



17 January 2018

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. _____
Series of 2018

SUBJECT : REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION OF ORGANIC CERTIFYING BODIES (OCB)

WHEREAS, Section 15 (Accreditation of Organic Certifying Body) of Republic Act (R.A.) 10068 otherwise known as the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 mandates the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (DA-BAFS) to grant official accreditation to Organic Certifying Bodies (OCB) in accordance to the Philippine National Standards (PNS) for Organic Agriculture (OA) and other relevant standards;

WHEREAS, Section 17 (Labeling of Organic Produce), in relation to Section 15, of the above law states that the label or organic produce shall contain the name, logo or seal of the organic certifying body and the official accreditation number issued by the DA-BAFS;

WHEREAS, Sections 15.2 to 15.5 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 mandated the DA-BAFS to chair the Technical Working Group (TWG) which shall revisit, prepare and update the guidelines, rules and procedures for the accreditation of organic certifying bodies for the approval by the NOAB;

WHEREAS, in line with the need to refine the official accreditation procedure, to address the demands of the stakeholders, and to further complement the Department's initiatives under the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP), the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) and the National Committee for the Official Accreditation of Organic Certifying Bodies (NCOA-OCB) deemed it critical and necessary to repeal Department Circular (D.C.) No. 6, Series of 2015 (*Revised Guidelines for the Official Accreditation of Organic Certifying Bodies*);

IN VIEW THEREOF, this Circular replaces D.C. No. 06, Series of 2015, providing the *Revised Guidelines for the Official Accreditation of Organic Certifying Bodies*.

ARTICLE I OBJECTIVES

The provisions under this Department Circular aim to provide the criteria, requirements and guidelines for the official accreditation of organic certifying bodies (OCBs), and ensure that officially accredited OCB implement the organic certification scheme in a competent, consistent, and impartial manner.

This Department Circular replaces D.C. No. 06, Series of 2015, in order to make the following changes:

1. exclusion of ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation from the list of mandatory requirements

- for official accreditation subject to provisions of this Circular;
2. inclusion of organic certification scheme for standardized certification protocols among OCBs; and
 3. improving the processes and mechanism for decisions relative to official accreditation (e.g. suspension, handling appeals and complaints, etc.)

ARTICLE II SCOPE

This Department Circular provides the rules and procedures for the official accreditation of OCBs to provide certification services for organic crop production, animal production, special products (wild harvest and mushroom production), processing, aquaculture, inputs in accordance with the relevant Philippine National Standards (PNS) for organic agriculture, and recognition of non-PNS organic certification. This shall apply to all OCBs seeking official accreditation with BAFS.

ARTICLE III DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 1. As used in this Department Circular, the following terms shall be understood to have the meaning correspondingly provided below:

1.1 Accreditation

third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks

1.1.1 Official Accreditation

procedure by which BAFS having jurisdiction over OCB formally recognizes the competence of a certification body to provide inspection and certification services. Official Accreditation is issued by the BAFS

1.2 Appeal

request by the applicant/client for reconsideration of any adverse decision by the BAFS related to its desired official accreditation status

NOTE Adverse decisions include: refusal to accept an application, refusal to proceed with an audit, changes in certification scope, decisions to deny, suspend or revoke certification and any other action that impedes the attainment of official accreditation.

1.3 Applicant

a legal individual or business enterprise applying for Official Accreditation with the BAFS

1.4 Assessment Team

team organized by the BAFS responsible for the conduct of office and witness audits. It shall be composed of not more than three (3) members of the National Committee for Official Accreditation of Organic Certifying Bodies (NCOA-OCB)

1.5 Audit

systematic and functionally independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with prescribed protocols, standards, rules and regulations and laws

1.5.1 Office Audit

audit relative to the thorough examination and verification of documentation and records of the OCB in the office where critical processes are being carried out

1.5.2 Witness Audit

audit relative to field observation of the OCB carrying out inspection within its scope of accreditation

1.6 Certification

procedure by which officially accredited OCB provides written attestation that food or inputs, production systems, organic soil amendments, or organic biocontrol agents conform to applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements. Certification may be, as appropriate, based on a range of inspection activities, which may include, but not limited to, continuous inspection, auditing of quality assurance systems, and examination of finished products

1.7 Complaint

written expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization to the competent authority and/or officially accredited OCB relating to its activities/operations

1.8 Consultancy

participation/engagement of OCB or personnel of OCB in activities that involves the designing, manufacturing, installing, maintaining or distributing of a product, process, and/or service certified and to be certified

1.9 Group Certification

certification of an organized smallholder group of operators with: (1) a central office; (2) similar farming/production/processing/handling system; (3) working according to a common internal control system, which is established and subject to continued surveillance by the central office. Group certification applies to the group as a whole. Certificate shall be issued to the central office of the group but cannot be used by individual member of such group

1.10 Infringement

encroachment, breach, or violation of relevant laws, regulations, or contracts

1.11 Inputs

materials allowed for organic production and processing such as seeds, plant propagation materials, plant protection and pest management agents, organic soil amendments, organic biocontrol agents, feeds, processing aids, which are used to comply with the requirements of applicable PNS OA

1.12 Inspection

examination of food or systems for control of food, raw materials, processing, and distribution including in-process and finished product testing, in order to verify that they conform to the requirements. For organic food, inspection includes the examination of the production, postharvest, processing, handling, storage and packaging units

1.13 Internal Control System (ICS)

part of a documented quality assurance system that allows the external certifying body to delegate the annual inspection of individual group members to an identified body/unit within the certified operation

1.14 ISO/IEC 17065:2012

Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services. This International Standard ensures that the certification bodies operate the organic certification scheme in a competent, consistent and impartial manner

1.15 Main Office

chief administrative office of an OCB where critical processes covered by the scope of official accreditation are being carried out. These critical processes include, but are not limited to, policy formulation, planning conformity assessment, contract review, review, appointment of inspection approval and decision on the results of inspection. Such office may be owned, rented or leased (or any other legally enforceable arrangement)

1.16 National Committee for the Official Accreditation of Organic Certifying Bodies (NCOA-OCB)

the multi-sectoral committee created by relevant DA issuances, which evaluates and approves the official accreditation of OCB

1.17 Noncompliance

non-fulfillment or failure to meet a requirement of applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements

1.18 Objective Evidence

physical evidence supporting the existence or verity of something and may be obtained through observation, measurement, test, or other means

1.19 Operator

an individual or a business enterprise that is responsible for ensuring that production, processing, manufacturing, distribution, wholesale, retail, trade, importation of organic agriculture products meets, and continues to meet, the applicable PNS for organic agriculture and regulatory requirements, on which the certification is based

1.20 Organic Agriculture Validation Team (OAVT)

the team of experts and representatives from various DA regulatory agencies and concerned offices organized by the BAFS responsible for the pre-registration and pre-licensing validation for organic input operators, and monitoring and post market surveillance of licensed and registered organic food, non-food, and input operators

1.21 Organic certification scheme

rules, procedures and management for carrying out organic certification, which includes, but is not limited to, applicable Philippine National Standards (PNS) relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements

NOTE 1 The fundamentals of product [processes or services] certification and the guidance for developing certification scheme is provided for by ISO/IEC 17067:2013.

NOTE 2 The applicable organic certification scheme is provided in Annex A of this Guideline.

1.22 Organic Certifying Body (OCB)

a body responsible for verifying that a product sold or labeled as “organic” is produced, processed, prepared, handled and imported according to the applicable Philippine National Standards (PNS) relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements, and whose operations/practices are aligned with the

principles of ISO/IEC 17065

1.23 Post-market Surveillance

activities relating to safety and quality monitoring of organic primary and postharvest food and non-food, and input products after market authorization has been issued. This shall also include, among others, adverse events reporting, product safety update reporting, collection and testing of products in the market

1.24 Revocation

complete withdrawal of the granted official accreditation certificate

1.25 Satellite Office

a physical office, located different from the main office, established in another location, which serves as support unit of the OCB in its operational activities including, but not limited to, receiving of application, and as inquiry point for interested entities

1.26 Suspension

temporary invalidation of the granted official accreditation certificate, or any of its approved official accreditation scopes or any specific activities

1.27 Surveillance

set of activities including office and witness audits, except reassessment, to monitor continued compliance of officially accredited OCB to the requirements for official accreditation

NOTE Surveillance includes both surveillance on-site assessments and other surveillance activities, such as the

- a) enquiries from the BAFS to the OCB on aspects concerning the official accreditation;*
- b) reviewing the declarations of the OCB with respect to what is covered by the official accreditation;*
- c) requests to the OCB to provide documents and records (e.g. inspection/audit reports, results of internal quality control for verifying the validity of OCB services, complaints records, management review records);*
- d) monitoring the performance of the OCB.*

**ARTICLE IV
CRITERIA FOR OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION**

Section 1. The following are the criteria for official accreditation:

- 1.1 Must be duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as legal entity in the Philippines;
- 1.2 Must have a Main Office;
- 1.3 Must have an established organic certification program in accordance with the organic certification scheme as provided for in Annex A (*Organic certification scheme*)

NOTE 1 Having one (1) satellite office located in either Luzon, Visayas or Mindanao would be an advantage

NOTE 2 Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 with the scope of organic agriculture will be an advantage as this could be used as marketing tool in promoting their services as certifying body and that they could easily apply for other standards, especially international standards, e.g. US NOP standards, JAS, EU Organic, etc.

**ARTICLE V
GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION OF OCB**

Section 1. The following outlines the various stages of the official accreditation process. The step-by-step procedure including detailed description of requirements and issuances is indicated in Annex B (*Step-by-step official accreditation procedure*).

1.1	Submission of Requirements	The applicant shall submit the duly accomplished application form and its corresponding documentary requirements.
1.2	Application Review	The Accreditation Section of the Organic Agriculture Division of BAFS shall conduct table review of the submitted documents.
1.3	Assessment (Office & Witness Audits)	<p>The Accreditation Section of the Organic Agriculture Division of BAFS and representative/s from the NCOA-OCB shall carry out the office and witness audits to determine the compliance of the applicant with the official accreditation requirements.</p> <p>The basis for the assessments or the audit criteria is provided for in the <u>Annex A</u> (<i>Organic certification scheme</i>).</p> <p>In case of noncompliance/s, the applicant shall be required to provide further elucidation and/or take corrective actions within a specified period of time.</p>

1.4	Evaluation of the Assessment Report and Approval	The office and witness audit report(s) shall be endorsed to the NCOA-OCB for review and evaluation. After review and evaluation of the NCOA-OCB, the approval in a form of Resolution will be then endorsed to the BAFS Director for the issuance of official accreditation decision.
1.5	Issuance of the Official Accreditation Certificate	The BAFS shall issue the Official Accreditation Certificate, accompanied with the Terms and Conditions, to approved applicant for official accreditation.
1.6	Surveillance	When granted with official accreditation, the OCB shall be subjected to surveillance assessments to ensure the OCB's continued compliance to standards, this Circular, and the Terms and Conditions.

ARTICLE VI

APPLICATION REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT FOR OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION OF OCB

Section 1. Application for Official Accreditation is made by accomplishing the prescribed application form, written in English and in duplicate copies. Together with the said form, the applicant shall submit the following:

- 1.1 Organizational Profile;
- 1.2 Certified True Copy of the SEC Certificate of Registration together with the Articles of Incorporation and latest by-laws;
- 1.3 Certified True Copy of latest General Information Sheet (GIS) by the SEC;
- 1.4 Copy of Operations Manual including procedures and checklists on Organic Agriculture based on applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture;
- 1.5 List of Inspectors with their approved scope/s; and
- 1.6 List of certified organic operators compliant with applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture, if applicable.
- 1.7 If accredited to ISO/IEC 17065, Certified True Copy of ISO/IEC 17065 Accreditation Certificate;

Section 2. The applicant shall provide declaration, manifested by an authorized signature on the application form, that it agrees to comply with all official accreditation criteria including terms and conditions of the procedure for Official Accreditation, and be subjected to assessment procedures.

Section 3. The Accreditation Section of the Organic Agriculture Division of BAFS shall conduct a table review to evaluate if the accomplished form and submitted documents are complete. In case additional documents are needed, the Accreditation Section shall inform and require the applicant in writing to submit within a prescribed timeline in order for the application review to proceed. Incomplete submission of requirements shall not be processed pending the submission of lacking documents.

- Section 4. Applicant with valid accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 from DTI-PAB shall still undergo application and documentary review as basis for official accreditation. In such a case, the process will proceed to the Article VII for the decision-making and granting of Official Accreditation.
- Section 5. An Assessment Team shall conduct office-based audit in order to verify the implementation of the operations manual and procedures and other documents submitted in their place of operation. An office audit report shall be drawn thereafter.
- Section 6. In order to proceed with the witness audit, the Accreditation Section shall issue a Notice of Witness Audit (including assessment team composition and audit schedule) and the Pre-Witness Audit Form to the applicant. Request for reschedule of the conduct of witness audit initiated by the applicant or by BAFS shall only be warranted up to two consecutive requests as long as supported with valid reason/s.
- Section 7. A new team member is nominated from the NCOA-OCB members if the applicant does not approve of any member of the assessment team on the ground of conflict of interest.
- Section 8. An Assessment Team prepares a witness audit plan based on the itinerary of the applicant's inspectors and provide a copy to the applicant and its inspector/s.
- Section 9. Results of the audit are communicated to the applicant. *Annex C (Guidance on classification of findings, timeline for implementation of correction and corrective action by OCBs)* shall be followed for the classification of findings and the severity of potential non-compliances (NCs) arising from audits, timeline required to close NCs, and verification of implementation of correction and corrective action by applicant/OCBs.
- Section 10. If there are no major noncompliances found, the applicant is recommended for official accreditation subject to the close-out of any minor noncompliances raised.
- Section 11. When there is one or more major noncompliances raised, the applicant shall be subjected to a follow-up visit or reassessment.
- Section 12. The Assessment Team may recommend denial of official accreditation based on the results of the assessment. Recommendation for denial of official accreditation shall be forwarded to the NCOA-OCB for decision-making.

ARTICLE VII

DECISION-MAKING AND GRANTING OF OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION

- Section 1. The following criteria shall be considered when formulating decision on whether to grant official accreditation:
- 1.1 Results of assessments and closure of non-compliances.
 - 1.2 For OCB with valid ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation from DTI-PAB, results of application and documentary review shall be the basis for official accreditation.
 - 1.3 For OCB undergoing renewal of Official Accreditation, results of validation activities by the OAVT will be taken into consideration

during the decision making process.

Section 2. In carrying out decision-making, the following procedure shall apply:

- 2.1 The BAFS shall organize a NCOA-OCB meeting to deliberate on the recommendation(s) of the Assessment Team.
- 2.2 If neither issues nor noncompliances are raised, or all noncompliances have been addressed by the applicant within the agreed period of time in accordance with Annex C, the NCOA-OCB shall issue a Resolution recommending to the BAFS Director the issuance of Official Accreditation Certificate.
- 2.3 The Certificate shall state the certification scope/s based on *Annex A* for which the Official Accreditation has been approved, and the effectivity and validity of the official accreditation.
- 2.4 In case of a denied application, the applicant may reapply after one (1) month from the receipt of denied status and shall follow the procedure from Step 1, except when an appeal has been filed and in-process.

ARTICLE VIII SURVEILLANCE OF ORGANIC CERTIFYING BODIES

- Section 1. The NCOA-OCB shall conduct office and witness audits for surveillance purposes. Witness audit sample size shall be 5% of the total number of operators or minimum of one (1) operator for each approved scope of an officially accredited OCB.
- Section 2. Surveillance for officially accredited OCB shall be conducted annually within the validity of the official accreditation, except for OCBs with valid accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 which shall be conducted every other year within the validity of the official accreditation without coinciding with the surveillance of their respective accreditation bodies.
- Section 3. The surveillance witness audits shall cover a representative range of inspectors of officially accredited OCBs (for crop production, livestock, processing, etc.) and the different types of operators (individual or group).
- Section 4. The operators for surveillance witness audits shall be a representative sample and its selection shall be risk-based and done at random.
- Section 5. In the case of reports of frauds, mislabeling and other complaints, BAFS shall conduct necessary action depending on the nature of reported case.

ARTICLE IX DISPUTE

- Section 1. The BAFS defines a dispute as difference of opinion between the officially accredited OCB or the organic certification body to be officially accredited and the BAFS with regard to:
- 1.1 Interpretation of a requirement of applicable PNS relevant for organic agriculture;

1.2 Interpretation of this Circular; or

1.3 Quality procedure of the BAFS Official Accreditation.

Section 2. The officially accredited OCB or the organic certification body to be officially accredited can file a case of dispute to BAFS Director in writing. The BAFS shall consult with the parties involved and with the NCOA-OCB and makes a decision based on the documents submitted by the officially accredited OCB or the organic certifying body to be officially accredited to substantiate such dispute. The decision will be communicated to the parties in writing.

ARTICLE X COMPLAINTS

Section 1. All complaints shall be received by BAFS and shall serve as reference during assessments depending on the gravity, motive, and substance of the complaints.

Section 2. Complaints against OCB shall be first lodged with the OCB concern.

Section 3. For complaints regarding officially accredited OCB, the following procedures shall apply:

3.1. Upon receipt of the complaint, either through mail, personal delivery or electronic data messages/ electronic documents, it should be acted upon by the concerned officially accredited OCB within fifteen (15) working days. Otherwise, the complainant may file a complaint against an OCB with BAFS.

3.2. The receipt of complaint shall be acted upon by the BAFS.

3.3. Where the BAFS considers the complaint to be sufficiently substantiated, it shall notify the OCB concerned and shall require a written explanation within fifteen (15) working days.

3.4. The written explanation provided by the OCB shall be referred to the NCOA-OCB for appropriate action.

3.5. The NCOA-OCB shall convene to discuss the lodged complaint, written explanation provided by the OCB concern, and come up with recommendations for consideration of the BAFS Director.

ARTICLE XI SUSPENSION OF OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION

Section 1. Official accreditation is subject to suspension based on any of the following grounds:

1.1 Failure to comply with the current or revised official accreditation guidelines;

1.2 Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions set forth for the official accreditation;

- 1.3 Systemic failure of the operations manual or implementation that demonstrates inability to comply with the regulations;
 - 1.4 Failure to close out a previously issued noncompliance, within a prescribed time period;
 - 1.5 Unjustified refusal of the officially accredited OCB to allow the assessment team to access the premises, facilities, records and personnel, as may be necessary, for the conduct of assessments/surveillance;
 - 1.6 Deliberate violation of the regulations of the official accreditation, including but not limited to:
 - 1.6.1 Engagement in organic agriculture production during the lifetime of the official accreditation status as OCB;
 - 1.6.2 Deviation of operations from the approved scope/s for certification (including deviations from the declared technical and geographical scope of operation); and
 - 1.6.3 Provision of any kind of consultancy services to certification applicants.
 - 1.7 Violation of the non-transferability condition of the Official Accreditation Certificate;
 - 1.8 Falsification or concealment of records;
 - 1.9 Request for voluntary suspension by an Officially Accredited OCB if it is temporarily unable to comply with the official accreditation requirements. Request for a voluntary suspension during the period that an assessment is being carried out by the BAFS and NCOA-OCB is not allowed; and
 - 1.10 Request by the officially accredited OCB to voluntarily end its official accreditation, or part of its approved scope/s for certification.
- Section 2. In case of validated report/s or complaints following the grounds for suspension specified in Section 1 of Article XI, the BAFS through the NCOA-OCB, shall conduct an investigation. Additionally, BAFS can conduct its own investigation even without formal complaints (*motu proprio*).
- Section 3. If warranted, the official accreditation or any of its approved certification scope/s may be suspended or revoked based on the results of the investigation of the BAFS through the NCOA-OCB.
- Section 4. The order of suspension shall be effective and executory immediately upon proof of receipt of the notification issued by BAFS by the officially accredited OCB. The suspension shall be for a maximum period of six (6) months, subject to adjustments depending on the compliance and implementation of corrective action of the officially accredited OCB. However, failure of the officially accredited OCB to undertake and implement appropriate corrective actions within the suspension period shall result in the revocation of the Official Accreditation Certificate or any of its approved scope/s for certification.
- Section 5. Once a decision to move forward with suspension has been made, the officially accredited OCB will receive a written notice stating that its official

accreditation or any of its approved certification scope/s has been suspended. The notice will generally contain the following elements:

5.1 Statement of reason/s for such decision; and

5.2 Notification that the suspended officially accredited OCB has the right to pursue an appeal for reconsideration following the procedures as stated in Clause 1.2 of Section 1, Article XIII of this Circular.

Section 6. During the suspension period, the officially accredited OCB shall not be allowed to:

6.1 accept and process new application/s for the suspended scope;

6.2 accept, process, certify, and issue new certificate/s, in case of suspension of the whole official accreditation.

Section 7. However, applications for other scopes not covered by the suspension, and those on-going applications received prior the effectivity of the suspension may still be processed by the officially accredited OCB.

Section 8. In order to process request for reconsideration of lapsed official accreditation, the applicant must complete the application process as stipulated in Article V and VI of this Circular.

Section 9. The BAFS shall notify interested parties and the public of these final decisions and its status through suitable media.

ARTICLE XII

REVOCATION OF OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION

Section 1. Official accreditation is subject to revocation based on any of the following grounds:

1.1 Failure to comply with the current or revised official accreditation guidelines;

1.2 Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions set forth for the official accreditation;

1.3 Systemic failure of the operations manual or implementation that demonstrates inability to comply with the regulations;

1.4 Failure to close out previously issued noncompliance/s, within a prescribed time period;

1.5 Unjustified refusal of the officially accredited OCB to allow the assessment team to access the premises, facilities, records and personnel, as may be necessary, for the conduct of surveillance;

1.6 Deliberate violation of the regulations of the official accreditation, including but not limited to:

1.6.1 Engagement in organic agriculture production during the lifetime of the official accreditation status as OCB;

- 1.6.2 Deviation of operations from the approved scope/s for certification (including deviations from the declared technical and geographical scope of operation); and
 - 1.6.3 Provision of any kind of consultancy services to certification applicants.
 - 1.7 Violation of the non-transferability condition of the Official Accreditation Certificate;
 - 1.8 Falsification or concealment of records;
 - 1.9 Request by the officially accredited OCB to voluntary end its official accreditation;
 - 1.10 Failure to implement corrective action to lift a declared suspension; and
 - 1.11 Recurring suspension of any of the scopes within the validity of official accreditation.
- Section 2. In case of validated report/s or complaints following the grounds for revocation specified in Section 1 of Article XII, the BAFS through the NCOA-OCB, shall conduct an investigation. Additionally, BAFS can conduct its own investigation even without formal complaints (*motu proprio*).
- Section 3. If warranted, the official accreditation or any of its approved certification scope/s may be revoked based on the results of the investigation of the BAFS through the NCOA-OCB.
- Section 4. The order of revocation shall be effective and executory immediately upon proof of receipt of the notification issued by BAFS by the officially accredited OCB.
- Section 5. Once a decision to move forward with revocation has been made, the officially accredited OCB will receive a written notice stating that its official accreditation or any of its approved certification scope/s has been revoked. The notice will generally contain the following elements:
- 5.1 Statement of reason/s for such decision; and
 - 5.2 Notification that the revoked officially accredited OCB has the right to pursue an appeal for reconsideration following the procedures as stated in Clause 1.2 of Section 1, Article XIII of this Circular.
- Section 6. In order to process request for reconsideration of lapsed official accreditation, the applicant must complete the application process as stipulated in Article V and VI of this Circular.
- Section 7. The BAFS shall remove the OCB's name from all the published list of officially accredited OCB and shall immediately cancel the official accreditation certificate of the OCB.
- Section 8. The BAFS shall notify interested parties and the public of these final decisions and its status through suitable media.

ARTICLE XIII
APPEALS

Section 1. The appeal procedures shall apply in the following situations:

1.1 Denial of Issuance of Official Accreditation of OCB

- 1.1.1 The applicant may file an appeal with BAFS to reconsider such decision attaching substantial documentation or the strategies to address the cause of such decision within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of notification for denied application.
- 1.1.2 The NCOA-OCB shall evaluate the proposed remedial actions including the implementation timeline of the OCB to be officially accredited, and shall send a copy of the decision to the said OCB for its implementation.
- 1.1.3 The applicant shall notify the BAFS of its compliance by submitting objective evidences of actions taken. Within fifteen (15) working days, an assessment team shall validate the evidence of implementation of the corrective action plan.
- 1.1.4 The NCOA-OCB shall review, evaluate, and decide on the filed appeal based on the assessment report.
- 1.1.5 If the NCOA-OCB decides that reconsideration is not warranted, the appeal will be denied stating the reasons and a reiteration of the OCB's right to pursue its application one (1) month after the denial of the appeal.
- 1.1.6 If the NCOA-OCB decides that the appeal is meritorious, the NCOA-OCB may reverse the denial decision and proceed with the granting of official accreditation as provided in Clauses 2.2 to 2.3, Section 2 of Article VII.

1.2 Suspension/Revocation of the Official Accreditation Certificate

- 1.2.1 The officially accredited OCB may file an appeal with BAFS through formal written request within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of notice of-suspension/revocation.
- 1.2.2 The appeal must be accompanied by a report specifying the major documented errors of fact and how such errors contributed to the suspension/revocation decision, together with other relevant substantiating documentation.
- 1.2.3 The BAFS shall grant or deny the officially accredited OCB's appeal of the suspension/revocation decision based on the statement of reason/s and submitted documented facts within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the appeal. The action will be based solely on the report and the supporting documentation submitted by the officially accredited OCB in accordance with the nature of the non-conformance that led to the suspension/revocation decision.

- 1.2.4 If the NCOA-OCB decides that the appeal is not meritorious, the appeal will be denied with a statement of reasons and such decision shall be final and executory.
- 1.2.5 In case the appeal on the original suspension decision is meritorious, the BAFS shall lift the suspension or reverse the revocation decision based on the recommendations of the NCOA-OCB, and grant official accreditation.
- 1.2.6 The decision for the appeal of suspension/revocation shall be decided by majority vote of the NCOA-OCB.

ARTICLE XIV
VALIDITY OF THE OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION OF OCB

- Section 1. The validity of the official accreditation shall be five (5) years.
- Section 2. The BAFS shall notify the officially accredited OCB to apply for renewal of official accreditation, six (6) months prior to the expiration of its official accreditation.
- Section 3. The rights and privileges as an officially accredited OCB shall not be transferable.

ARTICLE XV
CHANGE IN CERTIFICATION SCOPE OF OCB

- Section 1. If an officially accredited OCB applies for any change, either extension or reduction of their approved scope/s for certification, the OCB shall submit an application for change of scope including necessary documentation to substantiate the request to enable the NCOA-OCB for evaluation and, if deemed necessary by the NCOA-OCB, for conduct of assessments.
- Section 2. Assessment is carried out as part of the surveillance visit or assessment for renewal. The expiry date of the additional scope/s shall be identical to the expiry date of the original certificate of official accreditation. The original certificate, Terms and Conditions and other associated document of Official Accreditation are revised to include the extended scope/s.
- Section 3. The BAFS may decide to reduce the scope of official accreditation to exclude those parts where the OCB has persistently failed to comply with these guidelines and with the Terms and Conditions of the official accreditation, including competence.
- Section 4. Final review of the recommendation for extension or reduction of scopes shall be done by the NCOA-OCB if the assessment is carried out as part of the reassessment or by the BAFS Accreditation Section if the assessment is carried out as part of surveillance assessment.

ARTICLE XVI
USE OF 'ORGANIC' MARK

- Section 1. The BAFS shall issue the 'Organic' mark to the officially accredited OCB.
- Section 2. The '*Organic*' mark shall be provided by the officially accredited OCB to its client with active certification. The mark shall always accompany the logo of the OCB and its official accreditation number and may appear only on, organic certificate issuances, and on all certified products under its scope of certification.
- Section 3. Specific details and guidelines on the use of the '*Organic*' mark is indicated in *Annex E (Guidelines for the use of 'Organic' mark)*.

ARTICLE XVII
CONFIDENTIALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

- Section 1. All personnel involved in the Official Accreditation of OCB shall adhere to the principles of confidentiality and impartiality.
- Section 2. Information on production practices, ingredients, customer list, complaint log, etc., submitted by applicants for approval shall not be released in any form to any party or to the public in general without written permission from the applicant or officially accredited OCB.
- Section 3. However, the following general information may be made accessible to the public:
- 3.1 Name, address and contact details of the OCB;
 - 3.2 Effectivity date and validity of the official accreditation;
 - 3.3 Approved scope of official accreditation;
 - 3.4 List of operators with approved certification including the scope, validity, products and area covered, and any other details that may be released for public access;
 - 3.5 Any information to comply with a court order; and
 - 3.6 Any information to comply with a request from the NCOA-OCB, investigating an alleged complaint.

ARTICLE XVIII
ANNEXES

- Section 1. The following annexes, or any part thereof, referred to in this Circular are deemed integral part of this document:
- 1.1 Organic certification scheme;
 - 1.2 Step-by-step official accreditation procedure;
 - 1.3 Guidance on classification of findings, timeline for implementation of correction and corrective action by OCBs;

1.4 Responsibilities of Organic Certifying Bodies (OCB); and

1.5 Guidelines for the use of 'Organic' mark

ARTICLE XIX
TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

Section 1. The officially accredited OCBs shall be given a transition period of one (1) year upon registration of the PNS relevant to organic agriculture to the Bureau of Philippine Standards (BPS) of the Department of Trade and Industry to implement the registered standard. The previously issued PNS will still be effective during the remaining period of the transition period.

Section 2. The officially accredited OCBs should have a mechanism in place to inform its clients that of a newly registered PNS and the transition period.

ARTICLE XX
SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

Should any provision of this Department Circular or any part thereof be declared invalid, the other provisions, so far as they are separable, shall remain in force and effect.

ARTICLE XXI
REPEALING CLAUSE

All rules and procedures or parts of said rules and procedures of pertinent guidelines inconsistent with this Department Circular are hereby repealed by this Department Circular.

ARTICLE XXII
AMENDMENTS

This Department Circular shall be reviewed as deemed necessary by the NCOA-OCB. Revisions shall take into consideration significant changes due to legal, market, or standards developments.

ARTICLE XXIII
EFFECTIVITY

This Department Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in a newspaper of general circulation and its filing with the National Administrative Register of the University of the Philippines Law Center.

APPROVED BY:

EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL
Secretary

Annex A (normative)

Organic certification scheme

Operations manual of OCB should explicitly reflect the following:

A.1 Functions and activities for the organic certification program of the OCB

The OCB shall, at minimum, include the following functions and activities in their organic certification program:

- **Evaluation, combination of selection and determination of characteristics** (**Selection**, including planning and preparation of activities, specifications of requirements, e.g. normative documents, sampling, as applicable; **Determination of characteristics**, as applicable by: (a) Testing, (b) Inspection, (c) Design appraisal, (d) Assessment of services/processes, and (e) Other determination activities, e.g. verification;)
- **Review** - Examining the evidence of conformity obtained during the determination stage to establish whether the specified requirements have been met;
- **Decision on certification** - Granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending, withdrawing certification; and
- **Attestation** - Issuing a certificate of conformity or other statement of conformity (attestation)

A.2 Standard and Normative Documents

The Philippine National Standards (PNS) relevant to organic agriculture, against which the organic production and its products are evaluated, are the recent version of the following standards:

- PNS for organic agriculture;
- PNS for organic aquaculture;
- PNS for organic soil amendments;
- PNS for organic biocontrol agents;
- PNS for organic milled rice; and
- PNS for organic aquaculture feeds.

The applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture that will be developed after effectivity of this Circular shall become a normative document for this organic certification scheme unless the purpose of the standard/s are otherwise not necessary for the organic certification.

A.3 General requirements for certification

Organic certifying bodies shall enforce the scoping scheme for certification found in Table A.1:

Table A.1 -- Scopes for certification, coding system, and its description

Scope	Code	Description
Crop Production	CP	For production of unprocessed plant produce: primary and post-harvest agricultural products of plant origin intended for food
Animal Production	AP	For production of live animals or unprocessed animal produce: primary and post-harvest agricultural products of animal origin intended for food; including beekeeping
Special Products (<i>Wild harvesting and mushroom production</i>)	SP-WH; SP-MP	For production of cultivated mushrooms and herbs; and plants or portions of plants, mushrooms, and honey that are collected or harvested from defined sites which are maintained in a natural state and are not cultivated or otherwise managed
Processing	Pr	For processing and prepackaging of agricultural and fishery products for use as food
Aquaculture	Aq	For production of primary and post-harvest fishery products intended for food
Inputs		
<i>General</i>	AI-Gen	For production of organic materials allowed for organic agriculture production and processing such as seeds, plant propagation materials and stocks
<i>Aquaculture Feeds</i>	AI-AqF	For production of organic aquaculture feeds, either farm-made or commercial, for culture of aquatic animals such as fish and crustaceans
<i>Organic Soil Amendment</i>	AI-OSA	For production of organic soil amendments
<i>Organic Biocontrol Agents</i>	AI-OBCA	For production of organic biocontrol agents
Recognition of non-PNS organic certificate	RC	For products third party certified using other organic standards validated equivalent to the applicable PNS for organic agriculture

- a) OCBs shall declare full adoption of the recent version of applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture.

- b) OCBs shall ensure non-discriminatory certification requirements to all the operators of organic agriculture.
- c) The organic certification system should be based on written agreements, with clear responsibilities of all parties involved in the chain of operations for production of an organic produce and/or product. The operators should sign contracts/agreements requiring them to:
- Follow the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements as provided for in this Circular;
 - Give access to the certification body or designated authority and provide any necessary information for third party audit inspection purposes, e.g. access to:
 - all relevant units and facilities of the organic operation including the non-organic production and handling units associated by ownership or management to the operator;
 - accounts and sales related records of the organic operation for the purposes of traceability of origin, nature and quantities of all raw materials bought, and the use of such materials. In addition, written and/or documentary accounts should be accessed of the nature , quantities and consignees of all agricultural products sold;
 - its record-keeping system adapted to the scope of certification that enables the OCB to retrieve information necessary for verification of the production, storage, processing, purchase and sale; and other relevant documentation to provide adequate inspection trails and traceability of organic product and/or products; and
 - information regarding all complaints received by the certified clients relating to the certified products;
 - Notify the OCB of any change that may affect the ability of the operator to conform with the applicable organic certification requirements; and

EXAMPLE Change may refer to changes in group membership, plantation areas, or type of products, etc.
 - Provide the OCB with information regarding any previous organic certification and/or other certification scheme currently undertaken or in progress.
 - Provide the OCB with the updated information on the scope of certification, which the operator maintains or intends to maintain for ensuring organic integrity.

A.4 Resource requirements

- a) **OCB Personnel.** The OCB should ensure that its personnel have sufficient knowledge on the applicable PNS, and regulatory requirements of this Circular relevant to organic certification. The OCB should employ and have access to sufficient number of personnel.
- b) **Qualification Criteria.** The following criteria should be applied for OCB personnel in organic certification, which should include but not limited to, as appropriate, the contract review personnel, inspection and evaluation personnel, technical reviewers and decision-makers. These personnel should have:

- Sufficient background and knowledge in agriculture and/or food technology. The requirements may vary based on the functions undertaken by the personnel and the product category. Knowledge may be gained typically through educational qualification and/or experience, adequate to provide knowledge of organic products and processes. Personnel should be qualified on the basis of use of appropriate evaluation methods.

NOTE A number of evaluation methods like review of records; feedback; interviews; observations/witness; and examination can be used to evaluate knowledge and skills

- Received appropriate training with respect to organic agriculture, food, processing, trade, specific production areas (e.g. mushroom production) and applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements relevant to organic certification.
 - Gained experience by participation in sufficient number of inspection/s or its equivalent man-days as defined by the OCB for personnel involved in inspection and evaluation activities.
- c) Decisions on organic certification shall be undertaken by a competent person or Committee fulfilling the same qualification criteria cited above.
- d) The OCB shall actively identify training at entry level as well as based on needs and develop training program based on systematic performance reviews and provide, as necessary, training to its staff on the requirements of the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements identified by the BAFS, the organic certification scheme, and relevant methodologies. Adequacy of such training plans, training and evaluation records, and the related materials should be maintained.
- e) The performance assessment shall be done regularly for each evaluator/inspector should include observation of a sufficient number of on-site inspection/s or its equivalent man-days as defined by the regulations of the BAFS, normally not longer than every three years, unless there is sufficient supporting evidence that the inspector is continuing to perform competently.

A.5 Process Requirements

General

- a) OCBs shall have defined requirements for its functions as well as certification process requirements.
- b) OCBs shall take into consideration explicitly the following aspects as applicable: retroactive recognition of conversion period, separation and inspection of non-organic production units, parallel/split production, group certification and wild collection.
- c) OCBs shall have available and implement policies and procedures for risk-based inspections, recognition of organic certification by CBs not using the PNS relevant to organic agriculture, management of deviations, non-conformities and corrective actions, exchange of information between CBs and BAFS as the competent authority.

Application

- a) When accepting an application, an OCB shall ensure availability of all the background information in respect of the operator, and whether another CB had denied certification to the applying operator.
- b) OCBs shall also have a documented system for corroborating the information received from the OCB who had previously certified the operator.

Inspection

- a) OCBs shall ensure sufficiency in number and technical competence of inspectors for all of their approved scopes of official accreditation.
- b) OCBs shall ensure that sufficient inspection is conducted, following the inspection protocols set by the OCBs in accordance with the international best practices for inspection such as identification of organic critical points (OCP), prior any certification decision.
- c) The inspection protocol of the OCB shall at the very minimum undertake the following:
 - interviews with relevant personnel;
 - assessment of the production, processing and handling system by means of visits to facilities, fields and storage units (which may also include visits to non-organic production units);
 - document reviews (manuals, protocols, internal control systems, etc). Review of records and accounts in order to verify flow of goods (production/sales reconciliation on farms, input/output reconciliation and the trace back audits in processing and handling facilities);
 - identification of areas of risk and organic integrity;
 - critical analysis of mass balance and traceability of records (i.e. production records, sales records, etc); and
 - verification that changes to the standards and to requirements of the certification body have been effectively implemented, and that corrective actions have been taken.
- d) Inspection expenses incurred by inspector/s should be absolutely necessary in the performance of the assignment, and supported by receipts, chargeable to the organic operator subjected to inspection.
- e) Special treatments or lavish preparations for inspectors is strictly prohibited to ensure unbiased performance of inspection and its decision.
- f) The OCBs shall implement a public notification mechanism on changes in the list of bona fide inspectors and other technical staff under supervision.

Sampling

- a) The CB shall have documented policies and procedures generally including the following:

- System for identification of cases in which samples should be taken for analysis where, use of a substance prohibited by the PNS, is suspected.
 - A procedure on how to take samples and send them to the laboratory.
 - The number of samples to be taken and the frequency of sampling.
- b) The following provisions shall apply to officially accredited OCBs, competent authorities, and DA regulatory agencies who submit samples from organic agriculture and fishery establishment/farm for laboratory testing and analysis.
- c) Samples shall be collected for laboratory testing and analysis based on the level of risk of the organic agriculture production or processing operation and/or based on the risk category of the product/s or commodity/s.
- d) Sampling methods for organic soil amendments stipulated in the PNS for Organic Soil Amendments shall be followed by the OCBs.
- e) Officially accredited OCBs shall follow appropriate sampling methods based on international best practices and in their quality procedures for commodities not covered by the PNS for Organic Soil Amendments.
- f) Original laboratory results should be provided by the OCB together with the organic certificate to the concerned operator for their proper documentation.

Testing

- a) Samples taken by the OCBs shall be analysed in testing laboratories qualified based on the Section A.7 (*Laboratory selection criteria, and minimum parameters for analysis*) of this Annex.
- b) A copy of laboratory results shall be kept and maintained by the OCBs. OCBs shall inform the operator of the respective results of the analysis.

Review

- a) OCBs shall assign at least one person to review all information and results related to the evaluation (inspection, sampling, testing). The review shall be carried out by person(s) who have not been involved in the evaluation process.
- b) Recommendations for a certification decision based on the review shall be documented, unless the review and the certification decision are completed concurrently by the same person.

Certification decision

- a) No organic certification shall be issued to produce/products under in-conversion period.

Certification documentation

- a) OCBs shall ensure that issued certificate has the effectivity duration of one year from the date of issuance of the certificate. Certification effectivity should start upon full compliance of all the requirements of certification.

- b) At the minimum, organic certificates issued by the OCBs should have the following information:
- Logo/seal of the concerned OCB;
 - Name and contact details of the OCB;
 - Unique certificate number;
 - Name of the establishment/farm;
 - Name of the Authorized representative of the establishment/farm;
 - Address of the establishment/farm;
 - Standards or certification scheme used and approved for certification;
 - Approved certification scope using the coding system found in Table A.1;
 - Approved product/s or commodity/s to be labeled or sold as organic including brand name/s, identified by type or range, and approved production volume or quantity; For organic rice, include as attachment to the certificate the varieties of rice and/or its general description;
 - Number of units certified, e.g. processing unit, packaging unit and/or storage unit, and the total area;
 - Name list of group members as well as their addresses and locations should be included as an attachment, in case of group certification
 - Official Accreditation Number of the OCB;
 - Organic Mark (See *Annex E* of this Department Circular);
 - Date of Issuance;
 - Date of Expiry; and
 - Name and signature of the authorized representative/s of the OCB.

Surveillance

- a) OCBs shall implement a system and documented procedures in conducting operator risk-based surveillance activities including:
- a full physical inspection is undertaken, at least once a year, of the organic production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging and storage unit/s.
 - additional occasional unannounced visits/inspections should also be undertaken according to need or at random.
 - In the case of reports of frauds, mislabeling and other complaints, the OCB should conduct necessary investigation including, but not limited to, inspection and document review, depending on the nature of reported case.

A.6 Group certification

- a) **Scope.** The OCB should limit the scope of group certification to groups that fulfill the following requirements:
- The group should be constituted of registered operations within a functional internal control system;

NOTE This requirement does not limit the arrangement to farmers. Other operations organized collectively may also be included provided the other requirements in A.6 are met.

- Large farming units, simple processing units and traders may be included as part of a group but should be inspected directly by the OCB in accordance with Section 7.5.2 of the IFOAM Norms for Organic Production and Processing (version 2014).
- Simple on-farm processing and storage units may be included as part of sample inspection arrangement as long as these entities operate as part of the smallholder group;
- No group of processing units and traders can apply for group certification;
- Group members should be in geographic proximity;
- The group should be large enough and have sufficient resources to support a functional internal control system (ICS) that assures compliance of individual members with production standards in an objective and transparent manner;

NOTE The requirement refers to the three factors that the size of the group should ensure sufficient resources, transparency, and impartiality. The OCB must determine whether the group is large enough to satisfy these factors.

- The group should have coordinated marketing.

b) Requirements. Group certification should require that at least:

- The entity should be the group as a whole. This means that group members cannot use the organic certification independently (i.e. marketing as separate individual member outside of the group's internal control).
- The group should be composed of a minimum of ten (10) members.
- An effective and documented internal control system (ICS) should be in place and that there are competent personnel managing and implementing the system. The system should include a documented management structure of the ICS.
- A general description of the operation with the definition of the type of group (such as cooperative, association, exporter with producers under contract).
- Internal inspection protocol should be described and implemented. Inspections of all group members for practices in accordance with A.5 - Inspection of this Annex should be carried out by the ICS at least annually.
- Internal inspectors should be designated by the group to carry out internal inspection. They should receive suitable training. The ICS should set out rules to eliminate or minimize potential conflicts of interest of the internal inspectors.
- A clear description and identification of the production units and group members should be on file and available at all times.
- A mechanism to include new members and to implement sanctions on non-conforming group members should be in place.
- The relationship of the management body to each of the group member, the relationship between group members and conflict of interest should be evaluated by the OCB prior to issuance of the certificate.

- Risk assessments should be conducted.

NOTE Risk assessments should be done by both the OCB and the group.

- The core documentation is complete, which includes:

- Appropriate Maps/sketches;
- A complete list of the group members and status of the members to the ICS;
- Farm/field and/or processing records;
- Yield estimates; and
- Signed member agreements.

c) **Contracts.** Group certification should require that the management body of the group sign a written contract with the OCB specifying the responsibilities of the group. The contract should require that the group management obtain signed obligations from all group members to comply with the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements relevant to organic certification, and to allow inspections.

d) **Access to Standards.** All group members should have access to the applicable PNS, and other regulatory requirements or the relevant sections of standards and requirements presented in a way adapted to their language and knowledge.

e) **External Inspection.** The OCB should conduct external inspections as follows:

- Inspection of the group should be carried out by the OCB at least annually.
- The inspection visit should include both inspection for conformity with the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements relevant to organic certification and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the ICS.
- Inspection of a sample of group members should be undertaken by the OCB.
- Determining the risk classification of the group and sample number of group members subject to external inspection should take into account the following aspects:
 - The number of operations in the group; and
 - The outcome of the risk assessment of the management structure (low, medium or high risk) which include, but are not limited to:
 - The value of the produce/products and the difference between the price of the organic and non-organic produce/product;
 - Degree of similarity of the production systems and the crops within the group;
 - Risks for commingling and/or contamination; and
 - Experience of the group, (i.e. number of years in operation, number of new members registered annually, nature of problems within the organization, potential conflicts of interest and staff turnover).

- Determination of the number of group members subject to annual external inspection for group certification should be calculated by taking the square root of n , where n is the total number of group members or five (5), whichever is higher.
 - The sample should be selected based on a combination of risk-based and random selection. The risk factors may include the number of years an individual group member has been into organic production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging and storage, their size, location and/or identified risk.
 - The production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging and storage units visited by the external inspection body must be predominantly different from one year to the other. Larger production units, processors, and exporters should be inspected annually by the OCB.
- f) **Evaluation and Assessment of ICS.** The following should be applied in evaluating the ICS:
- Internal inspections of all group members should be carried out at least annually; new group members are only included after internal inspections, according to procedures agreed with the OCB;
 - Sample external inspections should be carried out with the relevant documents from the internal inspection and the methods and results of the internal inspection should be compared with the results of the external inspection to determine whether the inspections of the ICS have adequately addressed the compliance of group members;
 - Instances of noncompliance have been dealt appropriately by the ICS and according to a documented system of sanctions;
 - Adequate records of inspections have been maintained by the ICS;
 - The group members understand the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements relevant to organic certification; and
 - The external inspector is encouraged to witness audit a number of internal control inspectors.
- g) **Records.** The OCB shall maintain basic data on all group members, in addition to certification records of the group as a whole. A standardized form containing the basic data should be completed and updated by the group management which includes: Identification code, name, location (at least on an area map), year of entrance into the certification system, date of last internal and external inspection, number of hectares, certified crops, sales, and yield estimates.
- h) **Responsibility.** The group should be responsible for conformance of all group members. The ICS should include the application of sanctions to individual group members who do not conform with the applicable PNS and other regulatory requirements relevant to organic certification. The group should inform the OCB of the irregularities and noncompliances found, as well as the corrective actions implemented.
- i) **Sanctions.** In the event of noncompliances by the group and/or its group members, sanctions should be issued commensurate with the severity of the non-

conformance. Failure of the ICS to detect and act on non-conformances should invoke sanctions on the group as a whole. In cases where it finds the ICS to lack reliability and effectiveness, the OCB should apply sanctions to the group as a whole, including, in case of serious deficiencies, the withdrawal of the organic certification of the group.

A.7 Laboratory selection criteria, and minimum parameters for analysis

- a) OCBs should primarily consider the following when selecting a laboratory for testing and analysis of the samples taken from the operator or group:
 - Laboratories should, first and foremost, hold current accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025:2005, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*.
 - Laboratories should provide evidence that their analytical method is appropriate for the submitted sample and that suitable validation data are available.
- b) Laboratories should be able to provide any of the testing services essential to organic agriculture including soil nutrient analysis, multi-pesticide residue analysis, heavy metal analysis, microbiological analysis, and fertilizer analysis.
- c) OCBs should have mechanism to verify the competence of the outsourced third-party laboratories.
- d) During inspection, the inspector may take samples to validate the doubt on risk/based on risk.
- e) For organic soil amendments, the applicable parameters (specifications, heavy metals, and pathogens) indicated in the recent PNS for organic soil amendments for should appear in the laboratory results.

NOTE 1 When there is no available laboratory due to absence of accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 for a certain laboratory test or due to the remote location of the organic operator, the OCB should consider the laboratories without accreditation however, competence and calibration of equipment of such laboratory should be evident.

NOTE 2 DA laboratories, such as the National Pesticide Analytical Laboratories of BPI (BPI-NPAL), Laboratories of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Regional DA Integrated Laboratories, and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Regional Laboratories should also be considered by the OCB.

A.8 Certification cost

- a) OCBs shall adhere to the general principles prescribed therein.
- b) Certification cost should only include the following:
 - application/administrative fees;
 - inspection fees (including professional fee per day, food, travelling expenses, and accommodation, if necessary);
 - certification fees; and
 - laboratory analysis fees.

- c) OCBs shall ensure fair and just collection of fees to cover the resources required for the operation of the OCB and ensure stability.
- d) OCBs shall provide the breakdown of expenses prior collecting fees with the clients.

A.9 Publicly available information

- a) OCBs should maintain (through publications, electronic media or other means), and make available upon request, the following:
 - information about (or reference to) the certification process, including evaluation procedures, rules and procedures for granting, for maintaining, for extending or reducing the scope of, for suspending, for withdrawing or for refusing certification;
 - a description of the means by which the OCB obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to clients;
 - a description of the rights and duties of applicants and clients, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the OCB's name and certification mark and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;
 - information about procedures for handling complaints and appeals.
- b) OCBs shall have processes for informing all concerned including the prospective and present certified operators about the applicable PNS and other relevant regulatory requirements to organic certification.
- c) OCBs shall clearly identify the standards and requirements used for the different product categories. These shall be available to the operator and publicly accessible.
- d) The detailed information regarding applicable PNS and other relevant regulatory requirements against which the products will be certified and the certification processes, as well as schedule of fees should be made available through publications and electronic media.
- e) OCBs should maintain information on certified products which contains at least the following:
 - Name of the establishment, company or organization, whichever that applies;
 - List of product/s (including brand names, if any), or commodities covered by the approved scope of certification;
 - Standards/Certification scheme used and approved for certification;
 - Organic certificate number; and
 - Date of expiry of a given organic certificate.

A.10 Reporting

- a) OCBs shall ensure timely reporting and submission of relevant documentations including, but not limited to, list of certified operators, applicants for certification, and list of decertified and suspended operators in consonance to the Responsibilities of the Officially Accredited Organic Certifying Bodies.
- b) The list of certified operators shall contain at least the following information:

- Name of the establishment, company or organization, whichever that applies;
 - Type of certification (individual certification or group certification);
 - Name and designation of the authorized representative of the company or organization;
 - Contact details of the operator (i.e. telephone numbers, mobile phone number/s, active e-mail address);
 - Complete address of the office of the company or organization;
 - Complete address of the farm/production site or establishment;
 - Area of farm/production site or establishment (in hectare);
 - Approved scope of certification;
 - Organic certificate number;
 - List of product/s (including brand names, if any), or commodities covered by the approved scope of certification;
 - List of approved grower group members (for group certification only);
 - Date of issuance of organic certificate;
 - Date of expiry of organic certificate;
 - Standards/Certification scheme used and approved for certification;
 - Date of inspection/s conducted;
 - Name of the assigned inspector/s;
 - Name of the assigned certification officer/s; and
 - Relevant findings during the last inspection (including noncompliances and their correctives measures.
- c) The list of applicants in process for certification shall contain at least the following information:
- Name of the establishment, company or organization, whichever that applies;
 - Name and designation of the authorized representative of the company or organization;
 - Contact details of the operator (i.e. telephone numbers, mobile phone number/s, active e-mail address)
 - Complete address of the office of the company or organization;
 - Complete address of the farm/production site or establishment;
 - Area of farm/production site or establishment (in hectare);
 - Scope of certification being sought;
 - List of product/s (including brand names, if any), or commodities applied for certification;

- Schedule of inspection;
 - Name of the assigned inspector/s; and
 - Status of application for certification, if any.
- d) The list of decertified or suspended operators shall contain information listed in A.10 (Reporting) Item b) and include the following information:
- Reason for decertification/suspension of certification; and
 - Duration of suspension, if applicable.
- e) The BAFS shall publish the list of certified organic operators of all of the officially accredited OCBs in its official website and updated regularly, limited only to the following information:
- Name of the establishment, company or organization, whichever that applies;
 - Type of certification (individual certification or group certification);
 - Complete address of the office of the company or organization;
 - Area of farm/production site or establishment (in hectare);
 - Approved scope of certification;
 - Organic certificate number;
 - List of product/s (including brand names, if any), or commodities covered by the approved scope of certification;
 - Date of issuance of organic certificate;
 - Date of expiry of organic certificate; and
 - Name of officially accredited Organic Certifying Body.

A.11 Use of Certificates and Marks of Conformity

- a) OCBs shall exercise control over the use and display of certificates and logos that it can authorize operators to use, including the official organic mark;
- b) OCBs shall be able to request an operator to discontinue use of certificates and logos that it authorizes operator to use based on the provisions of the agreement;
- c) OCBs shall apply suitable actions to deal with incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of certificates or logos that it authorizes operators to use.

A.12 Changes affecting certification

- a) OCBs shall ensure that changes such as new or revised requirements that affect the client are communicated to all clients. The OCBs shall verify the implementation of the changes by its clients and shall take actions required by the relevant PNS and other regulatory requirements.
- b) OCBs shall consider other changes affecting organic certification, including changes initiated by the certified client, and shall decide upon the appropriate action.

NOTE Changes affecting certification can include new information related to the fulfilment of certification requirements obtained by the OCB after certification has been established.

- c) The actions to implement changes affecting certification shall include, if required, the following:
- evaluation
 - review
 - decision
 - issuance of revised organic certificate to extend or reduce the scope of certification; and
 - issuance of certification documentation of revised surveillance activities.

A.13 Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

- a) When a noncompliance with certification requirements is substantiated, either as a result of surveillance or otherwise, the OCB shall consider and decide upon the appropriate action.

NOTE Appropriate action can include any of the following:

- continuation of certification under conditions specified by the OCBs (e.g. increased surveillance),
 - reduction in scope of certification to remove noncompliant product variants,
 - suspension of the certification pending remedial actions by the certified client,
 - withdrawal of the certification.
- b) When the appropriate action includes evaluation, review or a certification decision, the requirements in A.5 (*Process Requirements*), specifically inspection, sampling, testing, review, certification decision, respectively, shall be fulfilled.
- c) If certification is terminated (by request of the client), suspended or withdrawn, the OCB shall take actions specified in A.12 and shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure it provides no indication that the product continues to be certified. If a scope of certification is reduced, the OCB shall take actions specified by this Annex and shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client and clearly specified in certification documentation and public information.
- d) If certification is suspended, the OCB shall assign one or more persons to formulate and communicate the following to the client:
- actions needed to end suspension and restore certification for the product(s) in accordance with the certification scheme;
 - any other actions required by the certification scheme.
- e) These persons shall be competent in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the handling of suspended certifications.
- f) Any evaluations, reviews or decisions needed to resolve the suspension, or that are required by the certification scheme, shall be completed in accordance with the applicable parts of A.5 (*Process Requirements*), specifically inspection, sampling, testing, review, certification decision, certification documentation (c), surveillance, and A.13 (*Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification*) (c), respectively, shall be fulfilled.

- g) If certification is reinstated after suspension, the OCB shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure all appropriate indications exist that the product continues to be certified.
- h) If a decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, the OCB shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client and clearly specified in certification documentation and public information.

A.14 Records

- a) OCBs shall maintain records to demonstrate the certification procedures on organic production, handling, storage, processing, and packaging have been effectively implemented. Such records should include but not limited to:
 - Full description of the production, handling, storage, processing, and packaging units
 - It should also maintain information about individual members of a group as well as the certified organic unit's subcontractors, if any.

A.15 Complaints and appeals

- a) OCBs shall have document process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints and appeals. OCBs shall record and track complaints and appeals, as well as actions undertaken to resolve them.
- b) To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client, shall not be used by the OCB to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within two (2) years following the end of the consultancy or employment.
- c) Whenever possible, OCBs shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant.
- d) OCBs shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the appeal process to the appellant.
- e) OCBs shall take any subsequent action needed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

A.16 Non-conforming products

- a) OCBs shall define procedure when a produce/product no longer fulfils certification requirements, such as product recall and/or providing information to the market.

A.17 Fraudulent Claim of Certification

- a) Sanctions and penalties for fraudulent claims of certification including misuse of certification marks and mislabeling should be enforced in accordance with relevant rules and regulations.

A.18 Management system requirements

- a) OCBs shall establish and maintain a management system that is capable of achieving the consistent fulfilment of this certification scheme.
- b) The management system of the OCBs shall address the following:
 - general management system documentation (e.g. manual, policies, definition of responsibilities);

- control of documents;
- control of records;
- management review;
- internal audit;
- corrective actions; and
- preventive actions.

NOTE For the details of the above requirements (b), please refer to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 (Option A) 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8.

Annex B (informative)

Step-by-step official accreditation procedure

The step-by-step procedure for official accreditation including the detailed description of requirements and issuances is indicated in Table B.1.

Table B.1 -- Detailed official accreditation procedure with pertinent issuances and timeline

Step	Procedure	Requirement	BAFS Issuance	Remarks	Timeline
Initial/Renewal Application Procedure					
1	Submission of Requirements	Two (2) copies of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Duly accomplished application form; 1.2 Updated organizational profile; 1.3 Certified True Copy of Certificate of Registration from the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) with the Articles of Incorporation and by-laws; 1.4 Copy of an updated General Information Sheet (GIS) by the SEC; 1.5 Copy of the ISO/IEC 17065 Accreditation, if applicable; 1.6 Copy of updated Operations Manual, procedures and checklist on Organic Agriculture based on applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture; 1.7 List of Inspectors with their approved scope/s; 1.8 List of certified organic operators compliant with the PNS for organic agriculture, if applicable; and 1.9 List of certified organic operators compliant with other 	Acknowledgement Receipt / Notification of Incomplete Submission of Requirements		Receiving of requirements will be processed within four (4) working hours upon receipt of complete requirements.

		organic standards, if applicable.			
2	Application Review (Table review)	Submitted requirements	Notice to proceed with Office Audit		Two (2) working days upon receipt of the requirements
3	Assessments				
3.1	Office Audit	Physical office and management personnel for interview List of Inspections for the next two (2) months (may be submitted during the office audit proper)	Office Audit Report Notice of Witness Audit, and Pre-Witness Audit Form ¹ <i>¹If List of Inspections is submitted during office audit proper</i>	A designated NCOA-OCB member and the BAFS Accreditation Section shall conduct this to verify the implementation of the quality manual, procedures and other documents submitted in their place of operation.	Five (5) working days after office audit Office audit will be conducted within fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of the Notice to Proceed with Office Audit by the applicant
3.2	Preparation for Witness Audit	3.1 Duly accomplished Pre-Witness Audit Form 3.2 Documents of the approved organic operators: 3.2.1 Inspection Plan 3.2.2 Farm Layout (Map) 3.2.3 Copy of Organic Management Plan 3.2.4 If applicable, last inspection report 3.2.5 If applicable, last certification decision	Witness Audit Plan		Five (5) working days upon receipt of the listed requirements
3.3	Witness Audit for each scope applied for official accreditation	Conduct of Inspection/s	Witness Audit Report Noncompliance List, if applicable	In case of noncompliance/s, the OCB should implement corrective measures within the given timeframe and proceed to Step 3.4, otherwise proceed to Step 4.	Witness audit report or Noncompliance List will be issued within five (5) working days after the conduct of the Witness Audit
3.4	Corrective Measures	Noncompliance List with the following columns filled up: (1) Proposed Corrective Actions, and (2) Root Cause Analysis Objective evidences of Implementation	Noncompliance List with the following columns filled up: (1) Comments from Assessors, (2) Verification of elimination of noncompliance, and (3) Corrective Action Implemented and accepted Notification on Follow-up Audit, if deemed necessary		Five (5) working days upon receipt of the Noncompliance List

4	Evaluation of Assessment Report and Approval	-none-	NCOA-OCB Resolution		Five (5) working days
5	Issuance of Official Accreditation Certificate	-none-	Official Accreditation Certificate, and Terms and Conditions		Five (5) working days after adoption of the NCOA-OCB Resolution
Surveillance					
1	Preparation for Surveillance	Duly accomplished Pre-Witness Audit Form Documents of the approved organic operators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspection Plan ● Farm Layout (Map) ● Copy of Organic Management Plan ● If applicable, last inspection report ● If applicable, last certification decision 	Witness Audit Plan		Five (5) working days upon receipt of the listed requirements
2	Conduct of Surveillance for each approved scope	Conduct of Inspection/s	Witness Audit Report Noncompliance List, if applicable	In case of noncompliance/s, the OCB should implement corrective measures within the given timeframe and proceed to Step 3, otherwise proceed to Step 4.	Witness audit report or Noncompliance List will be issued within five (5) working days after the conduct of the Witness Audit
3	Corrective Measures	Noncompliance List with the following columns filled up: (1) Proposed Corrective Actions, and (2) Root Cause Analysis Objective evidences of Implementation	Noncompliance List with the following columns filled up: (1) Comments from Assessors, (2) Verification of elimination of noncompliance, and (3) Corrective Action Implemented and accepted Notification on reassessment, if deemed necessary		Five (5) working days upon receipt of the Noncompliance List
4	Preparation of Surveillance Report	-none-	Surveillance Report		Issued five (5) working days upon approval of the BAFS Director

Annex C (normative)

Guidance on classification of findings, timeline for implementation of correction and corrective action by OCBs

1. Purpose

This document provides clarification and guidance on the classification of findings and the severity of potential non-compliances (NCs) arising from assessment (office and witness audits), defines the timeline required to close NCs, and verification of implementation of correction and corrective action by OCBs

2. Definitions

According to its severity, all findings shall be classified as *major*, *minor*, or *observation* in line with the definitions below:

2.1 Major Non-Compliance

A systemic failure or significant deficiency - either as a single incident or a combination of a number of similar incidents - in part of the quality system, or the lack of implementation of such a part, governed by applicable standards. A number of NCs identified against one requirement of the relevant standards can represent a total breakdown of the system and thus be considered a major NC.

2.2 Minor Non-Compliance

An isolated or sporadic lapse in the content or implementation of procedures or records which could reasonably lead to a systemic failure or significant deficiency of the system if not corrected. If a pattern of minor NCs occurs over successive assessments, it may represent a systemic failure or significant deficiency of the system and a major NC shall be issued.

NOTE Three or more minor non-compliances associated with the same requirement or issue could demonstrate a systemic failure¹ and thus constitute a major non-compliance

2.3 Observation

An area of concern, a process, document or activity that is currently compliant but may, if not improved, result in a non-compliant system or service.

3. Classification of Audit Findings

Audit findings that could lead to Major or Minor Non-Compliance, include but not limited to situations/circumstances provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Audit findings that could lead to a Major or Minor NC and some examples

Major Non-compliance	Minor Non-compliance
Systemic failure of the operation manual or implementation that demonstrates inability to comply with the regulations.	Noncompliant practice/s that indicate no systemic failure in the operation manual or implementation of certification but are

¹ A "systemic failure" would be one or more violations that show an operation is unable to comply with the BAFS regulations

	significant enough in nature or in scope to require a corrective action plan to ensure and verify compliance.
No procedure or mechanism implemented that are deemed integral as defined by the organic certification scheme	There is a documented procedure but there are lapses in its implementation
Failure to resolve, successfully or within a prescribed time period, a previously issued noncompliance.	Inconsistencies and/or omissions in records that indicate no systemic failure in the operation manual or implementation of certification but are significant enough in nature or in scope to require a corrective action plan to ensure and verify compliance.
<p>Examples: <i>Violation of the regulations of the official accreditation</i></p> <p><i>No procedure for handling complaints and appeals from its clients</i></p> <p><i>No certification documentation available to provide attestation or certification</i></p>	<p>Examples: <i>Failure to submit necessary documents requested by BAFS within the given period of time.</i></p> <p><i>Appointments of personnel involved in certification are unsigned.</i></p> <p><i>Failure to observe BAFS rules on the use of the "Organic" mark.</i></p>

4. Timeline for Implementation of Correction and Corrective Action by OCBs

- 4.1 Timelines for OCBs to implement appropriate correction and corrective action(s) and demonstrate compliance become effective after the closing meeting has been held and the Summary of Audit Findings/Non-Compliance List has been acknowledged by the OCB.
- 4.2 **Minor NCs** shall be fully addressed and compliance demonstrated within a period up to 12 months.
- 4.3 **Major NCs** identified during surveillance or re-accreditation assessments shall be fully addressed and compliance demonstrated within a period up to 3 months.
- 4.4 In cases where the assessment team concludes that the major NC(s) identified creates a risk to the integrity of the official accreditation, the OCB may be required to implement correction and corrective action(s) and demonstrate compliance immediately or within a period of less than 3 months.
- 4.5 The implementation of the corrections and/or corrective actions might take more time depending on the potential severity of the NC. In such cases, the action plan must include any temporary measures or controls necessary to mitigate the risk until the permanent corrective action is implemented.
- 4.6 A Major NC is automatically raised (on management responsibility & resource allocation) in the event of non-completion of the approved action plan.
- 4.7 Major NCs identified in an initial assessment, or during an evaluation process for extension of accreditation scope, preclude accreditation being recommended or the scope from being extended.
- 4.8 Extensions of timelines beyond 12 months for minor NCs and 3 months for major NCs

can only be granted by the BAFS Director.

- 4.9 An OCB may only appeal an NC raised by the assessment team within the first 30 days of receiving the Assessment Report of the assessment team.
- 4.10 Observations raised by the assessment team do not have defined timelines for action but the OCB may undertake the necessary action to prevent an NC being identified in future.

5. Verification of Effective Correction and Corrective Action, and Closing of NCs

- 5.1 The dates by which NCs must be fully addressed shall be recorded by the assessment team.
- 5.2 The OCB shall implement action plan (including determining the root cause of the NC, correction and corrective action, and identifying and addressing any other resultant NC) within the specified timeline. The OCB shall also verify the effectiveness of that corrective action prior to providing BAFS with evidence to demonstrate compliance.
- 5.3 The BAFS shall be responsible for verifying that the corrective action was adequate to address the NC. The appropriate verification method by the BAFS depends on the severity and the nature of the NC and may range from a desk review to an on-site assessment.
- 5.4 The BAFS shall only close out the NCs if the CAB demonstrates compliance with the accreditation requirement through the full implementation of appropriate corrective actions.
- 5.5 Observation/s may, if not improved, result in a non-compliant system or service. Thus, observations which are not addressed by the OCB may lead to an NC being identified in the future.
- 5.6 Upon closure of an NC, or Observations, the relevant Non-Compliance List shall be updated to indicate the new status.

6. Consequences of Continuing Non-Compliance by an OCB

- 6.1 If an officially accredited OCB does not implement satisfactory correction and corrective action (s) to correct a major NC and demonstrate compliance within the required time frame, the BAFS, in consultation with the NCOA-OCB, may start suspension procedures.
- 6.2 If an applicant OCB does not undertake correction and corrective action to address a major NC and demonstrate compliance, the Assessment Report shall not be forwarded to the NCOA-OCB for decision on official accreditation until compliance has been demonstrated.
- 6.3 If an officially accredited OCB does not perform satisfactory correction and corrective action for a minor NC within the required time, the NC will be upgraded to a major NC. Extensions of timelines can only be granted by the BAFS.

Annex D (normative)

Responsibilities of Organic Certifying Bodies (OCB)

Officially accredited OCB are responsible for:

- a) At the minimum, applying the following protocols in their operations, to wit:
 - Develop or update, and implement the organic certification program in accordance with the organic certification scheme (*Annex A*);
 - Ensure certified clients comply with all requirements of the applicable PNS and relevant regulatory requirements;
 - Conduct certification and inspection activities (e.g. annual on-site inspections) of approved scope/s based on the organic certification program;
 - Hear and address appeals of the clients; and
 - Submit their organization to inspection and monitoring activities of the BAFS (including observer/s) and the NCOA-OCB. This shall include the annual surveillance through witness audits of the BAFS.
- b) Issuance of relevant documents/notifications:
 - notices of non-compliance, suspension or revoking the certification of clients that do not comply with the applicable rules and relevant PNS for organic agriculture
 - certification decisions, including corrective actions and certificates in compliance with the PNS related to organic agriculture and these guidelines.
 - certificate to certified organic operators that is valid only for one (1) year.
- c) Reporting of any of the following to the BAFS not later than twenty (20) working days after any change/s:
 - Documentations specified in the organic certification scheme as indicated in Section A.10 (Reporting) of *Annex A*;
 - Adverse actions against organic operators, including notices of noncompliance, proposed suspension, proposed revocation, suspension, or denial of certification;
 - Annual and/or other periodic reports of the activities undertaken.
- d) Engage the analytical testing services only to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 accredited laboratories, and/or DA officially recognized laboratories. Refer to Section A.7 (*Laboratory selection criteria, and minimum parameters for analysis*) of *Annex A*.
- e) Follow recommended sampling procedures for analytical testing based on internationally recognized standards (e.g. Codex). Refer to Section A.5 (Sampling) of *Annex A*.

Annex E (informative)

Guideline for the use of ‘Organic’ mark

E.1 Basic design elements and colors

- a) *Figure E.1* shows the basic design elements of the certification mark is the National Organic Agriculture Program Logo capped with the Sun and the three Stars with the text “*Organic* PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE” and with the Official Accreditation Number situated at the bottom of the mark. Only official artwork versions of the mark should be used. There are three allowable designs of the mark with respect to the color as shown in *Figure E.2*.



Figure E.1. The Official ‘Organic’ Mark.

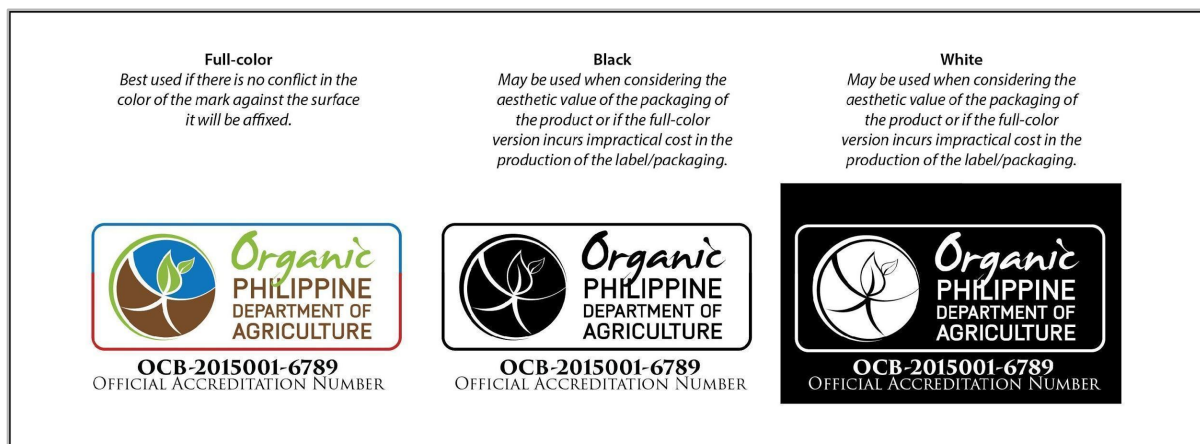


Figure E.2. Three allowed design of the ‘Organic’ Mark.

E.2 Basic rules

- a) The Officially Accredited OCB should only use the official artwork of the ‘Organic’ Mark for management systems that corresponds with the scope to which the OCB is officially accredited.
- b) Always use the ‘Organic’ Mark with the Official Accreditation Number in conjunction with OCB’s logo.
- c) You may use the ‘Organic’ Mark on:
 - Certified Products, including primary packaging or adhesive tape
 - Product documentation (e.g. technical specifications and catalogue pages)

- d) To avoid misinterpretation, the 'Organic' Mark is therefore not allowed to be used on:
- Certificates (except organic certificate), statements of conformity, reports etc. as an output from services provided (e.g. testing and calibration activities, inspections, assessments etc.)
 - Marketing material of the OCB
 - Corporate publications (e.g. annual reports)
 - Business Cards of any of the personnel of the OCB and clients
 - Websites
 - Tarpaulins
 - Stands, buildings and signs
 - Stationary: letterheads, envelopes, invoices and fax sheets
 - Vehicles
- e) In addition, the Mark should not be used on letterheads.
- f) If in doubt regarding use of marks, you should contact the BAFS.

E.3 Mark misuse

- a) The original artwork of the 'Organic' Mark should be used in a way that preserves the integrity of the mark. Therefore, the mark should not be altered or used in an improper way.
- b) Do not modify the color.
- c) Do not distort any part of the mark.
- d) Do not alter the relative size of any element of the mark.
- e) Do not position the mark on a visually distracting background or on pictures.
- f) Do not separate and modify any elements of the mark.
- g) Do not place the seal inside any kind of box or other shape that may mistakenly be considered part of the mark.
- h) Do not print at less than 100 percent ink density (opacity).
- i) Do not use the seal as a decorative element – for example, repeating it or portions of it like a wallpaper pattern.
- j) Do not modify the font of the inscription.
- k) Do not modify the color of the inscription.
- l) Do not separate and modify any elements of the inscription.
- m) Any uses not addressed in this guide are considered unacceptable unless approved by the BAFS.

E.4 Distance and size of the mark

- a) The certification mark may be enlarged or reduced maintaining its height-width

proportion.

- b) The size of the certification mark should be in proportion to the size of the OCB's logo.
- c) The minimum reduced size is 20 mm (in height). This is the minimum size at which numbers and letters are legible.
- d) The certification mark may be used in such a way that:
 - It is the same height as the OCB logo.
 - The space between the mark and the OCB logo is the same height as the mark.
 - Even when the OCB logo is very small, the certification mark must be at least 20 mm high.
 - The maximum size of the mark should be such that it does not predominate over the size of the OCB logo. It is recommended that the size of the certification mark should not exceed one-third or one-half the height of the surface to which it is affixed.