

**Your One Stop for Organic Certification
in the World Market of Organic Food**



**How to get yourself Organic Certified as per International Standards
(NOP, NOP & EEC-834/2007)**

**Guidelines for
Organic Certification of Grower Group**

OneCert = Value

Disclaimer: These Guidelines are made for developing basic understanding only, Can not be used or referred as standard reference. For the standard reference please refer to applicable standards.

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OneCert is a nationally and internationally operating Organic Certification agency accredited by APEDA under **National Program for Organic Production (NPOP-India)**. **OneCert International** is associate of **OneCert Inc; USA**. OneCert was formed to provide understandable, affordable and efficient certification by certifying simultaneously to the **India-NPOP, US-NOP, European Union-EU 834/2007**, in one certification fees. This ensures adherence to the highest possible standards as well as providing the clients with certification for all the major world market of Organic produce. The name OneCert and the logo are recognized internationally as a symbol of high integrity and quality. OneCert Certification team has experience and expertise in food production, processing, transportation and distribution. OneCert ensures all the support, within the permitted limits, to its customer.

What is Organic Certification?

Organic Certification is a procedure for verifying that products conform to certain set/defined standards. In case of Group Certification of Farmers, it is primarily the acknowledgement that the products from the Group members have been produced according to the applicable Gower Group standards.



Why Organic Certification?

1. Organic certification helps in building trust between consumers and organic farmers.
2. The certification mark 'Organic' is the only means to differentiate between certified organic and conventional foods.
3. Labels and certification marks help a consumer to recognise trustworthy organic products easily.
4. Organic certification and the logo are important marketing tools
5. Organic certification helps in getting comparatively a better price.



Benefits of Organic Certification by OneCert International

1. OneCert Organic Certification services are understandable, affordable and efficient.
2. We provide NPOP-India, NOP-USDA and EU 834/2007 Certifications all in one single fee.
3. A team of young, energetic and experienced inspectors, having excellent knowledge of different types of operations is deputed.
4. OneCert Logo is recognized internationally as a symbol of very high integrity and quality.
5. Customer services and other supports to the clients are *par excellence*.
6. Requirements of the entire major international standards have been summarized in the OneCert International standards.
7. Fully understanding the values and importance of Transaction Certificates, these certificates are released within 24 hrs. of receiving the required documents.
8. Neither hidden costs nor confusing statements.



Note:- HACCP, ISO, FSMS certified facilities need only a few additional requirements for organic certification. The documents prepared for the above systems are acceptable for organic certification also.



The Certification Process

The Certification process of OneCert is divided into 5 steps



STEP-1:- Registration and Application:-

For obtaining Organic Certification the first step is to be registered with OneCert International who in turn will provide you with an application packet. The packet contains **Application form, agreement, Grower Group Questionnaire (GGQ), Organic Farm plan (OFP), Farm Product and Inventory list and Field History sheet.** In Grower Group Questionnaire (GGQ) information about date of Group Formation, No. of farmers in Group, Total land holding of the Group, Detail of ICS are required. In Organic Farm Plan (OFP) information about Record keeping, Detail of Cultivation operation, Soil Fertility, Pest and Disease management Inputs/practices, Storage details, Detail of packaging material and methods used for prevention of contamination and commingling are required. While submitting the OFP and GGQ one must attach the Cluster Map, Training records of ICS staff and Group members, Non GMO statement, ICS document, List of Farmers, and Product label presently in use or to be used in future.



STEP-2:- Application Review:-

Once your complete application is received, we will review the same on the basis of applicable standards. If any incomplete information/non compliance are found or any additional information is needed, we will contact you. Once required information is gathered or non compliance is over, an on site audit is planned on a mutually agreed date and time.

This reviewing of application usually takes about a couple of days based on the information provided by applicant.



STEP-3:- Inspection:-

On the prescribed date a trained Organic Inspector, familiar with your type of operation will reach your facility. The inspector will thoroughly examine each process and documents of your operation and facility for the verification of your plan in an accurate description of Organic standard compliance. Inspection is done on the basis of sample. During an exit interview he will summarize his findings and asks for any additional information, if required. Inspection normally takes 3 days to One week depending upon the No. of sample to be inspected and complexity of operations.



STEP-4:- Secondary Review:-


After submission of the inspector's report, it is reviewed to evaluate compliance with the applicable standards. During the Secondary Review if more information is required we will contact you. After the receipt of report from the inspector, the Secondary Review generally takes 2-4 days.



STEP-5:- Certification Decision


After completion of the Secondary Review, the file is sent for the final decision, where it takes 1-2 weeks. After receiving the final decision you will receive your Organic Certificate along with a covering letter citing the conditions for awarding certificate. The Organic Certificate contains name of your company, address, category of certification and list of






certified organic product. The entire Certification Process may take about 4-12 weeks depending upon documents and co-operation provided.


Basic Requirements for Group Certification


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1. **Scope:** - Grower Group certification is based on the Internal Quality System. The member of the Group must apply similar production system and farms should be in the similar geographical proximity.






The number of farmers in a Grower Group minimum 25 farmers and maximum 500 farmers.


2. **Constitution of the Group organization:** - Group must have a legal status or constitution of the organization and shall be presented by organization chart.


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3. **Internal Quality System:-** Group certification is based on the Internal Quality System and following are the important constituent of the IQS:

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- Implementation of the Internal Control System
 - Internal standard
 - Risk assessment


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4. **Internal Standard:** - Internal standard should be prepared in local language by the IQS manager. If the farmers are illiterate, internal standard should contain

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- Definition of the production unit.
 - How to deal with the part conversion.
 - Conversion period.
 - Farm production norms for entire unit.
 - Harvest and post harvest procedure.

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5. **Conflict of interest:** - IQS personnel should not have any conflict of interest. All possible conflicts should be declared in a written statement.

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6. **Scope of certification:-**The certification should be granted to the Group with reference to the regulation/standard adopted by the Group.

7. **Trade:** - The Group will market the products under a single entity. For procurements IQS should draw up relevant procedure.

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8. **Implementation of the Internal Control System:** - For maintaining the Internal Control System, the following procedures should be adopted by the grower Group:-



- Registration of new member.
- Provision of documentation to the members of the grower Group.



9. Internal Inspection:-

- At least two inspections of the Group should be carried out by the internal inspector and will be documented.
- The inspection will be carried out in the presence of the member or representative.
- In case of the severe noncompliance, the result will be reported immediately to the IQS manager and all measures will be taken to the internal sanction procedures.



10. INTERNAL APPROVALS

- The ICS manager will have a defined procedure to approve or impose sanction on the farmers in the group. All internal farm checklists are screened by internal approval staff with special focus on the critical control points of risk / difficult cases.



11. YIELD ESTIMATES

- Yields will be estimated for each crop for individual farmer in the group by the ICS. This activity should be carried out especially during harvesting and will be counter-checked with the estimates during external inspection by OneCert International.



12. OPERATING DOCUMENT

- The ICS manager shall prepare the operating document, which shall be followed by all the members of the group. The operating document will contain the following:
 - ✓ An overview map (village or community map) showing location of each member's production unit. The map should indicate the crops cultivated in rotation and also mark any farm in an area, which could be identified as high risk due to drift from non-conventional farms.
 - ✓ Farmer's list with code and name of the farmer, total area, area under crop (or number of plants), date of registration with the group, date of last use of forbidden products, date of internal inspection, name of internal inspector, result of internal inspection (separate lists for in-conversion farmers).
 - ✓ List of farmers who have been issued sanctions with the reason and the duration of the sanction (if relevant).
 - ✓ The risk shall be assessed by ICS manager for the grower group every year. The risk assessment should be made at the farm level, processing, transporting and during trade. The ICS will take all measures to minimize the identified relevant risks.



Critical control points for risk assessment

- Measures taken by the farmers to deal with part conversion (if farmers still grow some non-organic crops).
- Conversion period
- Production rules for the whole production unit, e.g., seeds, fertilization and soil management, pest management, approved inputs, prevention of drifts, animal husbandry.
- Harvest and post harvest procedures.
- Processing and handling procedures





13. External Inspection:-The external inspection and certification agency will inspect the Group members on the basis of sample for the evolution of the grower Group for efficient Internal Control System for compliance with the NPOP Standards. The sample plan for inspection should be based on the inspector's perception of risk based on the following:



- Size of holding.
- Number of the member in the Group.
- Inter-mingling/contamination.
- Local hazard.



14. Non compliance and sanction: - In case of the non-compliance, the IQS should take corrective or mitigating measures.



- Procedure for implementation of sanction will be defined in case of non-compliance.
- Sanction has to be documented.
- Farmers that have to use prohibited inputs on their farms must undergo again the full Conversion Period all over again.



• Training of IQS personnel and Farmers:-

- Each internal inspector will be trained annually by a competent person.
- The date of the training and the list of participants will be documented.
- The date of participation and content of the training of all ICS staff needs to be documented in the staff files.



The IQS manager will organize the regular training to the farmers of the Group and each farmer will be needed to participate the training. Each training should be documented.



15. Buying Procedure:-To ensure the integrity of the product from the Group, IQS ensures about the status of the farmer, supplied amount should be compared with harvested amount and estimated yield. All documents should indicate the status of the certified product. Bags should be labeled as Organic or as Conventional.



16. STORAGE AND HANDLING PROCEDURES

The purchase or the warehouse manager during the handling of produce shall check the document to ensure the compliance with the NPOP standards.



For the detailed requirements please consult OneCert International Standards, USDA-NOP, NPOP-India & EU 834/2007 regulations. Above standards can be downloaded from our website www.onecertinternational.com.



Cost of Organic Certification by OneCert

OneCert is formed to provide understandable, affordable and efficient certification simultaneously for the India-NPOP, US-NOP, and European Union-EU 834/2007 standards in One Certification fees i.e. One Certification fee for ALL. The fees may vary depending upon the time required for different activities such as processing of application, review/s, inspection/s, report writing, decision making etc. Fees of a Grower Group depend upon:



1. No. of products applied for Organic Certification.



2. No. of farmers in grower group.
3. No. of Operation sites and total land offered for organic.
4. Records maintained and information provided.
5. Complexity of operation.
6. Support provided by applicant.
7. Size of operation.



Note:

To know the actual cost of your operation, please contact OneCert International office.

Time taken by OneCert International for Organic Certification

The complete certification process may take 4 to 12 weeks depending upon the providence of information and support by the applicant.



Complaint & Appeal

Under the provisions of OneCert Certification Procedure (OCA-111) any decision taken in respect of granting withholding, renewal, suspension or cancellation of certification under the NPOP, NOP & EEC 834/2007 can be appealed against. An operator may also lodge the complaint.

For the Procedure and Guidelines for making an appeal and complaints, contact

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