



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1101 Philippines

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DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 02
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SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON THE CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE POOL OF EXPERTS (DAPE) AND THE ISSUANCE OF SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 16 of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10611 otherwise known as the "Food Safety Act of 2013" and Section 4 of R.A. 10068 otherwise known as the "Organic Agriculture Act of 2010," this Department Circular is hereby issued to provide guidelines and procedures for the creation of the DA Pool of Experts, hereinafter referred to as DAPE.

The Circular also provides guidelines and procedures for the issuance of scientific or technical recommendations based on the results of relevant risk assessment. The results shall serve as basis for risk management options such as development of standards and adoption of relevant technical regulations covering food and feed from primary to postharvest stages of production, including those from organic agriculture and aquaculture production.

ARTICLE I
SCOPE

Section 1. This Circular covers scientists and technical experts from government agencies, academic and research institutions, industry organizations, professional organizations or relevant private sector representatives.

ARTICLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 2. As used in the Circular, the following terms are defined as follows:

- 2.1 *Ad hoc Task Force* – a group of experts from the DAPE established to carry out an assessment and provide scientific or technical recommendation on a particular request.

- 2.2 *Committee* –refers to the Steering Committee (Annex A), which oversees the DAPE and provides guidance for effective implementation of its functions. The Committee consists of: the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, R&D and Regulations as the chair, the Assistant Secretary for Regulations as alternate chair, and the heads of the regulatory agencies responsible for regulations of food, feed, and organic agriculture referred to in 2.9 as members.
- 2.3 *Feed* – refers to any substance or product, including additives to be used for oral feeding to animals.
- 2.4 *Food* – refers to any substance or product whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed that is intended for human consumption. It includes drinks, chewing gum, water and other substances, which are intentionally incorporated into the food during its preparation and treatment.
- 2.5 *Food safety* – refers to the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared or eaten according to its intended use. It also refers to the efforts to protect food products from unintentional and naturally occurring contamination by agents reasonably likely to occur in the food supply from production to consumption.
- 2.6 *Hazard* – refers to a biological, chemical or physical agent in food and feed with a potential to cause adverse effect on health.
- 2.7 *Postharvest stages* - refer to the stages in the food supply chain involving the minimal transformation of plant and animal foods after primary production such as removal of field heat for fruits, slaughter of animals, sorting, grading and cutting of fresh plant and animal foods, icing and freezing, and the drying, milling and storage of grain.
- 2.8 *Primary production* - refers to the production, rearing or growing of primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production up to slaughter; and the rearing and growing of fish and other species in aquaculture. It also includes fishing, and the hunting and catching of wild products.
- 2.9 *Regulatory agencies responsible for Food, Feed, and Organic Agriculture* – refer to government agencies that are involved in the development and/or implementation of standards and technical regulations for food and feed safety covering primary to postharvest stages of production, including organic agriculture. These include the following agencies:
- a. Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS);
 - b. Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI);
 - c. Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR);
 - d. Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI);
 - e. Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM);
 - f. Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA);

- g. National Dairy Authority (NDA);
 - h. National Food Authority (NFA);
 - i. National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS);
 - j. Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA);
 - k. Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA); and
 - l. Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA).
- 2.10 *Risk* – refers to the likelihood of an adverse health effect and the severity of this effect following exposure to a hazard.
- 2.11 *Risk analysis* – refers to a process consisting of three (3) interrelated components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.
- 2.12 *Risk assessment* – refers to the scientific evaluation of known or potential adverse health effects resulting from human exposure to biological, chemical and physical hazards.
- 2.13 *Risk communication* – refers to the interactive exchange of information and opinions during the course of risk analysis on the hazards and risks among risk assessors, risk managers, consumers, food and feed business operators, academia and other stakeholders.
- 2.14 *Risk management* – refers to the process of weighing policy alternatives to accept, minimize or reduce assessed risks and if necessary, to select and implement appropriate prevention and control measures.
- 2.15 *Scientific recommendation* – refers to a scientific output, based on risk assessment, in the form of a concise document, which was developed in response to a request or to address an issue on food and feed safety.
- 2.16 *Secretariat* – refers to BAFS, as represented by the Executive Director, which is responsible for the general coordination to ensure efficiency and consistency in the issuance of the scientific or technical recommendations based on the results of relevant assessments conducted.
- 2.17 *Technical Recommendation* – refers to a technical output in the form of a concise document, which was developed in response to a request or to address an issue on organic agriculture.

**ARTICLE III
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE DAPE**

- Section 3. Interested experts shall meet the following general requirements to become members of the DAPE:
- 3.1 Has at least master's degree in the areas being required by the risk assessment to be carried out;
 - 3.2 Has at least five (5) years relevant experience in required discipline/s;
 - 3.3 Is knowledgeable in the following areas:
 - a. principles of risk analysis;
 - b. conduct of chemical and/or biological risk assessment;
 - c. relevant local and international food safety legislations, regulations, measures and standards
 - d. current and emerging local and international food and feed safety issues and developments, or current and emerging local and international organic agriculture/aquaculture production technologies; and;
 - 3.4 Is free from undue biases and conflicts of interest;
 - 3.5 Is able to communicate effectively in English, both written and oral; and
 - 3.6 Is preferably an active member of relevant national or international scientific bodies, committees or other expert advisory bodies.

**ARTICLE IV
PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION OF INTERESTED EXPERTS
FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE DAPE**

- Section 4. Call for Experts - Expression of Interest
- 4.1 The Secretariat shall launch and announce a regular call for expression of interest, hereinafter referred to as the Call, every first quarter of the year.
 - 4.2 The Call shall be open to interested experts pursuant to Section 1 of this Circular. These interested experts should not be directly involved in the development of standards, or in implementation or monitoring of technical regulations.
 - 4.3 The Call shall indicate terms of reference, validity requirements, eligibility criteria, selection criteria, incentives, deadline for submission of requirements and other supporting documents, and contact information where these shall be submitted.
 - 4.4 For the widest coverage possible, the Secretariat shall issue the Call through a combination of any or all of the following strategies:

- a. Posting in the DA and/or BAFS official website;
- b. Publication in the Official Gazette or in relevant leading scientific or technical publications;
- c. Posting of the information in media frequently consulted by scientific or technical experts;
- d. Posting of the information and/or sending of information of the Call to academic and research institutions and professional organizations; and
- e. Physical call for experts through public fora to a well-distributed geographical target audience.

Section 5. Application

5.1 Application for membership to the DAPE shall be made by completing and submitting the following documents, to the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) – DAPE Secretariat:

- a. Application form (refer to Annex B);
- b. Declaration of Interest (refer to Annex C);
- c. Curriculum vitae (CV);
- d. Diploma and Transcript of Records;
- e. Endorsement or nomination letter from the applicant's head of office or professional organization or endorsement from the reference cited in the CV, whichever is applicable.

Section 6. Initial Review of Applications

6.1 Initial review of applications shall be carried out by the Secretariat. It shall entail checking for completeness and validity of the submitted application package against the general requirements listed in Article IV, Section 4 of this Circular.

6.2 Applications received before the deadline specified in the Call shall qualify for initial review and those received after the deadline will be submitted to the BAFS Executive Director for evaluation in the succeeding batch.

An applicant shall be considered eligible for the succeeding evaluation if all the eligibility criteria, as published in the Call, are met.

When applicable, the Secretariat shall send a notification of incomplete submission to the applicant who shall be requested to provide the lacking documents within five (5) working days after acknowledging receipt of the notification.

6.3 Only valid and eligible applications shall be processed. The Secretariat shall notify the applicants on the status of their application after the initial review.

Section 7. Evaluation and shortlisting of valid and eligible applications

- 7.1 The Secretariat shall endorse valid and eligible applications to the BAFS Executive Director, which shall conduct further evaluation using an Evaluation Matrix and following established procedures.
- 7.2 Eligible applicants who have been evaluated to become members of the DAPE shall be properly noted and shortlisted. The DAPE shall be grouped into two (2) thematic groups:
 - a. Food and feed safety; and
 - b. Organic agriculture and aquaculture.

Section 8. Designation of members to the DAPE

- 8.1 The BAFS Executive Director shall endorse the shortlist of eligible applicants to the Committee for their final review prior to its submission to the DA Secretary for approval of the designation.
- 8.2 The Secretariat shall notify the designated DAPE members and other eligible applicants on the outcome of the selection procedure.
- 8.3 The designated members of the DAPE shall be asked to annually submit an updated Declaration of Interest and an updated CV.
- 8.4 The process flow including the interfaces is presented in Annex D.

ARTICLE V
TERMS OF REFERENCE, TERMS OF OFFICE AND REMUNERATION

Section 9. Terms of Reference

- 9.1 The DAPE is tasked to:
 - a. Conduct risk assessments following internationally accepted procedures. The scope of risk assessment excludes those conducted for foods derived from Recombinant DNA Plants, which is covered by a separate Guidelines;
 - b. Develop scientific or technical recommendations based on the results of relevant risk assessment conducted;
 - c. Submit scientific or technical recommendations to the BAFS Executive Director and then to the Committee, for endorsement of the same to the concerned regulatory agencies; and
 - d. Participate as a resource person in the development of standards and relevant technical regulations, including risk communication, to explain the results of risk assessment conducted, whenever necessary.

Section 10. Terms of Office

- 10.1 The members of the DAPE shall be designated by the DA Secretary following publication in the DA and/or BAFS official website and/or in relevant scientific publications.

The designation of members to the DAPE shall be in the form of a Department Special Order.

- 10.2 The DAPE members who fail to submit an updated Declaration of Interest and CV shall be deemed inactive members and will not be tapped to conduct any assessment until submission.

Section 11. Remuneration

- 11.1 The DAPE shall be entitled to honoraria, per diem and traveling expenses for every meeting and relevant activities attended in relation to their functions, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.

**ARTICLE VI
PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNICAL
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Section 12. Submission of requests or proposals

- 12.1 The DAPE shall issue scientific or technical recommendations through the BAFS Executive Director and for approval of the Committee:
- a. at the request of the DA Secretary and/or the Chair of the Committee, with respect to any matter within its jurisdiction, and in all cases where legislation makes provision for the DAPE to be consulted; and
 - b. at the request of the regulatory agencies on matters falling within its jurisdiction. This will include requests for review of the risk assessments conducted by the regulatory agencies.
- 12.2 Requests for scientific or technical recommendations from the DA Secretary and/or Chair of the committee shall be submitted to the BAFS Executive Director.

Requests from regulatory agencies should be submitted to the Chair through the Alternate Chair, copy furnished to the Secretariat for processing. Requests shall be accompanied by documents providing background information explaining the issue to be addressed, data gathered or results of risk assessments conducted.

- 12.3 Upon checking the completeness of the submitted documents referred to in 12.2, the Secretariat shall determine the availability of experts from the

DAPE who will compose the *ad hoc* Task Force that will carry out the assessment. The Secretariat shall recommend the members of the *ad hoc* Task Force to the BAFS Executive Director for confirmation.

- 12.4 Where different requests are made on the same nature of the issue or where the request is not in accordance with paragraph 12.1, or is unclear, the DAPE may either seek for further information or propose amendments to the request in consultation with the proponent. Unavailability of relevant studies or references may constitute holding the request on 'pending' status. Justifications for the 'pending' status shall be given to the proponent that made the request.
- 12.5 In circumstances where the DAPE has already delivered a scientific or technical recommendation on the specific topic, it shall accept a similar request on the basis of new information that justifies re-examination. The decision shall be properly communicated to the proponent through the BAFS Executive Director.

Section 13. Assessment and Issuance of Scientific or Technical Recommendation

- 13.1 For each request for scientific or technical recommendation, the Committee, upon due consideration of the recommendation of the BAFS Executive Director, shall approve the creation and composition of an *ad hoc* Task Force that will conduct the assessment.
- 13.2 Relevant scientific and/or technical information, which may include data supplied by the regulatory agencies, academic and research institutions or other reputable institutions, and information coming from peer-reviewed journals, shall be made available to the *ad hoc* Task Force to assist the conduct of assessment.
- 13.3 The *ad hoc* Task Force shall closely coordinate with all relevant organizations and institutions in the collection of data necessary in the conduct of risk assessment.
- 13.4 The regulatory agencies shall ensure prompt transmittal of the data required by the *ad hoc* Task Force, through the Secretariat.
- 13.5 If there is a need for additional data, the Secretariat, upon recommendation from the DAPE, shall assist in the submission of a formal request for such to relevant agencies or launch an open call for data on the DA and/or BAFS official website.
- 13.6 Where the regulatory agencies have identified emerging risks, the *ad hoc* Task Force will conduct assessment based on the submissions or may request additional information from relevant government agencies through the Secretariat. Relevant government agencies shall reply as a matter of urgency and forward any relevant information in their possession.

- 13.7 The *ad hoc* Task Force shall draft scientific or technical recommendations based on the submitted assessment of individual member. The ensuing scientific or technical recommendation shall be adopted by consensus of the *ad hoc* Task Force.
- 13.8 The adopted scientific or technical recommendation shall be submitted to the BAFS Executive Director and then to the Committee prior to its official endorsement to the concerned regulatory agencies.
- 13.9 The process flow for the formulation of scientific or technical recommendations including the interfaces is presented in Annex E.

Section 14. Commissioning of Scientific and other relevant studies

- 14.1 Using the best independent scientific resources available or other relevant studies, the DAPE may recommend, for consideration and endorsement of the Committee, the commissioning of scientific or other relevant studies when deemed necessary for the performance of its mission.

Such studies shall be commissioned by the Department in an open and transparent manner and following relevant rules and regulations.

The DAPE shall seek to avoid duplication with other DA research programs and other relevant government agencies (i.e. DOST, DOH) and shall foster cooperation through appropriate coordination.

**ARTICLE VII
TRANSPARENCY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COMMUNICATION**

Section 15. *Transparency.* The following information shall be made available at the DA and/or BAFS official website:

- 15.1 scientific or technical recommendations approved by the Committee; and
15.2 annual report of activities.

Section 16. *Confidentiality.* Members of the DAPE, including the Secretariat, shall sign a written commitment not to divulge to third parties, submitted confidential information relevant to the conduct of assessment. Furthermore, members of the DAPE including the Secretariat even after their duties have ceased shall be subject to the requirements of confidentiality.

Section 17. Delivery of results and scientific or technical recommendations

- 17.1 The DAPE, shall communicate the results of assessments and scientific or technical recommendations to the Committee Chair for information of the regulatory agencies to support their risk management options.

- 17.2 The DAPE, through the BAFS Executive Director, shall act in close collaboration with the regulatory agencies and other relevant government agencies to promote the coherence in the risk communication process.
- 17.3 The DAPE, BAFS Executive Director, shall ensure appropriate cooperation with DA Regional Offices and other interested parties with regard to public information campaigns.

**ARTICLE VIII
ANNEXES**

All annexes or any part thereof referred to in this Circular are deemed integral part of this document. Any changes in the annexes are subject to the approval of the Committee and the Secretary.

**ARTICLE IX
SEPARABILITY CLAUSE**

If any portion of this Circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other portions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

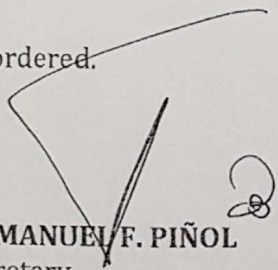
**ARTICLE X
REPEALING CLAUSE**

All other Circulars, Orders, issuances, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed, amended, modified or superseded accordingly.

**ARTICLE XI
EFFECTIVITY**

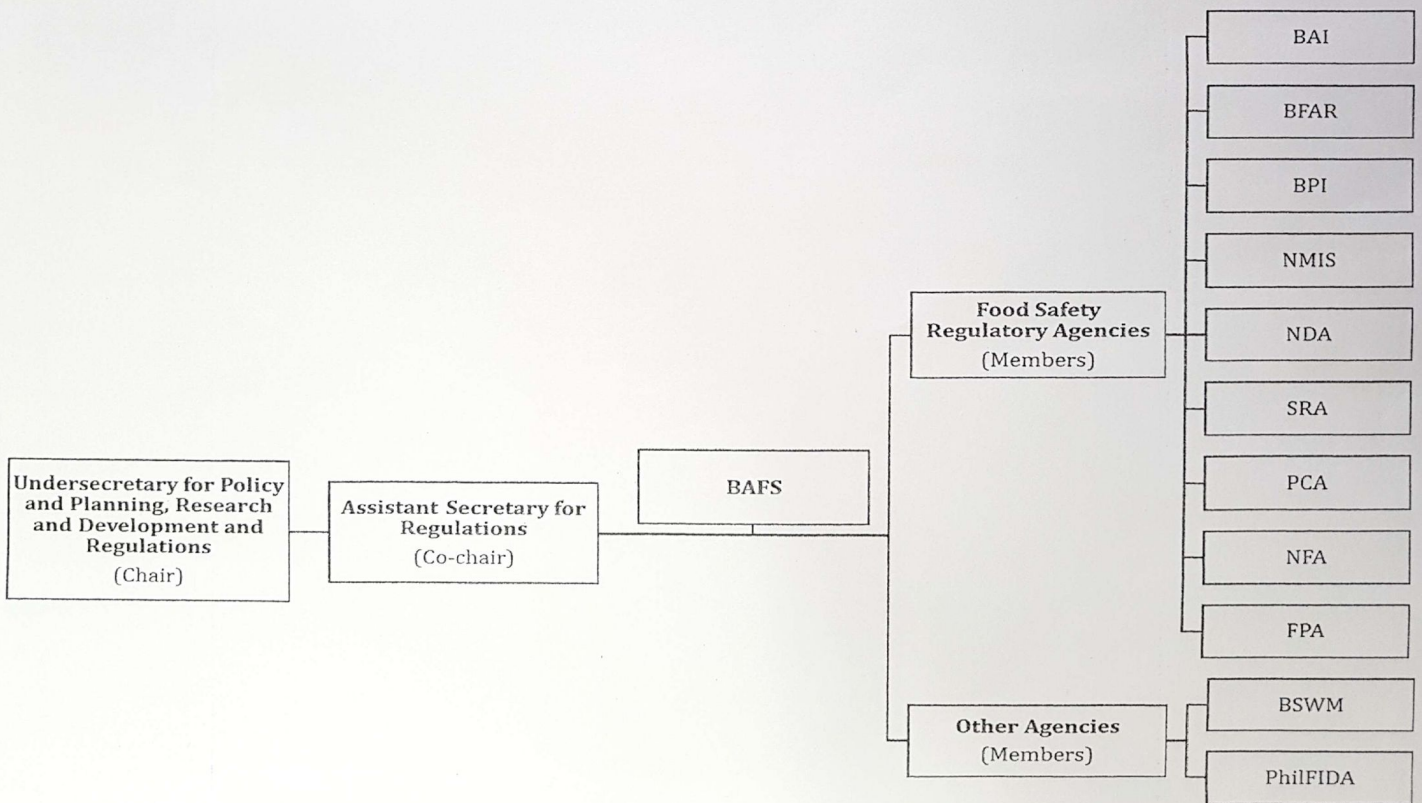
This Circular shall take effect fifteen days (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation and its filing with the National Administrative Register of the University of the Philippines Law Center.

So ordered.


EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL
Secretary

ANNEX A

Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee



**ANNEX B
APPLICATION FORM**

Personal Information

Name: _____
Last
First
Middle

Title: ___ Dr. ___ Prof. ___ Mr. ___ Ms. ___ Other Title: _____

Professional Affiliation: _____

Office Address: _____

Position: _____

Contact Details: _____
Telephone No.
Mobile Phone No.
Email Address

Highest Degree and Date Earned: _____

University where the highest degree was obtained: _____

Specialization(s): _____

Research Interest(s), if applicable: _____

By signing this form, you agree:

- a.) To abide by the provisions of the Department of Agriculture Circular No. ____ Series of 2016 re: GUIDELINES ON THE CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE POOL OF EXPERTS (DAPE) AND THE ISSUANCE OF SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS;
- b.) to the publication of your name and expertise on the DA and/or BAFS official website if approved as an expert in the pool;
- c.) not to divulge any confidential information relevant to the conduct of assessment

Signature over Printed Name
Date

Kindly attach the following as supporting documents:

- Declaration of Interest;
- Curriculum Vitae (CV); and
- Diploma and Transcript of Records of the highest degree obtained.

ANNEX C
DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR DAPE

Declaration of interest is made by the applicant and shall be published in the BAFS official website.

A Declaration of Interest contains details of current activities and those completed in the last five (5) years (including the activities of your family, i.e., parents, siblings, spouse and children) and are grouped in the following categories:

- (a) Employment;
- (b) Consultancy;
- (c) Research funding sources;
- (d) Membership to a Scientific Advisory Body;
- (e) Intellectual property rights; and
- (f) Other membership or affiliation.

Eligible applicants who shall become members of the DAPE shall annually submit an updated Declaration of Interest, highlighting changes in any of the categories mentioned above.

**ANNEX D
PROCESS FLOW FOR THE SELECTION OF
APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE DAPE**

Responsible	Key Steps	Interfaces
BAFS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Call for Experts - Expression of Interest </div>	Postings, Public Fora
Interested Experts	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Application </div>	Application Form, Curriculum Vitae, Declaration of Interest, Diploma and Transcript of Records, Endorsement or Nomination letter
BAFS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Application Review </div>	Documentary Requirements
BAFS, Committee	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Complete submission? </div>	Notice of Incomplete Submission
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Evaluation and Shortlisting </div>	Evaluation Matrix Proposed List of Candidates for endorsement
DA Secretary	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Designation of Members to the DAPE </div>	Special Order for the Designation of the Members of the DAPE, Publications

**ANNEX E
PROCEDURE FOR THE FORMULATION OF
SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

I. Receipt of Requests / Proposals

Responsible	Key Steps	Interfaces
BAFS, Committee, Regulatory Agencies	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Proposals / Request for Scientific or Technical Recommendation </div>	Proposals, Request Letters (including available risk assessment results for review of the DAPE)
BAFS DAPE, Committee	<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Confirmation of the Experts </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 80%;"> Possible for Assessment? </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px;">NO</div> </div> </div> </div>	Feedback Letter
BAFS	<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Prioritization and Registration </div> </div>	Confirmation Letter Prioritization Criteria, Publications

II. Assessment and Issuance of Scientific or Technical Recommendation

Responsible	Key Steps	Interfaces
BAFS DAPE, Committee,	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Setting up of Ad Hoc Task Force</div>	Special Order, Minutes of Meeting
BAFS, DAPE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Collection and Review of Data</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <pre> graph TD A[Collection and Review of Data] --> B{Data sufficient?} B -- NO --> A B -- YES --> C[Formulation of Scientific or Technical Recommendation] </pre> </div>	Minutes of Meeting
BAFS, DAPE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Formulation of Scientific or Technical Recommendation</div>	Draft Scientific or Technical Recommendation
BAFS DAPE, Committee	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Finalization and Endorsement of Technical Recommendation</div>	Final Draft Scientific or Technical Recommendation
BAFS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Publication and Information Dissemination</div>	