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis or as per national interpretation guidelines. The limiting criteria for easiness in operations is that QMS / PG Border limit within 50 km from

operation office of PHU / Packhouse for perishable products and 100 km for non-perishable products. Average number of Producer members can be 50 of average 2-hectare limit per 1 extension officer for first year of implementation.

4.1.19. For the registration to be completed, the applicant shall satisfy all the following conditions:

4.1.19.1. Submit to the CB the relevant application that shall include all the necessary information.

4.1.19.2. Sign acceptance of the IndG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement' in its latest version (available on the QCI website) with the CB, or the applicant shall explicitly acknowledge the receipt and the inclusion of the IndG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement' with signature on the service contract/agreement with the CB and the CB shall hand over a copy of the IndG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement' to the producer.

4.1.19.3. Be assigned a UIN after completion of first certification process (as per Section 3 Annexure 3C – Seed to Sale (S2S) Rules; clause 6.1 - SOP for issuing Unique Identification Number), if they don't already have a UIN.

4.1.19.4. Agree in writing to pay the IndG.A.P. registration fee, as explained in the current IndG.A.P. Fee Table' (available on the QCI website).

4.1.20. The registration process, in case of initial certification and transfers, shall be finalized before inspection can take place.

4.1.21. In the case of first registration, the CB shall confirm about the receipt of application and that the application is in order.

4.1.22. Production Site is defined as a production area (e.g., fields, plots, ponds, ranches) that is owned or rented and ultimately managed by one legal entity, and where the same input factors (e.g., water supply, workers, equipment, stores, etc.) are used.

4.1.22.1. One site (farm) may contain several touching areas (plot: areas that share a common border, are contiguous) and production of more than one product on the same site is possible. the multisite may contain several non-touching areas (fields: areas that do not share a common border, are non-contiguous) and production of more than one product on the same site is possible.

4.1.22.2. All production sites where the product(s) that are included in the IndG.A.P. certification scope are produced, shall be identified and registered.

4.1.23. Requirements for production sites:

4.1.23.1. All production sites shall be owned or rented and under the direct control of the legal entity.

4.1.23.2. For production sites that are not owned by the legal entity, there shall be a signed document, which includes a clear indication that the site owner does not have any responsibility or input or decision capacity regarding the production operations over the rented-out site. There shall also be written contracts in force between each production site owner and the legal entity that include the following elements:

a. Certificate holder/producer member name and legal identification.

b. Name and/or legal identification of the site owner.
c. Site owner contact address.
d. Details of the individual production sites.
e. Signature of both parties' representatives.

4.1.23.3. The certificate holder is legally responsible for all the registered production, including placing the product on the market.

4.1.24. A product handling unit (PHU) is defined as facilities where products are handled. If a producer handles products included in the IndG.A.P. certification scope in more than one PHU, all these shall be identified and registered.

4.1.25. Registration / Transfer with a new CB

4.1.25.1. If a producer who has already been registered changes CB or applies to a new CB for certification of a different product, the producer shall communicate the UIN to the new CB. Failure to do so will result will result in aborting the process for both Option 1 producer and Option 2 producer group.

4.1.25.2. Certificate holders who are sanctioned cannot change CB until the outgoing CB closes the corresponding non-conformance.

4.1.25.3. Individual producer members of a producer group are not allowed to leave the group and register with another group (for the products registered) if there is any pending sanction on the producer issued by the group, or there are any issues relevant to the producer raised by the CB that have not been closed.

4.1.26. Parallel Production (PP) or Parallel Ownership (PO)

4.1.26.1. Any applicant/certificate holder (individual producer, multisite producer or producer group) who owns IndG.A.P. and non-IndG.A.P. products (of the same product) at any time needs to register for parallel production (PP) or parallel Ownership (PO).

4.1.26.2. Registration Steps

a. The producer shall inform the respective CB of the application for PP/PO during the registration process.
   - Producer groups shall also include clear identification of their producer members who buy/sell non-certified products of the same products included in the scope of certification (and, therefore, also the products that have to be registered as "with PO" for each producer member).
b. The CB shall register the producer (per product) in the IndG.A.P. Database for PP and/or PO.
c. Producers can register for PP/PO at any time if they start carrying out PP/PO activities but cannot use the registration as immediate corrective action to avoid sanctions in the case of a non-conformance.
   - If a non-conformance is detected, the producer shall be sanctioned accordingly until effective implementation of the

corrective actions for the entire production process has taken place.

- In case producers want to register for PP/PO during the validity of their certificates (e.g. because they need to purchase certified products, which they did not expect at the time of their registration), CBs will have to carry out an extraordinary inspection/audit to check the applicable control points and update the information in the their Database and the paper certificate.
- In case producers want to register for parallel ownership at the beginning of the season, when they are not sure whether they will buy non-certified products, CBs shall evaluate that the traceability and segregation procedures are available and ready for implementation. When the purchase of products from non-certified sources begins, CBs shall require evidences of implementation (documentation or on-site assessment).

4.1.26.3. Identification of Producers Registered for PP/PO

a. The UIN is used to validate the certificate. It is made available via the identification of the final products with the producer, where the product originates from a certified process, which is an obligation for all producers registered for PP/PO.

b. PP/PO shall be specified on the paper certificate and is also visible via the online certificate validation in the IndG.A.P. website.

4.1.26.4. Additional Requirements for Producers with PP/PO

a. All products shall be traceable to the respective production site/PHU, and certified and non-certified products shall be fully segregated at all times. Producers shall be able to demonstrate that their traceability and recording system guarantees full traceability and segregation.

b. The handling of certified and non-certified products is possible within the same product handling facility.

c. Parallel production in one production site is not allowed. Exceptions, when possible, are explained in the respective scope-specific rules.

4.1.27. Burden of Proof

4.1.27.1. In the case of information (e.g. MRL exceedance, microbial contamination, etc.) about a certificate holder, which could have a potential impact on the certified status/claim being transmitted to the IndG.A.P. Secretariat, it is the responsibility of the certificate holders and the corresponding CBs to refute the claim by verifying and p The findings and actions taken shall be reported to the IndG.A.P. Secretariat within the defined period of time by the CB. providing evidence of compliance with the IndG.A.P. standards.

4.1.27.2. The findings and actions taken shall be reported to the IndG.A.P. Secretariat within the defined period of time by the CB.

4.1.27.3. If the certificate holders and the corresponding CBs do not provide the requested evidence of compliance within the period of time defined by the Scheme Owner, they will be sanctioned according to the sanctioning procedures described in the Certification Process (Section 3).

4.1.27.4. In case the evidence includes laboratory analyses, accredited laboratories (ISO 17025) and independent sampling.

4.2. Assessment process

4.2.1. Control Points and Compliance Criteria (CPCC)

The Control Points and Compliance Criteria (CPCC) checklist based on IndG.A.P. standard shall be used both for internal and external assessments. Any producer or producer group opting for IndG.A.P. needs to comply with Annex A of Section 3. If a group of farmers join to seek a group certification, they need to comply with requirements stipulated in Section 4A. A plan for the same shall be drawn along with the evaluator's details for information and declaration of CoI from auditee and others.

4.2.2. Pre-assessment

4.2.2.1. The applicant may seek a pre-assessment, which is not mandatory, during which the CB shall check the applicant's state of preparedness for the evaluation, and availability of competent personnel and adequate records of producers /farmer on CPCC.

4.2.2.2. Deficiencies observed with respect to the certification criteria during the pre-assessment shall be informed in writing to the applicant.

4.2.2.3. There shall be only one pre-assessment.

4.2.2.4. IndG.A.P. has both announced and unannounced audit programme

4.2.3. Initial evaluation

4.2.3.1. A single stage Initial evaluation shall be carried out by a competent evaluation team of the CB.

4.2.3.2. Initial Evaluation of the product and the processes at the site of the applicant shall be conducted on satisfactory fulfilment of all application requirements.

4.2.3.3. The CB shall communicate the composition of the team and duration of Initial Evaluation to the applicant for verifying any conflict of interest and any objections to the team composition by the applicant should be examined on merit.

4.2.3.4. If a producer or producer group uses the services of more than one CB, each CB shall conduct the respective inspections (Option 1) and QMS audit (Option 1 multisite with QMS or Option 2) independently. The transfer of the client

from one CB to other requires that the CB receiving CB shall request details of all information including details of NCs, sanction related to other project.

4.2.4. Assessment methodology

4.2.4.1. In order to achieve certification, a registered party shall perform either a self-assessment (Option 1 and Option 1 multisite without QMS) or internal inspections/audits (Option 1 multisite with QMS and Option 2) and receive inspections/audits by the chosen CB.

4.2.4.2. During any of these assessments, except the self-assessments, comments shall be supplied for all Major and minor control points.

4.2.4.3. Option 1 – Single sites and multiple sites without QMS

This section is applicable to applicants that are single legal entities (individual producer or company) with single production sites or multiple production sites that are not separate legal entities and operated without the implementation of a QMS.

i. Self-assessment- The self-assessment shall:

a. Cover all registered production sites, products and processes under the certification scope to verify compliance with the requirements defined in the applicable control points

b. Be carried out by or under the responsibility of the producer

c. Be carried out at least annually before the initial or surveillance inspections against complete checklist of all scope(s) and sub scope (s) and registered areas in one go or in stages depending upon the crops. The completed checklist shall be available on site for review at all times.

d. Comments and positive findings during the self-assessment shall be recorded as described in the checklist. The self-assessment checklist shall contain comments of the evidences observed for all non-applicable and non-compliant control points.

ii. External inspection

a. The inspection (announced and unannounced) shall be carried out by a CB inspector or auditor. Annual regular inspections/audits and unannounced inspections/audits shall be carried out during 2 separate visits that shall be a minimum of 30 days apart from each other. When made available, the CB may use the checklist for unannounced inspections.

The inspection shall cover:

- All accepted products and production processes
- All registered production sites
- Each registered product handling unit
- Where relevant, the administrative sites

The CB shall inspect the complete checklist of applicable scope and sub scope:

- Announced inspections
  - ✓ Each applicant shall undergo one announced external inspection at the initial assessment and annually thereafter,
  - ✓ Inspections shall cover all acceptable products, all registered production locations and each registered product handling site
  - ✓ The CB may divide announced inspections (both initial and subsequent) into 2 modules, which shall be verified by the same auditor/inspector:
    - Off-site module: This consists of a desk review of documentation sent by the producer to the CB before the inspection.
    - On-site module: This consists of an on-site inspection of the remaining content of the checklist, the production process on-site, and verification of the information assessed off-site.
    - The reason why two modules are used is to reduce the time spent on-site, although the overall duration of the inspection is not reduced.
    - The CB offers both the off-site and on-site module to its clients, the use is to be mutually agreed and part of the process
    - The producer has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered to be confidential. In this case the information will have to be present during the on-site inspection.
  - External unannounced and surveillance inspections
  - ✓ The CB shall carry out unannounced surveillance Inspections of a minimum of additional 10% of all its producers the CB has certified under Option 1 (individual producer)
  - ✓ The selection of the 10 % shall not only take into account total numbers, but shall also be calculated and carried out based on risk assessment and considering factors such as geography, legislation (where several jurisdictions are covered by the CB), crop type, compliance history, etc.
  - ✓ The duration of unannounced inspections (Option 1) shall not be shorter than 2 hours.
  - ✓ The CB shall inspect the major and minor of the applicable scope(s) and sub- scope(s). Any non-compliance will be handled in the same way as those found during an announced inspection.
  - ✓ The CB will inform the certificate holder in advance of the intended visit. This notification will normally not exceed 48 hours. In the exceptional cases where it is impossible for the certificate holder to accept the proposed date (due to medical or other justifiable reasons), the certificate holder will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced surveillance inspection

or audit. The certificate holder shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted. The producer will receive another 48-hour notification of a visit. If the visit cannot take place because of non- justifiable reasons, a suspension of all products will be issued.

- ✓ If a producer or producer group wishes to change to a new CB, the accepting CB shall as a first step for all applicants carry out a search in the INDG.A.P. website to verify the status before any further actions are taken. If a producer or producer group uses the services of more than one CB, each CB shall conduct the respective inspections (Option 1) and QMS audit (Option 1 multisite with QMS or Option 2) independently.
- ✓ the incoming CB has not seen the harvest season of all products included in the certification scope, an unannounced inspection (within the 10 % rule) shall be scheduled during the following 12 months, in order to inspect the harvest process of products not seen.
- ✓ The 10 % shall be calculated for a 12-month period. The number of unannounced inspections and audits per 12-month period shall reflect 10 % of the certificates issued without QMS included and with QMS included, respectively.
- ✓ The CB shall make sure that in the sampling for unannounced visits, those producers that did not receive a first inspection or the subsequent inspection during harvest have a greater chance of getting an unannounced inspection during the next harvest (this needs to be conveyed to the producer when discussing inspection timing). Additionally, the CB shall make every effort to carry out the subsequent inspection during harvest.

b. **Summary of assessments** - Assessments to be undertaken before certification is issued (option 1 Multisite without QMS initial evaluation) and annually thereafter (Surveillance evaluation):

Assessments	**Initial evaluation (first year) only)**	**Subsequent evaluations**
Self- assessment by producer needs to be done in various dates based on the availability of the standing corp(s) however, the self-assessment is a pre-requisite before visit of CB	Entire scope (All registered sites)	Entire scope (All registered sites)

Externally by the CB	Announced inspection of entire Scope (All registered sites)	1. Announced inspection of entire scope (All registered sites) 2.Unannounced inspection of (minimum 10% of the certificate holders)
		Announced QMS audit shall be undertaken at the central office/administrative center of the producer group or multisite company and at the central product handling facility/facilities. 2.a) If sanction from previous surveillance: Inspection of (minimum) square root of actual number of registered producers/production sites; or 2.b) If no sanction from previous surveillance: Inspection of (minimum) square root of actual number of registered producers/ production sites minus the number of producers/ production sites inspected during the previous surveillance inspection Second visit (surveillance) 3. Surveillance inspection of (minimum) 50 % square root of the actual number of certified producers/production sites.

4.2.4.4. Option 2 and option 1 Multisite with QMS

This section is applicable to groups and individuals with multiple sites who have implemented a QMS been taken into consideration by CB. The CB shall be responsible for the data submitted to IndG.A.P. sect. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all producers and production sites under the certification scope comply with the certification requirements at all times.

The CB does not inspect all producers or production sites, but just a sample. Thus, it is not the responsibility of the CB to determine the compliance of each producer or production site (this responsibility rests with the applicant). The CB shall assess whether the applicant's internal controls are appropriate.

i. Internal assessment

a. The applicant shall undertake internal assessments of all producers and/or production sites, covering all products and processes under the certification scope to verify and ensure compliance with the certification requirements.
b. The internal assessment shall comply with the requirements determined in sections 4 and 5 and include:
   - A minimum of one internal audit of QMS shall be carried out by the internal auditor before the first CB audit and thereafter once annually
   - A minimum of one internal inspection of each registered producer production site and product handling facility (PHU) shall be carried out by internal inspectors before the first CB inspection and thereafter once annually.

ii. External Quality Management System (QMS) audit

a. The audit (announced and unannounced) shall be carried out by a CB auditor
b. The audit (announced and unannounced) shall be based on the QMS checklist.

➢ **QMS announced audit**

✓ The CB shall carry out one announced external audit of the QMS at the initial assessment and thereafter once annually,

➢ **QMS unannounced surveillance audits**

✓ The CB shall carry out additional QMS unannounced external audits on a minimum of 10% of the certified producer groups and multi-sites annually,

✓ Non-compliance detected shall be handled as in announced audit. Non-conformances will lead sanction applied to the whole group and multi-site

✓ The CB will inform the certificate holder of the visit. This notification will normally not exceed 48 hours in advance of the intended visit. In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the certificate holder to accept the proposed date (due to medical or other justifiable reasons), the certificate holder will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced surveillance inspection or audit. The certificate holder shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted. The producer will receive another 48-hour notification of

a visit. If the visit cannot take place because of non-justifiable reasons, a suspension of all products will be issued.

iii. External inspection

a. The CB inspector shall carry out the inspection
b. The CB shall inspect the complete checklist (Major, Minor and Recommended) of the applicable scope(s) and sub-scope(s) during all inspections and give sufficient notes and comments to explain the on-ground situation.
c. The inspection per selected producer member or production site shall cover all accepted products, production processes and where relevant, the product handling units and administrative sites.
    - Initial Inspection: As a minimum the square root (or next whole number rounded upwards if there are any decimals) of the total number of the producers/production sites in the certification scope shall be inspected before a certificate can be issued. During the validity period of the certificate, the surveillance inspection of (minimum) 50 % square root of certified producers/production sites shall be carried out. Certification bodies if required, based on risk perceived, increase the verification rate of the total numbers of registered producers/production sites. The producer group/company has the right to appeal such a decision. The reasons for an increase could arise from any of the following:
        - ✓ Failure to comply with significant QMS and/or product handling requirements affecting the producer members' compliance
        - ✓ Customer complaints; e.g., illegal pesticide residue detection, MRL exceedance etc.
        - ✓ Significant inconsistencies between the internal audit/inspection reports and the CB inspection/audit findings
        - ✓ The possible need to determine if the NC is structural or not
        - ✓ Large Number of products/Multi crops (to cover more crops)

d. The document will be shared with the entity before the audit and will be considered while defining the certification scope. Scope of the inspection/audit: company, site, PHU, and product information shall be as per the products, production area/quantity, sites/members, country of destination, handling, and harvest included or excluded, product handling takes place in-field or in a facility or in both product attributes (PP/PO, covered/non-covered, first or further harvest).. The number of producers thus arrived, shall be inspected before a new certificate can be issued (Initial certification or inspection by a new CB)

e. The CB shall maintain and make publicly available accurate information describing its certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification, and geographical areas in which it operates. The audit (announced and unannounced) shall be carried out by a CB auditor.

f. The audit (announced and unannounced) shall be based on the QMS checklist.

- **QMS announced audit**
  - ✓ The CB shall carry out one announced external audit of the QMS at the initial assessment and thereafter once annually,
  - ✓ The CB may divide the announced audits into 2 modules, which shall be verified by the same auditor:
    - Off-site module: This consists of a desk review of documentation sent by the QMS to the CB before the audit, including internal audit, internal register of approved producer members/production sites, 'Food Safety Policy Declaration', risk assessments, procedures required in the General Regulations Part II, residue monitoring system (frequency, parameters, sampling program), residue analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used, list of plant protection products used, proof of lab accreditation and certificates or inspection reports of subcontracted activities, etc.
    - On-site module: This consists of an on-site audit of the remaining content of the QMS checklist, plus the verification of the information assessed off-site and the way the management system works on-site (e.g. internal inspections, traceability, segregation and mass balance, central product handling units, etc.).
    - The aim of the use of both modules is to reduce the time spent on-site, although the overall duration of the audit will not be reduced. The findings of the inspection will be signed by both the applicant and CB.
    - The CB decides if it will offer the off-site module to its clients. In case the CB offers the off-site module to its clients, the use has to be mutually agreed with each producer group/company.
    - The producer group/company has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered to be confidential. In this case the information will have to be present during the on-site audit.

- **QMS unannounced surveillance audits**
  - ✓ The CB shall carry out additional QMS unannounced audits for a minimum of 10 % of the certified producer groups and multisite with QMS annually.
  - ✓ Any non-compliance detected shall be handled as in announced audit. Non- conformances will lead sanction applied to the whole group and multi-site
  - ✓ The CB may inform the certificate holder. This notification will normally not exceed 48 hours (2 working days) in advance of the intended visit. In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the certificate holder to accept the proposed date (due to medical or other justifiable reasons), the certificate holder will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced surveillance inspection. The certificate holder shall receive a written warning if the first date has not been accepted. The certificate holder will receive another 48-hour notification of a visit. If the visit cannot take place because of non-justifiable reasons, a complete suspension will be issued.

g. The evaluation process shall require at least 6-8 hours commiserating to the size of the project. It shall be structure with an opening and closing meeting that will review all documentation, evaluate all records including review of the internal audits, inspections carried, verify the mass balance. This shall include the verification of the competency of the internal inspectors, auditor qualification and can check re-evaluate files evaluated in the past. This shall be validated and part of the yearly management review.

h. As part of the QMS audit, the results of the external and internal audits and inspections shall be compared to assess whether the applicant's internal controls are appropriate.

i. The final audit report and result can only be concluded after both the QMS and the minimum sample of producer members/production sites are evaluated. The audit report shall consist of list of non-compliances, non-conformances and follow up actions. This includes a summary of finding of each clause along with the objective evidence which shall be documented in format of CB with consent of the auditee with information of closure of the NCs as per the categorization. The evidence may also include documents or photographs as means of compliance.

j. Initial inspection shall include at least square root of the total central produce handling units and if there is only one Produce handling unit it shall be inspected every year.

iv. Surveillance producer inspection:

- The CB shall carry out announced external inspections to each producer group and multi-site annually. The minimum number of producers to be inspected per certificate holder depends on the outcome of the previous unannounced inspections and QMS audit.

- The number of producers/sites to be inspected during a cycle shall be equivalent to the square root of the current number of producers/sites grouped by the same type of activities and producers added based on the risk-based assessment. Half (50 %) of the square root of the producers/production sites shall be inspected during the surveillance inspections.

- The inspections may be split into 2 separate visits during the certification cycle, with the aim of increasing the reliability of the system: Re-certification audit and Surveillance producer inspections. This does not reduce the minimum number of inspections necessary during the certification cycle (12 months).
  The inspections may be split into two: 50% shall be inspected unannounced during the validity period of a certificate (12 months), and the other 50% during the announced surveillance inspection.

- Only if the producers inspected externally have no sanctions raised in that surveillance inspection, the following regular announced inspection by the CB will

be reduced to the square root of the current number of the producers/PMUs minus the number of producers/PMUs inspected unannounced

- Before a certification decision can be made, square root of total numbers of current producer member and/ PMUs shall have been inspected during the last 12 months.

v. Summary of assessments

Assessments to be undertaken before certification is issued (initial evaluation) and annually thereafter (Surveillance evaluation):

Assessments	Initial evaluation (In the first year)	Subsequent evaluations
Internally by producer group and option 1 multisite operation with QMS	1. Internal QMS audit 2. Internal inspection of each producer and/or PMU	1. Internal QMS audit 2. Internal inspection of each producer and/or PMU 3. The evaluation process of the requirements included in General Regulations Part II shall take at least 6 to 8 hours, depending on the size of the project.
Externally by the CB	1. Announced QMS audit + square root of the total number of central PMUs while in operation 2. Announced inspection to (minimum) square root of producer member and/or PMUs and additional producers as a result of risk assessment undertaken by CB 3. Unannounced inspection to (minimum) 50% of square root of producers and /or PMUs	1. Announced QMS audit will be carried out only by auditors that have done a QMS auditor training 2. Unannounced QMS audit to 10% of certificate holders that shall be carried out per scope. CBs with only one Option 2 certified producer group shall perform an unannounced QMS audit at least every 2 years. The requirement of auditor is similar to announced QMS audits. 3. Announced inspection to (minimum) square root of actual number of producer and/or PMUs minus the number inspected unannounced during previous cycle. 4. Unannounced inspection to (minimum) 50% of square root of actual number of producers and/or PMUs.

4.2.5. Inspection timings

4.2.5.1. Initial (first) inspections

i. The inspection of a farmer/producer takes place after registration with the CB depending on the produce to be inspected. The ideal timing for evaluation of all control criteria shall be during harvest time when sufficient records/evidence is available, especially to facilitate verification of the control points related to harvest.
ii. Alternative timing options may be followed where evaluation during harvest time is not possible. The first inspection therefore takes place before or after harvest. In these cases, the justification for alternative timings shall be recorded in the audit report. Justification for alternative timing may be logistics and time.

Note: Constraints of producer and/or inspector, variation in harvest dates etc., perennial crop not yet producing mature produce, etc. Additionally, following constraints may be accepted by the CB:

a. Practically, inspection of records and visual evidence requires that the evaluation must take place as close to harvest as possible, for the inspectors to verify as many control points as possible.
b. If inspection is made before harvest, it is not possible to inspect certain control points which either be covered by a follow up visit or documentary proof submitted by producer.
c. If harvest has already taken place at the time of inspection, producer shall retain evidence for compliance of control points related to that harvest,
d. The CB shall make sure that in the sampling of unannounced visits, those producers that did not receive a first inspection or recertification inspection during harvest have greater chance of getting unannounced inspection during the next harvest. Additionally, the CB must make every effort to carry out subsequent inspection during harvest.

iii. No inspection can take place until the CB has accepted the applicant's registration.
iv. Each production process for products registered and accepted for certification for the first time shall be completely assessed (all applicable control points shall be verified), prior to issuing the certificate.
v. A product that has not yet been harvested shall not be included in the certificate (i.e. it is not possible to certify a product in the future).
vi. It is possible to add a new product to an already existing certificate during an unannounced inspection (Option 1 without QMS) or during a surveillance inspection (Option 2/Option 1 with QMS and sampling, provided all applicable control points for this product are verified).
vii. The applicant shall have records from the registration date onwards or for at least 3 months before the first inspection takes place, whichever is longer, and the CB shall inspect them.

viii. Products that are harvested/processed before registration with IndG.A.P. cannot be certified.
ix. Records that relate to harvest or product handling before the producer has registered with IndG.A.P. are not valid.

4.2.5.2. First Inspection Timing for Multiple produce Certification

i. The producer may be seeking certification for more than one produce, and the produce may not all have the same seasonal timing, i.e. harvest of one produce does not necessarily coincide with the harvest of other produce.
ii. Where the produce to be included in the certification scope are concurrent, i.e., harvested at the same time, then the first evaluation will be timed so that at least one crop can be evaluated at harvest, making an assumption that the other crops getting ready for harvest will be compliant to the same degree.
   a. Where the crops to be included in the certification scope are consecutive, i.e., the production of one crop finalizes before the production of the next one commences, then in the first year a full evaluation of the first crop must be made during harvesting. Subsequent crops grown in that same first year can be added to the certificate only when compliance has been verified for each crop, either through a site inspection at harvest of each crop or through data collection and discussion with the applicant.
   b. The sample size of the following regular announced audit by the CB may be reduced to the square root of the current number of the producers/production sites minus the number of producers/production sites inspected during the previous surveillance inspections as long as the following prerequisites are met:
      • The sample shall cover all products registered for certification that they grow, all types of production and related sub-scope are included
      • There is no non-conformances detected on the day of the producer/production site surveillance inspections
      • The result of the QMS audit does not raise doubts about the robustness of the system.
   c. Before a certification decision can be made, at least the square root of the total number of current producers/production sites shall have been inspected during the last 12 months.
   d. CBs may take the decision to increase the sample during surveillance inspections if there is a need to investigate whether a non-compliance is structural or not.

Note- Crop grouping: - low risk produce (always cooked before eating, always cleaned before eating, dry nuts, produce with inedible skin/shells and produce where pathogens will not grow easily and produce with no known incidence of food safety. All other produce is under high risk also which involves ice or water for harvesting on field packing

4.2.5.3. Subsequent Inspections

i. Each production process for products registered and accepted for certification shall be completely assessed (all applicable control points shall

be verified) annually prior to issuing the certificate. This also applies if the producers change CBs.

ii. The subsequent inspection can be carried out at any time during an "inspection window" that extends over a period of 8 months: from 4 months before the original expiry date of the certificate, and (only if the CB extends the certificate validity in the IndG.A.P. registry) up to 4 months after the original expiry date of the certificate.

iii. There shall be a minimum period of 6 months between 2 inspections for re-certification.

4.3. Certification process

4.3.1. The team shall witness the processes covering as many CPCC as possible during evaluation of the applicant. Any nonconformity observed during evaluation with respect to the conformance criteria shall be informed in writing to the applicant for taking necessary action.

4.3.2. Compliance levels for certification

4.3.2.1. The producer is required to comply with three types of compliance criteria set out in the GAP standard. These are Major, minor and recommended which must be fulfilled in all respects before certification. In the case of Minor, one of three types of control points within the IndG.A.P. standards. All Minor control points shall be inspected during the self-assessments / Internal Inspection and external announced inspections but there is no compulsion for successfully meeting Minor. this means the number of non-compliance of minor clauses will not affect the outcome of certification

4.3.2.2. Compliance is indicated with a "Yes" (for compliant), "No" (for not compliant) on the checklist. The producer needs to undertake a self-assessment as indicated in Annex A of Section 3 to ensure compliance to the requirement of the IndG.A.P.. Evidence/comments should be provided for each control criteria- these shall enable the audit trail to be reviewed after the event, be it self or external evaluation and will include details of references taken during the evaluation. It is, however, obligatory to give evidence/comments for all the major and minor compliance criteria inspected in all external evaluation, self-assessments, and internal evaluation.

4.3.2.3. The level of compliance shall be established based on the following:
Major - 100% compliance of all applicable major control points
Minor - 95% compliance of all minor control points is compulsory
Recommended - No compliance required

a. The calculation method to find out the percentage of major control point non-compliance is number of non-complaint Major control points / total number of applicable Major control points X 100
   i. This shall be 5% or below if anything above 5% will lead to non-conformance
   ii. The total applicable Major control points = total number of Major – number of not applicable Major

b. The calculation method to find out the percentage of minor control point compliance is number of complaint minor control points / total number of applicable minor control points X 100
   i. This shall be 95% or above if anything below 95% will lead to non-conformance
c. Note:- counting has to be done will all applicable modules together.
d. The percentage compliance can never be rounded up for Eg: - 94.8 % compliance can not be rounded up to 95 %.
e. The calculation of either percentage non-compliance or compliance shall be available after inspection

4.3.2.4. CB shall maintain records of all certification activities- application registration, documents provided by applicant, on site evaluation report and evaluation and review of reports for grant of certification.

4.3.2.5. Self-assessment quality assurance (applicable Option 1 without QMS)

The individual producer/farmer shall carry out a self-assessment at least once a year. This self-assessment will be carried out under the responsibility of the producer/organization.

The self-assessment shall be against the complete checklist (Major, Minor and Recommended) of the applicable scope(s). The completed checklist shall be available on site for review by the inspector during the CB evaluation.

The self-assessment is an activity different from internal assessment which is mandatory in case of Option 2 which also has QMS as a requirement.

4.3.3. Grant of Certification

4.3.3.1. The CB shall grant certification a paper certificate or e-format after ensuring:
   i. complete compliance to the Certification Criteria based on evaluation reports resulting in positive certification decision,
   ii. certification scheme requirements, and
   iii. satisfactory resolution of nonconformities raised.

There shall be no conditional grant of certification.

4.3.3.2. On grant of certification, the CB shall inform the farmer/organization and issue a Certificate, uniquely identified, to the farmer/organization indicating the names of the produce certified, the certification criteria against which the certification has been awarded, effective date, validity date, and the name and address of the farmer /organization site where certified as a minimum.

4.3.3.3. No Brand names shall be mentioned on the Certificate document or any other document intimating grant of certification.

4.3.3.4. The effective date of certification shall not be before the date of decision to grant the certification to the farmer/organization.

4.3.3.5. The certificate for produce certification shall be for a period of 1 years from the date of decision to grant the produce certification.

4.3.3.6. The CB shall make the certification decision within a maximum of 28 calendar days after closure of any outstanding non-conformances. In case no non-conformances are detected during the inspection/audit, it means that the CB shall make the decision no later than 28 days after the end of the inspection/audit.

4.3.3.7. Any complaints or appeals against CBs follow the CB's own complaints and appeals procedure, which each CB shall have and communicate to its clients. In case the CB does not respond adequately, the complaint can be addressed to the IndG.A.P. Secretariat.

4.3.4. Scope of certification

4.3.4.1. The product scope is linked to the location where that product is produced. Certificate is issued to the registered producer/organization, on the farms where the products are produced and for the products declared. The legal entity of the places certified must be declared by the certificate holder.

4.3.4.2. The entire production process of the declared and registered produce must comply with requirements. Certified locations cannot be separated into growing areas or handling facilities that are certified and other growing areas or handling facilities of the same product that are excluded from certification.

4.3.5. Non-Compliance and Non-Conformance

4.3.5.1. Non-compliance (with a control point): A Major or Minor in the IndG.A.P. checklist is not fulfilled according to the compliance criterion.

4.3.5.2. Non-conformance (with the IndG.A.P. certification rules): A IndG.A.P. rule that is necessary for obtaining the certificate (see 6.2) is infringed (e.g. non-compliance with one or more Major, or more than 5 % of applicable Minor).

4.3.5.3. Contractual non-conformances: Breach of any of the agreements signed in the contract between the CB and the producer related to IndG.A.P. issues.

Case examples: Trading with a product that does not comply with legal requirements; false communication by the producer regarding IndG.A.P. certification, IndG.A.P. trademark misuse, payments not made in accordance with contractual conditions, etc.

4.3.5.4. All non-conformances shall be closed and compliance to be recorded before the certification. The status open non-conformance cannot be given to producer group members products.

4.3.6. Requirements to Achieve and Maintain IndG.A.P. Certification

4.3.6.1. The Control Points and Compliance Criteria document consist of 3 types of control points: Major, Minor and Recommended.

4.3.6.2. To obtain IndG.A.P. certification, the following are required:

a. Major: 100 % compliance with all applicable Major and QMS control points is compulsory.
b. Minor: 95 % compliance with all applicable Minor control points is compulsory.
c. Recommended: No minimum percentage of compliance required.

4.3.6.3. The producer shall comply with the agreements signed ('IndG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement' and CB service agreement in their current version) and with the requirements defined in the Certification Criteria in their current version.

4.3.6.4. Applicable Control Points

a. The control points to be taken into consideration to calculate the percentage of compliance for Major and Minor depend on the product and certification scope. The applicant shall ensure that each individual site and product complies with the certification requirements. Thus, the compliance percentage shall be calculated taking into account all the control points applicable to each site and product.
b. In a multisite operation without QMS, the compliance level is calculated for the entire operation in one checklist. Any applicable control point common to all sites needs to be taken into account for all sites.
c. In a multisite operation with QMS, the compliance level is calculated per sampled production site. Each production site shall comply with the certification requirements. Any applicable control point common to all sites (e.g. central chemical storage) needs to be taken into account for all sites.
d. In a producer group, the compliance level is calculated per sampled producer. Each producer member shall comply with the certification requirements. Any applicable control point common to all producers (e.g. central chemical storage) needs to be taken into account for all producers.

4.3.7. Sanctions

4.3.7.1. If non-conformance is detected, the CB shall apply a sanction (warning, suspension, or cancellation) as indicated in this section. The sanction stays and will not run out with the cycle if the non-conformance is not closed.

4.3.7.2. If a clear link has been established between a producer and public health outbreak by a reputable governmental regulatory authority, suspension of the certification shall be imposed while a review of the producer's certification is performed.

4.3.7.3. Producers cannot change CB until the non-conformance that led to the respective sanction is satisfactorily closed.

4.3.7.4. ONLY the CB or the producer group that has issued the sanction is entitled to lift it, provided there is sufficient and timely evidence of corrective action (either through a follow-up visit or other written or visual evidence).

4.3.7.5. WARNING

a. A warning is issued for all types of non-conformance detected (i.e. non-conformance with any of the Scheme requirement).
b. A warning is issued for all types of non-conformance detected (i.e. non-conformance with any of the Scheme requirement).
c. Initial inspection:
   - If the cause of the warning is not resolved within three (3) months, a complete inspection shall be performed before a certificate can be issued.
d. Subsequent inspection:
   - Non-conformances shall be closed within 28 calendar days.
   - In the event of non-conformances with contracts, the Certification Requirements, or a Major NC, the CB shall decide what period is given to the producer for closing the non-conformance before suspending the certificate. This period shall never exceed 28 days and may be shortened according to the criticality of the non-conformance in terms of safety of workers, environment and consumers. An immediate suspension shall be issued where a serious threat to food safety, the safety of workers, the environment, consumers, and/or product integrity (i.e., sale of non-certified products as certified) is present. This will be communicated via an official warning letter.

4.3.7.6. PRODUCT SUSPENSION

a. If the cause of the warning is not resolved within the defined period (maximum of 28 days), a suspension shall be imposed by the CB or the producer group on its members immediately.
b. CBs can lift product suspensions imposed on producers and producer groups issued by them.
c. Producer groups can lift product suspension on their accepted producer members issued by them.
d. A suspension can be applied to one, several, or all of the products covered by the certificate.
e. A product cannot be partially suspended for an individual producer (single or multisite), i.e., the entire product shall be suspended
f. When the suspension is applied, the CB/producer group shall set the period allowed for correction (not longer than 12 months).
g. During the period of suspension, the producer is prohibited from using the IndG.A.P. logo/trademark, license/certificate, or any other type of document that is in any way linked to IndG.A.P. in relation to the suspended product.
h. If a producer notifies the CB that the non-conformance is resolved before the defined period, the respective sanction can be lifted, after evaluation of evidence provided by the producer. This evaluation may take place on- or off-site. If done through an on-site inspection, announced or unannounced, it may be a full inspection or evaluating only the submitted evidence.

i. If the cause of the suspension is not resolved within the defined period, a cancellation is imposed.
j. The suspension remains as long as the CB or producer group does not lift it or impose a cancellation.

k. **Self-declared Product Suspension:**

- A producer or producer group may voluntarily ask the respective CB(s) for a suspension of one, several or all of the products covered by the certificate (unless a CB has already imposed a sanction). This can occur if the producer experiences difficulty with compliance to the standard and needs time to close any non-conformance.
- This suspension will not delay the renewal date, nor will it allow the producer to avoid paying registration and other applicable fees.
- The deadline for closing non-conformance is set by the declaring producer/producer group, which shall be agreed upon with the respective CB(s).
- The same applies for members of a producer group who may voluntarily ask the respective group to temporarily suspend their product(s). Here too, the deadline for rectifying non-conformance is set by the declaring producer, which shall be agreed upon with the respective producer group QMS.

4.3.7.7. Cancellation

a. A cancellation of the contract shall be issued where:

- The CB finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust to comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements or
- A producer/producer group cannot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective action before the suspension period set by the CB/producer group has elapsed

b. A cancellation of the contract results in the total prohibition (all products, all sites) of the use of the IndG.A.P.. logo/trademark, license/certificate, or any device or document that may be linked to IndG.A.P.
c. Producers that have received a cancellation shall not be accepted for IndG.A.P. certification within 12 months of the date of cancellation.

4.3.8. Notification and Appeals

4.3.8.1. The producer shall either resolve the non-conformances communicated or appeal to the CB in writing within 5 days against the non-conformances, explaining the reasons for the appeal.

4.3.8.2. If the non-conformances are not resolved within the permitted period, the sanction will be escalated.

4.3.9. Sanctioning of Certification Bodies

4.3.9.1. IndG.A.P. reserves the right to sanction CBs based on evidence of not following procedures or clauses of the 'IndG.A.P. License and Certification Agreement' signed between IndG.A.P. and the CB (refer to Requirement of CB).

4.3.10. IndG.A.P. Certificate and Certification Cycle

4.3.10.1. The IndG.A.P. certificate can only be issued to the applicant legal entity and only after all NCs have been resolved.

4.3.10.2. The name of the trader could optionally be mentioned on the certificate only with the following disclaimer: ‘’Can be exclusively traded through XYZ’’.

4.3.10.3. A certificate is not transferable from one legal entity to another when production sites change legal entity. In this case, a complete inspection following the rules for subsequent inspections is required. The new legal entity shall receive a new UIN.

4.3.10.4. The certification cycle is 12 months subject to any sanctions and extensions in accordance with the scope described.

4.3.10.5. Certificate Information:

a. The paper certificate issued by a CB shall conform to the available templates of IndG.A.P. The format may be different, but it shall include all relevant information.
b. The paper certificate shall match the information available in the IndG.A.P. registry for that UIN at the time of issuing.
c. The scope of certification shall be clearly defined in the certificate and shall have reference to the current version.
d. Date of certification decision: Date when the CB makes the certification decision after all non-conformances are closed.
e. Valid from:
    - Initial certification: The initial date of validity is the date on which the CB makes the certification decision
    - Subsequent certifications: The “valid from” date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the “valid from” date in the original certificate, except when the certification decision is made after the expiration of the previous certificate. In this case the “valid from” date shall coincide with the date of certification decision.
    - If a new product is added during the validity of a certificate, the certification cycle (valid from-valid to) is kept as it was. If the CB wants to indicate that the newly added products are certified and added later than the original ‘’valid from’’, there is a possibility to add the individual "valid from" of each product on the paper certificate.
f. Valid to:
    - Initial certification: Date valid from plus 1 year minus 1 day. The CB may shorten the certification cycle and the validity but cannot prolong it.
    - Date, time, and inspection duration of all evaluation both off-site and on-site modules of each audit shall be recorded by the evaluator. Sufficient time will be allocated to the inspection to cover all relevant clauses pertaining to the said activity.

- Subsequent certifications: The validity date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the “valid to” date on the original certificate.

g. If a producer is certified for different products by different CBs, certificates may have different certification cycles (valid from – valid to).

4.3.10.6. Extension of Certificate Validity

a. The validity may be extended beyond the 12 months (for a maximum period of 4 months) only if there is a valid reason, which has to be recorded. Here are the only reasons that are considered to be valid:
   - The CB wants to schedule the on-site inspection/audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process, because it has not been seen in the previous inspection/audit, because it is considered to be a high-risk process in terms of product safety or to be able to see a newly added product, process or a new or particular member of a producer group.
   - The CB needs to be able to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
   - The CB was not able to conduct the on-site inspection/audit and/or the producer was not able to receive the CB inspection audit due to circumstances beyond its control (force majeure) e.g., natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic, or unavailability of the producer due to medical reasons.

b. Upon the producer’s request, the CB (which issued the extended certificate) re-accepts the product in the IndG.A.P. Database for a full next cycle within the original validity period of the certificate.
c. The full registration fee shall be paid for the next cycle
d. The producer shall be re-inspected during that extension period.
e. The producer cannot change the CB in the cycle subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted.
f. If a certificate that was not extended and not "re-accepted" expires and the subsequent inspection (to be performed by the same CB) is going to take place in less than 12 months after the expiration date, a new certification cycle should start. The old cycle can be reinstated by setting the same “valid to” date as before. The cycle remains the same if the certificate was extended. However, the CB shall apply the rules for initial (first) inspection if the certificate expired for more than 12 months.

4.3.10.7. Maintenance of IndG.A.P. Certification

a. The registration of the producer and the proposed products for the relevant scopes shall be confirmed with the CB annually before the expiry date, following all conditions already explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

b. The inspector shall complete the entire checklist and the verification process annually.

4.4. Surveillance Evaluation

4.4.1. Surveillance evaluations of the certified sites shall be carried out at least once a year, ensuring that the gap between two surveillance evaluations does not exceed one year. The CB may allow a grace period of one month based on valid grounds beyond which delays shall lead to suspension of the certificate. The surveillance should be timed around harvest time of some crop under certification

4.4.2. The full checklist and verification process shall be completed by the inspector annually. There must be at least one produce registered in the field or in the storage evaluated to give the CB confidence that any other registered crops not present at that time, are handled in compliance with the standard.

4.4.3. The CB shall ensure coverage of the entire CPCC checklist (Annex A of Section 3) for IndG.A.P. so that operations and their controls are witnessed during the evaluation. Surveillance planning must keep in view the crop maturity timings to coincide visit with harvest time as for as possible.

4.4.4. In case where the farmer/organization is certified to a number of produces of different types under the same certificate, CB shall plan for surveillance evaluation with a view to covering as much of the entire range of produce during the certification period.

4.4.5. During the surveillance evaluation, the inspector shall as a minimum check and report on the following:

4.4.5.1. Status of compliance to the requirements of the certification criteria,

4.4.5.2. Internal self-assessment reports,

4.4.5.3. Handling and disposal of nonconforming products,

4.4.5.4. Actions taken on nonconformities observed during the previous evaluation,

4.4.5.5. Redressal of complaints, if any,

4.4.5.6. Information on production of produce and the names of consignees to whom certified produce have been supplied.

4.4.6. If any nonconformity is observed, the same shall be categorized as either a Major, Minor or Recommended. The nonconformity report shall be provided to the client in writing, generally on site, for correction and corrective action. Details of the same shall be reported in the Surveillance evaluation report.

4.4.7. The CB may increase the frequency of surveillances with duly recorded justification for reasons like investigation of complaints, any doubts about continuing adherence to standards prescribed etc.

4.4.8. If the surveillance evaluation results in an infructuous visit due to any reason, the CB shall conduct another surveillance evaluation. Such additional evaluations may be charged to the certified unit as decided by the CB.

4.5. Suspension of certification

4.5.1. The CB shall issue due notice of at least one week for suspension of certification to the unit. In case of serious failures, the notice may not be required.

4.5.2. A Suspension is issued when:

4.5.2.1. Unsatisfactory performance during two consecutive Surveillance evaluations on account of any of these aspects is observed

4.5.2.2. A suspension may also be issued to the producer who voluntarily asks for it, for some (partial) or all (complete) of his products

4.5.3. After the Suspension is issued, a time period allowed for correction and corrective action will be set by the CB not exceeding 6 months. If the suspension is voluntary, the period for corrections and corrective actions is set by the producer/organization, which must be agreed upon with the CB, but not exceed 6 months.

4.5.4. During the period of suspension, the producer shall be prevented from using the logo/trademark, License/certificate or any other type of document that has any relation to certification.

4.5.5. The producer/organization shall be advised to undertake a root cause analysis and identify the necessary corrective actions for resolving the same.

4.5.6. The CB shall revoke suspension only when corrective actions have been taken and verified by the CB.

4.5.7. Suspension shall not exceed a period of six months. If the cause of the Suspension is not resolved within the time period set, the certification shall be cancelled.

4.6. Cancellation of certification

4.6.1. A Cancellation shall be issued when:

4.6.1.1. A producer cannot show sufficient corrective action after Suspension has been issued and six months have elapsed,

4.6.1.2. A nonconformity in one scope leads to doubt about the integrity of the produce,

4.6.1.3. Major contractual nonconformities are detected.

4.6.1.4. Certified client contravenes the terms and conditions of certification and provisions of certification scheme like suspension of certificate, inadequate corrective actions, lack of compliance to criteria for Certification etc.

4.6.2. A Cancellation of the contract will result in the total prohibition of the use of the logo/trademark, License/certificate.

4.6.3. A producer that has had a cancellation applied may not re-submit for certification until 12 months after the date of Cancellation. If cancellation of certificate is due to non-payment of fees contractual non-compliance, then cannot re-apply until the payment is not cleared or an NOC from the CB which cancelled the certification.

4.6.4. The producer must either resolve the nonconformities communicated or appeal to the CB in writing against the nonconformities explaining the reasons for the appeal.

4.6.5. CB shall cancel the certification at the request of the certified client, if the operation(s) in the certified client's premises can no longer be carried due to reasons of natural calamities such as flood, fire, earthquake etc., or closure of operations etc.

4.7. Recertification

4.7.1. The certificate shall be renewed at the end of every year

4.7.2. The CB shall inform the client about recertification at least four months prior to expiry of certificate validity period.

4.7.3. The certified farmer/producer shall apply for recertification in the prescribed format along with fee, if any prescribed by the CB at least 3 months before expiry of the certification.

4.7.4. The CB shall review the performance of the certified client who has sought recertification, with respect to compliance to certification criteria during the certification cycle prior to a decision on the recertification.

4.7.5. The review shall be based on:

- **4.7.5.1.** The evaluation reports,
- **4.7.5.2.** Handling and disposition of nonconforming products,
- **4.7.5.3.** Any suspension of certificate during the previous validity period,
- **4.7.5.4.** Corrective actions taken,
- **4.7.5.5.** Complaints, if any received, and
- **4.7.5.6.** Adverse information, if any.

4.7.6. Recertification shall be based on the satisfactory performance of the certified client.

4.7.7. There shall be no conditional recertification.

4.7.8. When performance of the certified client is not satisfactory, the CB shall withhold the recertification clearly stating the reasons and give time for effective corrective actions. After audit the re-certifications decisions shall be taken within 1 month after closure of any non-conformance if any.

4.7.9. The corrective actions shall be verified generally on site unless the CB can verify the same off site prior to considering for re-certification. If a producer notifies the CB that the non-conformance is resolved before the defined period, the respective sanction can be lifted, after evaluation of evidence provided by the producer. This evaluation may take place on- or off-site. If done through an on-site inspection, announced or unannounced, it may be a full inspection or evaluating only the submitted evidence.

4.7.10. The recertification shall be effective from the date of the expiry of the previous certificate and the intervening period shall be treated as period of suspension and clearly stated on the Certificate. The certified producer/organization shall not claim certification or use the Certification during this period.

4.7.11. In case the certified unit does not complete satisfactorily actions within one months after audit, the certificate shall stand expired from the date of expiry of previous validity.

4.7.12. If corrective action against non-conformance detected is not taken within one month it will lead to suspension of client and if the non-conformance is not closed within 3 months cancellation of certificate shall happen.

4.7.13. The evaluation shall be timed in such a manner that the agronomic activities/ Produce handling (not only storage) are going on and shall give CB the confidence that all crops under certification are handled in compliance with certification requirement even if all the crop was not present during inspection. Off season or when minimal farm activities timings shall be avoided for inspections and at least one registered crop shall be present.

4.7.14. If produce handling is included it shall be inspected annually when produce handling is going on

4.8. Change of Ownership/Name

4.8.1. In the event of change of Ownership, the new owner farmer/producer shall submit proof of change of ownership. He shall also submit acceptance to the agreement for Certification with the CB regarding the operation and payment of fees. The same process shall be followed as and when an existing applicant undergoes a change in ownership. Such changes shall not call for a visit to the site.

4.8.2. In case of change of name, the applicant/certified client shall inform the change in the name to the CB supported with documentary evidence, and if satisfied the CB shall endorse the new name in the application/certificate.

4.8.3. This section is applicable to producers seeking IndG.A.P. certification for the first time, and to producers who want to add a new product to an already existing IndG.A.P. certificate. When a producer changes from one CB to another, or from IndG.A.P. Standard to an equivalent approved modified checklist or scheme (or the other way around), it is not considered a first inspection, but subsequent inspection.

4.9. Extension of scope

4.9.1. Extension of scope of certificate for inclusion of additional produce, varieties of the under the same certificate shall be done after ascertaining that the certified client has requisite resources required for the new produce/variety and technical skills as evaluated at harvest of that particular produce are available. It is possible to add a new product to an already existing certificate during an unannounced inspection (Option 1 without QMS) or during a surveillance inspection (Option 2/Option 1 with QMS and sampling, provided all applicable control points for this product are verified.

4.9.2. The extension of scope shall be clearly mentioned in the certificate document along with its date of inclusion for avoiding any misrepresentation or misinterpretation. Irrespective of the date of inclusion, the validity of the Certificate shall remain unchanged.

4.9.3. In case of option-2 certifications up to 10% producer members or site or area of production whichever is less may be added to the existing certificate without doing an external audit by the CB and for the subsequent unannounced surveillance this has to be considered in the calculation of square root of producers/production sites.

4.9.4. The two modules are used is to reduce the time spent on-site, although the overall duration of the inspection is not reduced as part of overall evaluation process. The same evaluator (auditor/inspector) can perform for both the module.

4.9.4.1. Off-site module: This consists of a desk review of documentation sent by the QMS to the CB before the audit, including internal audit, internal register of approved producer members/production sites etc.

4.9.4.2. IT could also be documents related to food safety, worker health and safety, risk assessments, residue monitoring system (frequency, parameters, sampling program), residue analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used, list of plant protection products used, proof of lab accreditation and certificates or inspection reports of subcontracted activities, etc.

4.9.4.3. The off-site evaluation methodology shall be validated by the CB before putting it into practice and shall be part of the yearly management review.

4.9.4.4. The inspection of the off-site module shall be conducted no more than 4 weeks before the on-site module. It consists of a desk review of documentation sent by the producer to the CB before the on-site inspection. The CB shall schedule a date as deadline for the producer to submit the documents to be evaluated off-site. That date will also trigger the period of 28 days to conduct the on-site assessment.

4.9.4.5. In case non-conformances are found during the whole assessment process (off-site and on-site modules together), the countdown to the deadline for closing them begins with the on-site closing meeting.

4.9.4.6. This system does not reduce the overall inspection duration (see requirements regarding inspection duration in scope-specific rules), but it will allow more efficient use of time on-site. The duration of the on-site module shall never be shorter than 2 hours. The inspection shall be carried out with the use of the checklist.

4.9.5. There shall be an in-house trainer whose qualification will be similar to that of the auditor.

4.10. Certificate

4.10.1. The CB shall provide a certification document to the certified client that clearly conveys, or permits identification of:

4.10.1.1. the name and geographic location of the client,

4.10.1.2. the dates of granting, extending or renewing certification,

4.10.1.3. the expiry date or recertification due date consistent with the recertification cycle,

4.10.1.4. Unique Identification Number (UIN) is used to validate the certificate. It is made available via the identification of the final products with the producer, where the product originates from a certified process, which is an obligation for all producers registered for PP/PO and issued by the CB. There is a provision of documenting the Unique Identification No. (UIN) referencing each of the producer.

4.10.1.5. the certification criteria, including issue number and/or revision, against which the product(s) are certified,

4.10.1.6. the scope of certification with respect to product(s) as applicable at the identified site,

4.10.1.7. the name, address and certification mark of the CB; other marks (e.g., accreditation symbol) may be used provided they are not misleading or ambiguous,

4.10.1.8. any other information required by the certification criteria used for certification,

4.10.1.9. in the event of issuing any revised certification documents, a means to distinguish the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents

4.10.1.10. AB symbol accreditation mark: The accreditation body (AB) symbol/accreditation mark is placed on all accredited certificates in compliance with AB's rules. Exception: If the CB is approved, but not yet accredited, the following text shall appear instead of the AB symbol: "Certificate issued by IndG.A.P. approved certification body [company name], but not accredited pursuant to the IndG.A.P. scope according to ISO 17065 rules'' or only ''non-accredited certificate". The AB logo can only be used if the scope of the accreditation of the CB corresponds to the certified IndG.A.P. sub-scope.

4.10.1.11. No. of certification body: The number given by the accreditation body to the certification body shall be on all accredited certificates.

4.10.1.12. The paper certificate shall match the information available in the IndG.A.P. registry for that UIN at the time of issuing.

4.10.2. The effective date on a certification document shall not be before the date of the certification / recertification decision. The details of the produce/product shall be immediately update in CB data base before issuance of the certification.

4.10.3. The formal certification documentation shall include the signature of the individual(s) of the CB assigned such responsibility.

4.10.4. Any changes in the certified status of the produce under IndG.A.P. shall be communicated and updated in the CB database. The CB shall periodically report the status to the Scheme Owner.

4.11. Extension/ Reduction of Certificate

The validity of certificate may be extended for a period of maximum 4 months in circumstances where the CB is unable to conduct the audit/inspection on time due to the following reasons:

- Pandemic situations or flood or similar due to which CB unable sent their auditors/inspectors
- Lack of manpower due to unforeseen situations
- To see harvest of particular crop or delay of harvest.

Before extension of certificate CB has to ensure that the client has reapplied for continuity of certification. New producer members or new sites shall not be added to extended certificates.

Before extension of certificate CB has to ensure that the client has reapplied for continuity of certification. New producer members or new sites shall not be added to extended certificates

The validity of certificate may be reduced/shortened if the client has not applied for renewal and there is a risk of certificate being used for selling the produce from more than one harvest and growing season.

4.12. Fee

4.12.1. A fee shall be charged to the client for various activities of the scheme, without any discrimination between units, geographical location, size of the unit.

4.12.2. The CB's fee structure shall be publicly accessible and also be provided on request.

4.12.3. CB shall notify and obtain consent to its fee structure from the clients prior to grant of certification. As and when the fee undergoes a change, the same shall be communicated to all applicants and clients certified under this scheme of certification for their acceptance.

4.13. Integrity Program

4.13.1. Program assessments may count towards the number of unannounced inspections or audits per year. The CB shall carry out the follow-up of the non-conformances found during that IndG.A.P. Certification Integrity Program assessment.

4.13.2. In case the CB representative is present and accepts the assessment findings, the integrity assessor can decide that the CB can book this integrity assessment as an unannounced inspection/audit under the 10 % rule.

4.13.3. The information collected by IndG.A.P. regarding the CBs and their activities, including records of the Integrity Program and the complaint management system, is made available on the request to ABs for facilitating accreditation evaluation.

4.13.4. In case the Certification Integrity Program results show a low auditing level, the respective auditor shall repeat the QMS training.

4.13.5. Program assessments may count towards the number of unannounced inspections or audits per year. The CB shall carry out the follow-up of the non-conformances found during that Certification Integrity Program assessment.

4.13.6. The integrity program of IndG.A.P. shall have personnel from the PAD Division including some personnel from other Boards and Division for managing the activity. Assessment shall be signed by any of the personnel if the program.

4.13.7. The financial related to activities of this aspect shall be governed by the principle of penalizing the defaulter or else the SO will bear the cost of the activities including assessment carried out at producer's project.

4.13.8. The program shall advice the IndG.A.P. secretariat the findings of the assessment and fix responsibility.

4.13.9. IndG.A.P. Sectt. shall accordingly transmit the information to the AB, regulator and GLOBALG.A.P. (in case Benchmarked) within 10 working days from receiving the report. The response from the CB/produce shall also be shared with the AB, regulator and GLOBALG.A.P. (in case Benchmarked).

4.13.10. The program can accept request from the AB, regulator or any stakeholders that gives in writing the issue with evidence or qualified submissions for them to take action accordingly.

4.13.11. All activities shall be confidential and will be restricted on need-to-know basis.

4.13.12. The sanctions to the CB will be in line with the processes that has been established for the auditee.

4.13.13. The integrity program of IndG.A.P. shall have personnel from the PAD Division including some personnel from other Boards and Division for managing the activity.

4.13.14. The certification integrity program shall include two kinds of assessment which are office-based assessment and on-site assessment aimed at monitoring CB certification performance and CB inspection and audit performance.

4.13.15. Integrity Program shall review on case-to-case basis following appropriate mechanism as per the procedures of accreditation body on any of the deviations and the proceedings shall be reported and processed.

4.13.16. In accordance with ISO/IEC 17065, the IndG.A.P. approved CB shall be structured to ensure separation of activities that may cause a conflict of interest. All CB personnel shall operate at high levels of professional integrity, be free from commercial, financial or other pressures that might affect their judgment, and are expressly forbidden from promoting any goods or services during evaluation activities.