

GUIDELINES IN THE ACCREDITATION OF CERTIFYING BODIES FOR STANDARDS ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

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Sec. 60 and Sec. 63 Chapter 7 of RA 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997, specifically mandates the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) to formulate and enforce standards of quality in the processing, preservation, packaging, labeling, importation, exportation, distribution and advertising of agriculture and fisheries products.

It is further recognized that in order for the government to enforce standards of quality and safety throughout the country a strong collaboration and effective partnership with the private sectors and non-government organizations with proven competency and experiences in organic agriculture and with adequate technical personnel and financial resources must be forged. To tap their expertise as certifying bodies, there is an imperative need to provide and spell-out specific guidelines in the accreditation of certifying bodies for the enforcement of standards for organic agriculture.

1. Objectives of Accreditation. The accreditation of the private sector institutions, and non-government organizations is aimed to attain the following:

- 1.1 To tap the expertise of the private sectors and non-government organizations as partners of government in certifying products as organically produce.
- 1.2 To provide them wider opportunities and direct participation in product certification activities.
- 1.3 To give due recognition of their efforts, capabilities, competencies and experiences in promoting the development and production of organic products, and marketing of organically produce products both in the local and foreign markets.
- 1.4 To ensure that the duly accredited certifying bodies shall enforce the Philippine Standards for Organic Agriculture, and comply with the requirements of the approved operating Manual of Certification Procedures.

2. Coverage of Accreditation:

Accreditation shall apply to private business organization, cooperatives, non-government organization, people's organization, foundations and civic-religious organizations.

3. Criteria for Accreditation:

- 3.1 Ownership must be owned or controlled by Filipino citizens.
- 3.2 Must not be engaged in the production of organic agriculture at the time of the application for accreditation and during the lifetime of the accreditation authority as certifying body.
- 3.3 Track Record:
 - 3.3.1 must have been engaged in organic agriculture production or related extension services for at least one year.
 - 3.3.2 must have undergone training in organic certification

3.3.3 must be able to deploy at least one inspector per region

3.3.4 must have financial resources to undertake certification activities in its coverage areas

3.3.5 must have a clean track record in its financial dealings in their previous transactions

3.3.6 must be capable of conducting inspection work in accordance with the approved Operating Manual of Certification Procedures

4. Procedure for Accreditation

4.1 Application for Accreditation

The applicant-institution shall submit to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture through the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, a written application for accreditation together with the institution's organizational profile, Certificate of Registration, track record and other pertinent documents attesting to their competency to conduct organic products' certification.

4.2 Conduct of Verification:

Whenever necessary, the DA through the BAFPS shall conduct inspection and interviews to validate the application-institution.

4.3 Issuance of Certificate of Accreditation:

A certificate of accreditation, shall be issued to the institution that satisfies the criteria enumerated in para. 3 of these guidelines within fifteen (15) calendar days from the days of the submission of the completed documents.

5. The Secretary may impose fees in such an amount sufficient to cover the administrative cost in processing accreditation documents.

6. Renewal of the Certificate of Accreditation:

The certificate of accreditation shall be valid only for a period of three years. After such period, the certifying body shall be required to renew its certificate of accreditation.

7. Revocation of Accreditation:

Any institution accredited following these guideline be required to submit year-end and other periods report of the activity undertaken. Failure to comply with the requirement shall be a basis for the revocation of accreditation that shall further deprive the institution to participate in future undertaking. Furthermore, the Secretary, upon recommendation of the BAFPS shall be empowered to revoke the certificate of accreditation at anytime if the Secretary has reasonable ground to believe that there is clear violation in the certification procedures.

8. Effectivity

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after it filling with the UP Law Center.

Adopted: 23 April 2003

(SGD.) LUIS P. LORENZO, JR.

Secretary

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