



October 15, 2018

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 16

Series of 2018

**SUBJECT: REVISED RULES AND PROCEDURES ON THE PROVISION OF
CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ENTITIES**

WHEREAS, Section 24 of Republic Act No. 10068, or the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 states that the government shall extend incentives for the production and propagation of organic farm inputs by maximizing their use in all government and government-supported agricultural production, research and demonstration programs;

WHEREAS, Section 24 further states that incentives such as subsidies for certification fees and other support services to facilitate organic certification shall be provided to farmers whose farms have been duly certified as compliant to the Philippine National Standards (PNS);

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Department of Agriculture issued Department Circular No. 04, Series of 2015 or the Revised Guidelines on the Provision of Certification Subsidy Incentive for Organic Agriculture Entities /Farmers and Organic Input Producers to fully operationalize Section 24 item (d) of the OA Act;

WHEREAS, to address the need of the concerned offices and to effectively implement the provision of certification assistance, the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) deemed it necessary to amend D.C. No. 04, Series of 2015.

IN VIEW THEREOF, this Circular replaces D.C. No. 04, Series of 2015 providing the *Revised Rules and Procedures on the Provision of Certification Assistance for Organic Agriculture Entities*

**ARTICLE I
OBJECTIVES**

The provisions under this Department Circular aim to expand the applicability and coverage of certification assistance, and specify the roles and responsibilities of Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Field Offices (RFO) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in the processing of application for certification assistance and ensure that certification assistance is given to qualified entities to facilitate certification by officially accredited organic certifying bodies (OCBs).

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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

ARTICLE II SCOPE

Section 1. This Department Circular provides the rules and procedures for granting certification assistance to qualified organic agriculture entity to facilitate certification by OCBs.

Section 2. The following are the scope for organic certification:


- 2.1. Crop production – primary and post-harvest agriculture products of plant origin intended for food;
- 2.2. Animal production – primary and post-harvest agriculture products of animal origin intended for food;
- 2.3. Beekeeping - primary and post-harvest products of honey bee origin intended for food;
- 2.4. Special Areas (Wild harvesting and mushroom production) – primary and post-harvest products of mushrooms or herbs origin intended for food;
- 2.5. Processing – processed and prepackaged products intended for food;
- 2.6. Aquaculture – primary and post-harvest fishery products intended for food; and
- 2.7. Inputs – organic materials allowed for organic agriculture production and processing such as seeds, plant propagation materials, stocks, plant protection and pest management agents (biocontrol agents), organic soil amendments (organic fertilizers, compost/soil conditioners, microbial inoculants, plant supplements), feeds, processing aids, which are used to comply with the requirements of applicable PNS OA.

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. Certification

procedure by which OCB provides written attestation that food or inputs, or production systems 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

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Chief, Records Division

1.2. Certification assistance

technical and/or financial assistance provided by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to qualified organic agriculture entities to facilitate certification by officially accredited organic certifying bodies (OCBs). Technical assistance refers to the pre-assessment activities conducted by the Regional Field Offices; while financial assistance refers to the payment for certification and inspection services of the officially accredited organic certifying bodies.

1.3. Certification cost

the amount charged by the officially accredited OCB, which includes the application, certification, laboratory fees, and other reasonable related costs relevant to certification

1.3.1. Application Fee

the amount charged to the applicant at the time of application. This is generally a flat fee, which is meant to cover the applicant's cost for the initial processing of its application. This covers document review and verification and administrative cost related to it

1.3.2. Certification Fee

the amount charged to the applicant to assess whether operators' production systems conform to applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements. The fee is variable depending on the number of scope being applied for and type of operations involved. The fee covers inspection and evaluation fees. For inspection, it covers the assessment of organic production units, preparation and packaging units, storage units among others. While evaluation covers assessment and evaluation of the inspection reports and other generated documents and those that are requested to establish compliance to the scope(s) applied for; and certification decision.

1.3.3. Laboratory Fee

the amount charged for testing organic primary, postharvest and processed food and non-food, and input products being applied for certification. The requirement for laboratory testing is dependent on the results of inspection and the perceived risk or established risk factor. Laboratory testing of organic input products, however, is mandatory and is based on the parameters provided in the current version of relevant PNS. The cost of laboratory analysis are dependent on the fee(s) charged by the outsourced laboratory

1.4. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

any business activity or engaged in industry, agribusiness, and/or services, whether single proprietorship, cooperative, partnership or corporation whose total assets, inclusive of those arising from loans but exclusive of the land on which the particular business entity's office, plant and equipment are situated, must fall under the following categories:

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- 1.4.1. Micro: not more than 3,000,000
- 1.4.2. Small: P3,000,001 – P15,000,000
- 1.4.3. Medium: P15,000,001 – P100,000,000

1.5. Non-food product

agriculture and fishery products that are not used directly for human consumption such as feeds, fiber, tea bags, etc.

1.6. Organic Agriculture Entities

an individual or a business enterprise that are involved in the production, processing, manufacturing, sale and distribution of organic primary and post-harvest, food, non-food and input products

1.7. Organic Certificate

document issued by an officially accredited OCB based on a decision following review, attesting that the entity fulfills specified requirements as stated in applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements

1.8. Organic Certifying Body (OCB)

an officially accredited 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

1.9. Organic Input

organic materials allowed for organic agriculture production and processing such as seeds, plant propagation materials, stocks, plant protection and pest management agents (biocontrol agents), organic soil amendments (organic fertilizers, compost/soil conditioners, microbial inoculants, plant supplements), feeds, processing aids, which are used to comply with the requirements of applicable PNS OA


1.10. Organic Primary Production

production, rearing or growing of primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production up to slaughter, and the rearing and growing of aquatic plants and animals in aquaculture facilities.

1.11. Philippine National Standards

a document established by consensus, and approved by the DA Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) as the case for agriculture and fishery commodities including the agriculture machineries, that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production method. This includes but not limited to PNS for organic agriculture, PNS for organic aquaculture, PNS for organic soil amendments, PNS for organic biocontrol agent, PNS for organic milled rice, PNS for organic aquaculture.

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 Officer-in-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

1.12. Regional Pre-Assessment Team

team of designated personnel from the DA regional field office tasked to assess applying organic agriculture entities and evaluate whether these agriculture entities are qualified to avail of technical and financial assistance to facilitate third party certification by officially accredited organic certifying bodies (OCBs)

1.13. Postharvest food

food that is obtained from the minimal transformation of plant and terrestrial and aquatic animals after primary production.

1.14. Registration

process by which DA-BAFS verifies, records, and enters names and information of organic soil amendment and/or BCA operators in an official list or system

1.14.1. Certificate of Registration (COR)

a written authorization granted by BAFS to operators after all administrative and technical requirements for registration are satisfactorily complied with to market OSA and/or OBCA

1.15. Smallholder farmers

natural person dependent on small-scale subsistence farming as their primary source of income and whose sale, barter or exchange of agricultural products do not exceed a gross value of One hundred eighty thousand pesos (P180,000) per annum based on 1992 constant prices. An inter-agency committee composed of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Finance (DOF) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and headed by the DA may conduct periodic review and adjustments of the income level to take into account the effects of changes in inflation, devaluation and consumer price index

1.16. Smallholder fisherfolks

persons directly or personally and physically engaged in taking and/or culturing and processing fishery and/or aquatic resources as their primary source of income and are using fishing boats of 3 gross tons or less. They are also known as municipal fisherfolk

1.17. Scope

type of operation defined in the PNS for OA e.g. crop production, animal production, beekeeping, special products (mushroom and herbs), processed products, aquaculture, and inputs.

**ARTICLE IV
GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE**

Section 1. Certification assistance may be in the form of technical and/or financial assistance.

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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

- Section 2. Certification assistance may be availed for three (3) times.
- Section 3. Only qualified organic agriculture entities based on the results of pre-assessments shall be eligible to avail of certification assistance to facilitate certification by OCBs.
- Section 4. Certification assistance shall be granted only to qualified organic agriculture entities whose areas are intended for production and marketing. For products intended for export, certification assistance shall be given only to MSMEs, indigenous people and agrarian reform beneficiaries.
- Section 5. In case of funding constraints, smallholder farmers, smallholder fisherfolks, MSMEs, indigenous people, and ARBs shall be accorded top priority for granting of certification assistance.
- Section 6. In case of a denied certification, the organic agriculture entities shall bear the cost of certification.

ARTICLE V CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. Organic agriculture entities shall be eligible to apply for certification assistance based on the following criteria:

- 1.1. Individual or organized group of smallholder farmers or fisherfolks engaged in organic primary, postharvest and processed food and non-food, and input production;
- 1.2. If organized group, the group must be duly registered with any of the following: Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); or Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); and
- 1.3. If involved in processing, must be classified as micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME).

Section 2. Certified organic agriculture entities who have been previously granted with certification assistance shall be eligible for renewal of certification assistance based on the following conditions:

- 2.1. the certified organic agriculture entity is able to show continued compliance with applicable PNS for organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements as evidenced by the ability to maintain the organic certificate issued by the OCB or from the reports of monitoring of the Regional Pre-Assessment Team (RPAT) or the BFAR Pre-Assessment Team;

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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

- 2.2. the certified organic agriculture entity is able to maintain its registration with the DA-Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) or with any of the relevant DA regulatory agency as evidenced by a Certificate of Registration (COR).
- 2.3. the certified organic agriculture entity is able to show that the production is sustainable and profitable.

**ARTICLE VI
COVERAGE OF ASSISTANCE**

Section 1. The certification assistance provided by the DA to qualified organic agriculture entity shall cover the costs of certification, consisting of the following:

- 1.1. Application Fees;
- 1.2. Certification Fees;
- 1.3. Inspection and/or Re-inspection fees;
- 1.4. Travel Expenses; and
- 1.5. Laboratory Fees.

Note: The required laboratory analysis/es per scope are listed in Annex A

Section 2. The individual or group certification Tables 1 and 2 show the certification assistance package for individual and group certification vis-à-vis the scope(s) applied for certification.

Table 1. Certification assistance package for individual certification vis-à-vis the scope(s) applied for certification.

Particulars	Scope						
	Crop production	Animal Production	Organic Beekeeping	Special Products	Processed Organic Products	Input production	Aquaculture
Application fee	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Certification fee	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Inspection fee ¹	60,000.00	30,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00
Travel expense ²	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
Laboratory analyses ³	20,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00	45,000.00	10,000.00	40,000.00	30,000.00
Total ⁴	132,500.00	92,500.00	97,500.00	122,500.00	92,500.00	117,500.00	112,500.00

¹The maximum amount for inspection fee.

²Estimated cost is Php5000.00/day..Conservative estimation for six (6)-day inspection.

³ Indicated is the estimated total costs of the analyses per sample. Refer to Annex A for the list of required laboratory analysis/es per scope.

⁴ The maximum amount of certification assistance for each scope.

Note: For two (2) or more scopes, the total certification assistance fee shall be computed as the sum of the costs of certification assistance for the scopes being applied for.

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Officer-In-Charge
Chief, Records Division

Table 2. Certification assistance package for group certification vis-à-vis the scope(s) applied for certification.

Particulars	Scope						
	Crop production	Animal Production	Organic Beekeeping	Special Products	Processed Organic Products	Input production	Aquaculture
Application fee	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Certification fee	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00
Inspection fee ¹	60,000.00	30,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00
Travel expense ²	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
Laboratory analyses ³	20,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00	45,000.00	10,000.00	40,000.00	30,000.00
Total ⁴	137,500.00	97,500.00	102,500.00	127,500.00	97,500.00	122,500.00	117,500.00

**ARTICLE VII.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 1. The DA RFO shall provide certification assistance to organic agriculture entities. As such, the DA RFO shall:

- 1.1 Ensure availability of budget for the provision of certification assistance including expenses to be incurred during the conduct of pre-assessment;
- 1.2 Establish a Regional Pre-Assessment Team (RPAT) tasked to conduct pre-assessment of eligible applicant;
- 1.3 Establish criteria and procedures for prioritization of qualified entities for certification assistance;
- 1.4 Process and evaluate eligible applicants for certification assistance based on established procedures and results of pre-assessment activities;
- 1.5 Collaborate with the BFAR Pre-Assessment Team relative to integrated farms with organic aquaculture production;
- 1.6 Come up with the list of qualified organic agriculture entities;
- 1.7 Process payment of OCBs where contract was awarded to, for the services it has rendered following the approved amount; and
- 1.8 Provide update on the implementation of certification assistance to the National Organic Agriculture Program – National Program Coordinating Office (NOAP-NPCO) and the NOAB.

Section 2. The DA BFAR shall provide certification assistance to organic agriculture entities applying only for organic aquaculture certification. As such, the DA BFAR shall:

- 2.1. Ensure availability of budget for the provision of certification assistance including fees to be incurred during the conduct of pre-assessment;

¹The maximum amount for inspection fee.


²Estimated cost is Php5000.00/day. Conservative estimation for six (6) day inspection.

³Indicated is the estimated total costs of the analyses per sample. Refer to Annex A for the list of required laboratory analysis/es per scope.

⁴The maximum amount of certification assistance for each scope.

Note: For two (2) or more scopes, the total certification assistance fee shall be computed as the sum of the costs of certification assistance for the scopes being applied for.

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 ROMULO B. PADIN
 Officer-in-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

- 2.2. Establish a Pre-Assessment Team tasked to conduct pre-assessment of eligible applicant;
- 2.3. Establish criteria and procedures for prioritization of qualified entities for certification assistance;
- 2.4. Process and evaluate eligible applicants for certification assistance based on established procedures and results of pre-assessment activities;
- 2.5. Come up with the list of qualified organic agriculture entities;
- 2.6. Process payment of OCBs where contract was awarded to, for the services it has rendered following the approved amount; and
- 2.7. Provide update on the implementation of certification assistance to the NOAP-NPCO and the NOAB.

Section 3. The OCB awarded with the contract to conduct inspection and assessment of qualified organic agriculture entities for certification assistance shall provide the certification decision to the DA RFO/DA BFAR. Likewise, the OCB shall provide DA RFO/BFAR with documents relevant to the qualified organic agriculture entities application for organic certification, and to abide by the terms and conditions of the tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed between the OCB, DA RFO/DA BFAR and the qualified organic agriculture entities.

- 3.1. The OCB awarded with the contract for certification assistance shall:
 - 3.1.1. conduct inspection and assessment of qualified organic agriculture entities;
 - 3.1.2. submit the certification decision to the DA RFO/DA BFAR;
 - 3.1.3. provide documents relevant to the qualified organic agriculture entity's application for organic certification;
 - 3.1.4. allow the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team to participate in the inspection as observer/s; and
 - 3.1.5. abide with the terms and conditions of the tripartite MOA executed among the DA RFO/DA BFAR, OCB and the qualified organic agriculture entity.

Section 4. The qualified organic agriculture entity applying for certification assistance shall:

- 4.1. Ensure readiness of the organic production, processing, packaging, and storage units among others prior to application for certification assistance;
- 4.2. File application for certification assistance including relative documentary requirements to the DA-RFO/DA BFAR to facilitate initial evaluation and the conduct of pre-assessment activities;
- 4.3. In case of disapproval of certification application, the qualified organic agriculture entity signifies its commitment to bear the cost of certification as evidenced in the tripartite MOA; and
- 4.4. Abide with the terms and conditions of the tripartite MOA, and the certification agreement executed between the organic agriculture entity and the OCB.

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ROMIROSE B. PADIN
Officer-In-Charge
Chief, Records Division

**ARTICLE VIII.
PROCEDURE FOR THE PROVISION OF CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE**

Section 1. The following outlines the procedure that will be observed by DA RFOs in processing application for certification assistance to facilitate certification by OCBs.

1.1	Submission of application	The eligible applicant shall submit the duly accomplished application form and relevant documentary requirements.
1.2	Review of application and preparation for the conduct of pre-assessment	The RPAT Secretariat/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team Secretariat shall conduct initial evaluation of submitted application including relevant documentary requirements. Complete application package shall be forwarded to the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team for the conduct of pre-assessment. The RPAT will draw a pre-assessment plan and determine the schedule of pre-assessment.
1.3	Conduct of Pre-assessment	The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall conduct the pre-assessment according to the plan. The report of the pre-assessment, recommendations, and prioritization list, as applicable shall be submitted to Regional Executive Director (RED)/BFAR Director for approval.
1.4	Approval of application	The RED/BFAR Director shall approve the application for certification assistance based on submitted pre-assessment report.
1.5	Procurement of service of the OCB	The DA RFO/DA BFAR shall procure the certification service of an OCB based on governing rules and procedures for procurement.
1.6	Signing of tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)	The DA RFO/DA BFAR shall facilitate the signing of the tripartite MOA among the DA RFO/DA BFAR, the officially accredited OCB, and the qualified organic agriculture entity.
1.7	Certification process	The OCB shall conduct inspection and evaluation based on agreed schedule. The DA RFO/DA BFAR shall collaborate with the OCBs on the conduct of inspection and evaluation. Certification process shall be conducted within two (2) months.

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
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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

1.8	Release of Certification Decision	The OCB shall release the certification decision within one (1) month after the conduct of the evaluation. A copy of the certification decision is provided to the applicant and to the DA RFO/DA BFAR.
1.9	Processing of payment	<p>The mode of payment of certification assistance will depend on the certification decision released. For positive decisions, the payment of services rendered by OCB shall be made by DA RFO/DA BFAR. The certification assistance recipient shall submit additional documentary requirements to the DA RFO/DA BFAR to facilitate the processing of payment.</p> <p>For denied certification, the payment shall be made by the applicant.</p>
1.10	Registration	The DA RFO/DA BFAR through the RFO/BFAR Organic Agriculture Focal Person shall assist the certified organic agriculture entity in applying for registration with DA BAFS or relevant DA regulatory agency. The DA BAFS or relevant DA regulatory agency shall issue COR to eligible registrant.
1.11	Monitoring	The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall conduct monitoring of certified organic agriculture entities where certification assistance was provided, to check continued compliance with the applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements.

Section 1. Application for certification assistance shall be made by submitting a duly accomplished application form and relevant documentary requirements, in addition to other requirements determined by the DA RFO/DA BFAR.

2.1 For individual assistance applicant:

- 2.1.1 Letter addressed to the RED/BFAR Director signifying intent to avail of certification assistance to facilitate certification by OCBs; including agreement to undergo pre-assessment;
- 2.1.2 Duly accomplished application form (Annex B);
- 2.1.3 Organic Management Plan;
- 2.1.4 Farm profile and map;
- 2.1.5 Manual of operations, if applicable; and

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 Officer-In-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

2.1.6 Other documentary requirements as may be required by applicable laws and government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

2.2 For group assistance applicant:

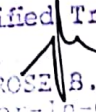
- 2.2.1 Letter addressed to the RED/BFAR Director signifying intent to avail of certification assistance to facilitate certification by OCBs; including agreement to undergo pre-assessment;
- 2.2.2 Duly accomplished application form (Annex B);
- 2.2.3 Authenticated certificate of registration from any of the following: SEC, CDA, DTI, DOLE, DSWD or any other appropriate agencies;
- 2.2.4 Organic Management Plan;
- 2.2.5 Organization profile, structure and map;
- 2.2.6 Copy of Internal Control System (ICS) Manual or any relevant manual; and
- 2.2.7 Other documentary requirements as may be required by applicable laws and government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Section 2. The RPAT Secretariat/BFAR Pre-Assessment Secretariat shall conduct initial evaluation of duly accomplished application form including other relevant documentary requirements submitted by the eligible applicants to check for its completeness and the veracity of submitted information. After which, the complete application package shall be forwarded to the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team. Only complete application package shall be subjected to pre-assessment. For applications with incomplete submission, the DA RFO/BFAR shall formally inform the eligible applicant to submit the required additional documents following a prescribed timeline.

Section 3. The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team, upon the receipt of the complete application package shall assess the documents in order to come up with the pre-assessment plan and determine the schedule of pre-assessment. The pre-assessment is conducted to determine the readiness of the eligible applicant for organic certification by assessing the production, processing, packaging, handling and storage units, and its compliance to the applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture. The pre-assessment activity will be carried out following the procedures as provided in Annex C. After the conduct of the pre-assessment, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall come up with the report, including recommendations, and these will be submitted to the RED/BFAR Director for approval. In case of multiple pre-assessment activities conducted, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall also come up with the prioritization list for consideration and approval of the RED/BFAR Director.

Section 4. The prioritization of qualified organic agriculture entity shall follow the provision provided in Article IV, Section 5.

Section 5. The RPAT/ BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall endorse the list of qualified organic agriculture entities together with the pre-assessment reports to the RED/BFAR Director.

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 Officer-in-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

Section 6. The RED/BFAR Director shall decide on the application for certification assistance based recommendations of the RPAT/ BFAR Pre-Assessment Team as supported by the pre-assessment reports.

Section 7. The DA RFO/DA BFAR shall procure the certification service of the OCB in accordance with the procurement requirements and procedures under Republic Act No. 9184, or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Section 8. The DA RFO/BFAR shall facilitate the signing of the tripartite MOA with the OCB and the qualified organic agriculture entity. The prescribed template of the tripartite MOA, prescribing the minimum terms and conditions for the certification assistance, is attached as Annex D.

Section 9. The OCB shall conduct the inspection activities based on a determined scheme and that during inspection the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall be allowed to act as observer during the inspection.

Section 10. Once organic certificate has been granted to the organic agriculture entity, the DA RFO/DA BFAR through the RFO/BFAR Organic Agriculture (OA) Focal Person shall assist the certified organic agriculture entity in submitting the organic certificate and other relevant documents necessary for its application for registration with DA BAFS. The DA BAFS shall issue COR to eligible registrant. In case of a denied certification, the RFO/BFAR Organic Agriculture Focal Person shall assist the OCB in collecting payment from the organic agriculture entity.

Section 11. The processing of payment for the certification assistance shall start after the organic certification by the OCB and upon submission of the following additional documentary requirements:

- 11.1. Certified true copy of the organic certificate issued by the officially accredited OCB;
- 11.2. Official receipt issued by the local OCB for the payment or billing statement for the certification costs based on the submitted computation of certification fees including official receipt of laboratory fees, if any.
- 11.3. Other documentary requirements as may be required by the applicable laws and government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Section 12. The payment shall be made directly to the OCB.

Section 13. The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall conduct monitoring activities to the beneficiaries of certification assistance to ensure continued compliance with the applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture.

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ROMIROSE B. PADIN
Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

ARTICLE IX
PROCESS FOR RENEWAL OF ORGANIC CERTIFICATION THROUGH CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE INCENTIVE

Section 1. The certified organic agriculture entity must maintain their compliance with the applicable PNS for organic agriculture and other regulatory requirements to avail of certification assistance. The cost of recertification regardless of the number of scope/s shall be valid only for two (2) applications.

Section 2. The process for renewal shall be based on the provisions under Article VIII (Procedures for the Provision of Certification assistance) of this Department Circular. In addition to the documentary requirements listed in Article VIII Section 1 of this Circular, the organic agriculture entity shall submit the following:

- a. Certified true copy of the organic certificate;
- b. Certified true copy of the COR;
- c. Records of volume of production, sales, financial statements or any relevant documents;
- d. Other documentary requirements as may be required by applicable laws and government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

ARTICLE X
GROUNDINGS FOR DISAPPROVAL OF CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE

Section 1. The following are the grounds for disapproval of application for certification assistance:

- 1.1. Failure of the eligible applicant or qualified organic agriculture entity to submit necessary documents requested by the DA RFO/BFAR within the given period of time;
- 1.2. Failure to resolve within the prescribed time period, a previously issued non-compliance based on the conducted pre-assessment; and
- 1.3. Unjustified refusal of the eligible applicant or qualified organic agriculture entity to allow the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team to access the premises, facilities, records, and personnel, as may be necessary, for the conduct of pre-assessment.

ARTICLE XI.
TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

All applications submitted prior the issuance of this Circular shall be processed in accordance to DC No. 04 Series of 2015.

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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

**ARTICLE XII.
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 XIII.
REPEALING CLAUSE**

All existing Orders, Circulars, Guidelines, Rules and Regulations inconsistent with this Department Circular are hereby modified, revoked or repealed accordingly.

**ARTICLE XII.
EFFECTIVITY**


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



EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
In replying pls cite this code :
For Signature: S-10-18-0514
Received : 10/23/2018 01:08 PM

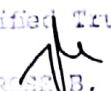
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Officer-In-Charge
Chief, Records Division

Annex A
Required laboratory analyses per scope of organic certification

Scope	Laboratory analysis/es
Crop production	Water analysis GMO detection analysis Soil analysis
Animal production	GMO detection analysis
Organic Beekeeping	Pesticide residue analysis
Special products	Heavy metal Water analysis Pesticide residue analysis
Processed organic products	Water
Input production	Full laboratory analyses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physio-Chemical Analysis (N, P, K, moisture content, organic matter, organic carbon) • Microbiological Analysis (Fecal Streptococci, total coliforms, Salmonella) • Heavy metal Analysis (Arsenic, Cadmium, Chromium, Lead, Mercury) GMO detection analysis
Aquaculture	Water analysis GMO detection analysis in feeds

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ANNEX B
Application form for organic certification assistance

Application Number:	
---------------------	--

I. Nature of Applicant (Check the box that applies)

A. First time applicant? Yes. No.

If no, please state how many times have you applied before (indicate the date of issuance):	
---	--

B. Type of Applicant

- Individual farmer (Proceed to Step II.A)
 Farmer Organization/ Institution/ Establishment (Proceed to Step II.B)

C. Scope of certification applying for

Scope of Certification (Note: Please specify the commodity/ies)	<input type="checkbox"/> Crop production	<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture
	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal production	<input type="checkbox"/> Processing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Beekeeping	<input type="checkbox"/> Input production
	<input type="checkbox"/> Special areas (Wild harvest and mushroom production)	
	Please specify the commodity/ies:	

II. Applicant's Information

A. For Individual Farmer

Name of Applicant:

<i>Last name</i>	<i>Given Name</i>	<i>Middle Name</i>

Gender:		Date of birth:	
---------	--	----------------	--

- PWD Senior citizen Member of the indigenous people

Landline:		Mobile Number:	
-----------	--	----------------	--

Active E-mail Address:	
------------------------	--

B. For Farmer Organization/ Institution / Establishment

Name of Organization:	
-----------------------	--

Office Address:	
-----------------	--

Name of Official Representative:

<i>Last name</i>	<i>Given Name</i>	<i>Middle Name</i>

Landline:		Mobile Number:	
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ROBERTO B. PADIN
Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

Active E-mail Address:	
------------------------	--

III. Farm/Establishment Information

Farm/Establishment Name:	
--------------------------	--

Farm/Establishment Address:	
-----------------------------	--

Farm/Establishment Area to be certified:	
--	--

IV. Organic Certification (if already been 3rd party certified)

(Please attached the Certified True Copy of the Certificate)

Name of Official Certifying Body:	
-----------------------------------	--

Scope of Certification <i>(Note: Please specify the commodity/ies)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Crop production <input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture <input type="checkbox"/> Animal production <input type="checkbox"/> Processing <input type="checkbox"/> Beekeeping <input type="checkbox"/> Input production <input type="checkbox"/> Special areas (Wild harvest and mushroom production)									
	Please specify the commodity/ies: <table border="1"> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>									

Date of Application for Certification:		Valid until:	
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V. BAFS Registration (Please attached hereto the Certified True Copy of the Registration)


Nature of Application:	
------------------------	--

Registration Number:		Valid until:	
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Declaration Statement: I hereby certify that the information appear herein are true and correct.

Signature of the Applicant over Printed Name

Date of Application

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 Officer-in-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

ANNEX C
Guidelines on the Conduct of Pre-assessment

Section 1. The DA RFO shall create its pre-assessment team composed of the following:

Team Leader	Organic Agriculture (OA) Focal Person/Alternate OA Focal Person
Members	BAFS Focal Person for Standards Promotion and Impact Evaluation BAFS Focal Person for Regulatory Activities Other RFO Personnel assigned by the Regional Executive Director
Technical and Administrative Secretariat	Organic Agriculture Program Staff

Likewise, the DA BFAR shall create its own pre-assessment team recommended by its Bureau Director.

Section 2. The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team may include members from the academe, LGU, and other regional units of the DA Regulatory Agencies.


Section 3. The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall take the lead in the conduct of the pre-assessment of eligible applicants. Specifically, it shall be responsible for the following:

- 3.1. Develop pre-assessment plan and conduct pre-assessment following established procedures;
- 3.2. Finalize and submit pre-assessment reports to the RED/BFAR Director including recommendations and prioritization list of qualified organic agriculture entity;
- 3.3. As appropriate, provide technical and administrative support to qualified organic agriculture entity prior to application for organic certification to the Organic Certification Body;
- 3.4. Conduct monitoring activities of certified organic agriculture entities to ensure continued compliance with the applicable PNS for organic agriculture; and
- 3.5. For the technical and administrative secretariat to conduct initial evaluation of submitted application form and relevant documentary requirements.

Section 4. General Criteria for the Conduct of Pre-assessment

4.1 Timing of Pre-assessment

Each production, processing, packaging, handling and storage units, and its compliance

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to the applicable PNS relevant to organic agriculture production processes will be completely assessed (i.e. all applicable control points must be verified) to determine the readiness of the eligible applicant for organic certification.

4.2 Areas of Pre-assessment

4.2.1 When developing a pre-assessment plan, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall take into account the following:

- 4.2.1.1 size of the area that will be applied for certification;
- 4.2.1.2 process flow of production;
- 4.2.1.3 presence of facilities (e.g. on-farm packing houses, storage and holding areas);
- 4.2.1.4 number of facilities (e.g. cages) that will be visited;
- 4.2.1.5 areas of the farmer members (in case of group certification);
and
- 4.2.1.6 location of growing areas of farmer with multi-production sites, if applicable

4.3 Length of pre-assessment


The length of a pre-assessment should be based on the operations of the eligible applicant. All operations, as referred to in the submitted process flow of production, documents, facilities, and records shall be observed. Depending on the area or number of farmer-members, in case of group certification, a no 'one-day inspection' policy shall be observed.

Section 5. The following provides the general procedure for the conduct of pre-assessment activity:

	Steps	Details
Preparatory activities		
5.1.	Preparation for the conduct of pre-assessment	<p>Upon receipt of the complete application package, from the RPAT Secretariat/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team Secretariat, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall conduct preparatory meetings to develop pre-assessment plan and identify schedule prior to the pre-assessment activities.</p> <p>The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team, through the secretariat, will inform the eligible applicant of the schedule of pre-assessment at least five (5) working</p>

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	Steps	Details
		<p>days prior to its actual conduct.</p> <p>In case when the RFO/BFAR Organic Agriculture Focal Person/Alternate Focal Person is not present during the conduct of pre-assessment, he/she shall designate a team leader coming from the members of the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team.</p>
<p>Conduct of Pre-assessment</p>		
<p>5.2.</p>	<p>Opening meeting</p>	<p>Upon arrival, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team must introduce themselves to the eligible applicant. The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team will inform the eligible applicant that the pre-assessment activity will be conducted using a checklist as a guide, and that all relevant facilities including documents will be evaluated.</p> <p>The eligible applicant must accompany the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team during the farm walk in order to provide details of the farm/aquaculture area/establishment practices and records. The inspection will be carried out based on the pre-assessment tool.</p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p>Actual farm walk and evaluation of records</p>	<p>The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall conduct farm walk and evaluate the relevant records. Observations shall be recorded in the checklist.</p> <p>If applicable, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team may collect samples for testing and analyses. The secretariat of the regional pre-assessment team must ensure that the samples taken are properly labeled, recorded and sent to the accredited laboratories, if any.</p>
<p>5.4.</p>	<p>Closing meeting</p>	<p>After the farm walk and evaluation of documents, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team will discuss the observations with the eligible application; and provide relevant recommendations, if applicable. During the exit meeting, the eligible applicant should clarify any observations that are unclear or non-compliant items. If non-compliant items are found and recommendations are identified, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team and the eligible applicant should discuss and agree on the timeline(s) for compliance or implementation of corrective actions.</p>


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 Chief, Records Division

	Steps	Details
		<p>The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team may be guided by the following recommendations: not more than one (1) month for minor non-compliances; and at most three (3) months for major non-compliances. However, both parties will still have to agree on the timeline(s) for compliance based on compromise.</p> <p>The pre-assessment checklist shall be signed by both the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team members and the eligible applicant.</p>
Preparation of pre-assessment reports and other post-activities		
5.5	Pre-assessment report	<p>The RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall prepare the pre-assessment report immediately after its conduct and shall present and discuss the same with the applicant during the exit meeting. Otherwise, the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall prepare a pre-assessment report within fifteen (15) days after the conduct of pre-assessment activity.</p> <p>The pre-assessment report should include a summary of noncompliant items.</p>
5.6	Follow-up visit	<p>For organic agriculture entity with non-compliant items, the regional pre-assessment team shall recommend a follow-up visit. The secretariat of the RPAT/BFAR Pre-Assessment Team shall provide notification on the conduct of follow-up visit.</p> <p>The frequency and number of follow-up visits will depend on the pre-assessment results and the noncompliant items needing corrective actions. Furthermore, the verification on the progress of compliance to noncompliant items will follow the agreed timeline and will be carried out either through formal or informal means. Follow up visits will only be conducted when a communication (whether formal or informal) from the organic agriculture entity is received signifying the readiness of the farm/establishment/aquaculture area.</p>

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ROMIROSE D. PADIN
 Officer-In-Charge
 Chief, Records Division

ANNEX D
Memorandum of Agreement

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

This Memorandum of Agreement made and executed, by and between:

The DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) - REGIONAL FIELD OFFICE (RFO)/DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) - BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES (BFAR) ___ duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with office address at

_____ represented herein by (Name of Director), Regional Executive Director/Bureau Director, herein referred to as the "DA-RFO/DA-BFAR ___"

(Name of Certifying Body), a domestic (foundation/organization) duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with office address at _____, represented by _____, (Designation of Executive Officer), herein referred to as the "CERTIFYING BODY or CB"

-and-

(for group of small holder farmers/fisherfolks)

(Name of Cooperative/Organization/Foundation), a domestic (cooperative/foundation/organization) duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with office address at _____, represented by _____, (Designation of Executive Officer), herein referred to as the "APPLICANT".

or

(for individual small holder farmer/fisherfolk)

(Name of Individual), of legal age, Filipino and residing at _____, represented by _____, herein referred to as the "APPLICANT".

WITNESSETH:

The parties hereby bind themselves to undertake a Memorandum of Agreement for the purpose of availing the certification subsidy incentive in support of the program of the State to promote and develop Organic Agriculture in the Philippines, under the following terms and conditions:

A. The DA-RFO/DA-BFAR shall:

1. Ensure availability of budget for the provision of certification assistance;
2. Establish a pre-assessment team tasked to conduct pre-assessment of eligible applicant;
3. Establish criteria and procedures for prioritization of qualified organic agriculture entity for certification assistance;
4. Process and evaluate eligible applicants for certification assistance based on established procedures and results of pre-assessment activities;
5. Come up with the list of qualified organic agriculture entity;
6. Process payment of OCBs where contract was awarded to, for the services it has rendered following the approved amount; and
7. Provide update on the implementation of certification assistance to the National Organic Agriculture Program – National Program Coordinating Office (NOAP-NPCO) and the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB).

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Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division

B. The CERTIFYING BODY shall:

1. Provide DA RFO/BFAR the computation of certification fees to be applied of the APPLICANT for subsidy based from the fee schedule cited in the approved regulation;
2. Provide DA RFO/BFAR pertinent supporting documents for the applicant's availment of subsidy; and
3. Hand back to DA the amount of subsidy granted for an application identified with non-compliances with the existing rules and regulation on granting of subsidy after due process.
4. Adhere to the standard processing timeline as stated in the Notice to Proceed or Work Order

C. The APPLICANT shall:

1. Provide DA RFO the necessary documents to avail of the subsidy;
2. Ensure preparedness/readiness of his/her/their enterprise for certification upon application for subsidy;
3. Ascertain that they have the knowledge and capacity to engage in certification by submitting relevant documents (e.g. proof of trainings/orientation on organic agriculture/ICS for groups);
4. Bear the whole cost of certification or be responsible for the payment of certification fees to the CERTIFYING BODY in case of disapproved application for certification; and
5. Abide the terms and conditions of the certification agreement.

This Memorandum of Agreement shall become effective upon signature of all parties and the implementation will begin immediately and shall continue to be valid hereafter until one (1) year or unless terminated by any party upon thirty (30) day written notice to other parties. No modification or amendment to this agreement and the approved project documents shall be allowed without the written consent of all parties involved.

In witness whereof, the parties have signed this Memorandum of Agreement at _____ this _____ day of _____ 20__.

For the CERTIFYING BODY

For the RFO/BFAR

For the APPLICANT

SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF:

Certified True Copy
 RONDRE B. PADIN
 Officer-in-Charge
 OIC, Records Division

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
_____)SS.

BEFORE ME, a Notary Public for and in the _____, this ___ day of _____ 20___, personally came and appeared:

NAME	RES. CERT. NO	DATE/PLACE OF ISSUE

Known to me and to the same persons who executed the foregoing instrument, consisting of four (4) pages including the page on which this acknowledgement is written, which they acknowledged before me as their free and voluntary act and deed.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL, this ___th day of _____ 20___ at _____.

Doc. No. _____
Page No. _____
Book No. _____
Series of _____

NOTARY PUBLIC

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ROMIROSE B. PADIN
Officer-in-Charge
Chief, Records Division