BHARAT
GOOD AGRICULRAL PRACTICES
(Bharat GAP)

Programme Manual
Bharat GAP Certification

राष्ट्रीय बागवानी बोर्ड
National Horticulture Board

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Bharat Good Agricultural Practices Certification Programme

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Programme manual

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Content

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The production of safe food is essential for protecting consumers from the hazards of foodborne diseases and is important both in the domestic food business as well as for increasing competitiveness in export markets. Hazards may occur at different stages of the food chain starting right from the primary production, e.g. residues above permitted levels, microbial contaminants and heavy metals. It therefore becomes important to address food safety right from food production at farm level. Implementing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) during on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe agricultural products is of immense importance for ensuring a safe food supply chain. The concept of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is getting wider acceptance in rapidly changing and globalizing food economy that involves all the process steps in food production and food security, food safety and quality, and the environmental sustainability of agriculture. GAP applies recommendations and available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe and healthy food and non-food agricultural products.

1.2 Definition

GAP, as defined by FAO (2016), are a “collection of principles to apply for on-farm production and post production processes, resulting in safe and healthy food and non-food agricultural products, while taking into account economic, social and environmental sustainability.”

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are based on following four principles:

- Economic viability,
- Environmental sustainability,
- Social acceptability and
- Food safety and quality

1.3 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Scheme

Quality Council of India, operates a certification scheme as IndGAP and the same has been benchmarked with the GlobalGAP. Global GAP is also operating through IndGAP and independently. But the acceptability of these schemes are very low mainly because of its complexity, amount of compliances needed, documentation and prohibitively high cost. To make the system of GAP acceptable in the country and promote the certification idea in the domestic market it is necessary that a simplified certification system, based on same standards but with simplified documentation and compliance verification process.

1.4 Bharat GAP

Therefore, it is propose to launch "Bharat GAP" certification system, based on the internationally acceptable standards but with simplified adoption process, documentation and compliance verification mechanism. The Bharat GAP shall emphasize mainly on food safety and hygiene, product quality, workers safety and traceability.

The Scheme will be driven by a multi-stakeholder **"Steering Committee"** under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW). Standards and compliance assessment procedures have been drawn keeping international best practices in mind to ensure parity among different systems for unrestricted trade within the country and across the borders. The system of certification is based on guidelines provided in the international standard, ISO 17067, which guides development of product certification schemes worldwide and the certification bodies approved under the Scheme would be accredited as per international standard, ISO 17065.

It is expected that the Scheme "Bharat GAP certification" would benefit not only the farmers of crops (including fresh fruits and vegetables) and processors across the entire value chain for food products but would also provide new avenues for accessing premium markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. The consumers will also be benefitted with assured and traceable guarantee for the label claims.

1.5 Definitions

For the purpose of implementation of certification programme for Good Agricultural Practices, their process and products, the guidelines laid down under the scheme "Bharat GAP Certification" would be followed. For the purpose of this scheme, the following definitions shall apply:

1.5.1 Accreditation - Accreditation means a procedure adopted by the National Accreditation Body for ascertaining the competence of a Certification Body to certify Good Agricultural Practices and their products as per the National Programme for Good Agricultural Practices.

1.5.2 Accreditation Body - National Accreditation Body constituted under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), Govt of India for accreditation of certification bodies under Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP) shall be the accreditation body of the scheme.

1.5.3 Accredited Certification Agency - An agency accredited by National Accreditation Body under the scheme for certification of Good Agricultural Practices.

1.5.4 Accreditation Programme - The accreditation programme is the programme of the Certification Body that has been approved by the Accreditation Body under the scheme "Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP)" based on its compliance with the scheme.

1.5.5 Accreditation Body Logo - Logo used by an National Accreditation Body under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) to identify itself

1.5.6 Accreditation Certificate - Formal document or a set of documents, stating that accreditation has been granted for the defined scope by the National Accreditation Body under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)

1.5.7 Accreditation Symbol - Symbol issued by an accreditation body to be used by accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) to indicate their accredited status.

1.5.8 Accreditation Secretariat - An office under the direct control of programme controller that provides all secretarial services to programme controller, National Steering Committee and National Accreditation Body. National Horticulture Board, an autonomous Board under Department of Agriculture and farmers Welfare (DA&FW) shall be the accreditation secretariat for the Bharat GAP certification programme.

1.5.9 Appeal - Request by a **CB** for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the accreditation body related to its desired accreditation status

NOTE: Adverse decisions include:

a. Refusal to accept an application,
b. Refusal to proceed with an assessment,
c. Corrective action requests,
d. Changes in accreditation scope,
e. Decisions to deny, suspend, or withdraw accreditation, and
f. Any other action that impedes the attainment of accreditation.

1.5.10 Assessment - Process undertaken by the Accreditation Body to assess the competence of a CB, based on particular standard(s) and/or other normative documents and for a defined scope of accreditation

1.5.11 Assessor - Person assigned by the accreditation body to perform, either alone or as part of an assessment team, for assessment of a CB

1.5.12 Complaint - Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization, to the accreditation body, relating to the activities of that accreditation body or of an accredited CB, where a response is expected

1.5.13 Certification - Certification shall refer to the procedure by which the accredited Certification Body by way of a Scope Certificate assures that the production or processing system of the operator has been assessed and conforms to the specified requirements as envisaged in the “certification programme”.

1.5.14 Certification Body - The Certification Body is the body responsible for inspection and certification of the operators as per standards prescribed under “Bharat Local Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP)”

1.5.15 Certification Trade mark or Logo - Certification Trade Mark shall mean the “Bharat-GAP” Logo, which is owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW).

1.5.16 Certification Programme - Shall mean the system operated by a Certification Body in accordance with the criteria for carrying out certification of conformity as laid down herein.

1.5.17 Compliance - Compliance shall mean the adherence to the norms laid down under the "Bharat Local Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP)"

1.5.18 Consultancy - Consultancy shall mean the advisory service for operations under Good Agricultural Practices, independent from inspection and certification procedures.

1.5.19 Consignment - Consignment shall mean a quantity of product(s) under one or more HS codes covered in a single transaction certificate of the Certification Body, transported by same means of transport for domestic trade, local sales, export and import of organic products.

1.5.20 Conformity Assessment Report - Conformity assessment report shall mean the assessment report of the Evaluation Committee/ Assessor on the accredited Certification Body as per the requirement of ISO17065 and the "Bharat Local Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP)".

1.5.21 Contamination - Pollution of Bharat-GAP product or land; or contact with any material that would render the product unsuitable for Bharat-GAP certification.

1.5.22 Evaluation - Evaluation is the process of systematic assessment of the performance of an applicant body seeking accreditation/renewal of accredited Certification Body to the extent it fulfils specific requirements under the scheme.

1.5.23 Evaluation Committee - A committee constituted under the scheme for carrying out audits for assessing and evaluating the applicant bodies and accredited Certification Bodies for compliance to the requirements / Standards prescribed in the scheme.

1.5.24 Facilitating agency/ Service Provider – A agency hired by the grower group to assist in management and implementation of Internal Control System, including data management on traceability platform on behalf of Local Group/(s).

1.5.25 Grower Groups - Grower Groups are organized group of producers who intend to adopt Good Agricultural Practices in accordance with the "Bharat Local Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat-GAP)".

1.5.26 Inspection - Inspection is a process of physical verification by an authorised inspector of accredited certification body to verify that the performance of an operation is in accordance with the production, processing and chain of custody as per standards specified under the scheme.

1.5.27 Inspector - A person assigned by the accredited Certification Body for physical assessment /evaluation of the operator at the site of activity.

1.5.28 Internal Review - Internal review is an assessment done by the accredited Certification Body on the working of its certification programme.

1.5.29 Internal Control System - An Internal Control System (ICS) is the part of a documented quality assurance system that allows an external certification body to

delegate the periodic inspection of individual group members to an identified body or unit within the certified operator.

1.5.30 ISO/IEC 17065 - Are the general requirements for Certification Bodies operating product/ process certification system.

1.5.31 Labelling - Labelling shall mean any written, printed or graphic representation that is depicted on the product label in conformity of product claim and regulatory requirements including the certification of its status as Bharat-GAP.

1.5.32 Management review - Management review is the evaluation of the overall performance of an organization's quality management system carried out by the organization's top management on a regular basis to identify improvement opportunities.

1.5.33 Non-conformity - Non Conformity is a condition when a product, process, procedure, system, or structure deviates from requirements of the standard.

1.5.34 Non-compliance - Bharat GAP principle in the checklist that is not fulfilled according to the associated criteria. Non-compliances only occur if a Minor Must or Recommendation is not fulfilled.

1.5.35 Non-conformance - When a Bharat GAP principle that is necessary for obtaining a Bharat GAP certificate is infringed. For example, a producer who does not comply with 100% of the Major Must principles and criteria and/or 95% of the Minor Must principles and criteria is in a situation of non-conformance. Non-conformance may also refer to a deviation from the critical limits set for a critical control point, which results in a hazard. Non-conformance can also result into breach of contract or its provisions.

1.5.36 Operator - A farmer, processor, trader, handler or exporter who is under Bharat-GAP certification.

1.5.37 Operating Manual - Operating manual is a document describing the standard procedures followed by the accredited Certification Bodies for its operations.

1.5.38 Quality manual - Quality manual is a document containing the quality policy, quality objectives, structure and description of the quality system of an organization. A quality manual explains how the requirements of a quality standard are to be met and identifies the person responsible for quality management functions.

1.5.39 Risk Assessment - Risk assessment is a process to identify potential risk in production and handling systems of Bharat-GAP certified products in order to check the infringement in the entire process for maintaining the true nature of the produce/product.

1.5.40 Scope Certificate - A certificate issued by the accredited Certification Body to its operators annually to demonstrate the compliance of their process and products as per standards under the scheme for their specific activity in terms of production, processing and trading.

1.5.41 Surveillance - Set of activities, except reassessment, to monitor the continued fulfilment by accredited CBs of requirements for accreditation

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

a) Enquiries from the accreditation body to the CB on aspects concerning the accreditation;
b) Reviewing the declarations of the CB with respect to what is covered by the accreditation;
c) Requests to the CB to provide documents and records (e.g. audit reports, results of internal quality control for verifying the validity of CB services, complaints records, management review records); and
d) Monitoring the performance of the CB (such as results of participating in proficiency testing).

1.5.42 Transaction Certificate (TC) - A certificate issued by the accredited Certification Body to its operator for every sale of its product to the buyer or transfer of the product under certification process from one place to another.

1.5.43 Unannounced audit - A surprise audit on the operator premises without informing the operator to assess the compliance and continuity of principles and criteria and other certification requirements. Unannounced audit shall count towards annual renewal audits. Only 10% of the total operators shall be subjected to unannounced audit

Chapter 2
Institutional Structure

2. Governing Institutional Structure

2.1 Scope

The "Scheme National Programme for Good Agricultural Practices (BHARAT GAP) (hereinafter referred to as 'the Scheme') provides for an institutional structure for the implementation of the scheme involving various organizations and committees. The aims of the scheme include:

- To create an institutional structure for creation, development, implementation, evaluation and surveillance of the scheme.
- To develop product and process standards for various scope categories in line with the international best practices and upgradation of standards from time to time.
- To develop accreditation and certification programme and procedures for effective implementation of the scheme.
- To evaluate and undertake surveillance at all the stages of certification programme to maintain integrity and sanctity
- To facilitate certification as per the standards and compliance assessment procedures of the scheme.
- To develop, manage and maintain end-to-end traceability of the entire certification process through on-line traceability platform.

2.2 Objective

The objective of this document is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of various organizations/committees involved in the operation of the Scheme.

2.3 Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare as controller and NHB as scheme owner

The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, headed by the Secretary Agriculture and Farmers Welfare shall be overall control authority of Bharat GAP programme and shall be reviewed and monitored by "Apex Review and Monitoring Committee". National Horticulture Board an autonomous body under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India shall be the scheme owner and implementation secretariat.

2.4 Apex Review and Monitoring Committee

Apex review and Monitoring Committee shall comprise of following members:

i.	Secretary DA&FW	Chairman
ii.	Additional Secretary, DA&FW	Member
iii.	CEO, FSSAI	Member

iv.	Dy Director General, ICAR (Horti)	Member
v.	Joint Secretary (EP Agri), DoC	Member
vi.	Joint Secretary (Hort) DA&FW	Member
vii.	Managing Director, NHB	Member Secretary

Roles and responsibilities of Apex Review and Monitoring Committee

i. Overall controller of the Bharat GAP programme
ii. Apex policy making and programme steering
iii. Review, monitoring and periodic assessment
iv. Programme improvement and new intervention
v. Constitution of Steering-cum-oversight Committee
vi. Appellate body against complaints of NAB

2.5 National Steering-cum-oversight Committee

The Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (BHARAT GAP) programme will be steered by "Steering-cum-oversight Committee" (hereinafter referred to as 'NSC'). The NSC shall comprise of following members:

i.	Additional Secretary, DA&FW	Chairman
ii.	Joint Secretary (Horti) DA&FW	Member
iii.	Dy Director General ICAR (Horti)	Member
iv.	Asst Director General, ICAR PP	Member
v.	Chairman, APEDA	Member
vi.	Representative Spices Board	Member
vii.	Representatives of states/ SAUs 2 No.	Member
viii.	Representative of DG, NIAM, Jaipur	Member
ix.	Representative of Industry and Farmer groups	Member
x.	Managing Director, NHB	Member secretary

Roles and responsibilities:

i. Approval of programme structure, manual, recommend amendments,
ii. Constitution of National Accreditation Body
iii. Assessment of feedback and recommendations for improvement
iv. Consultation with industry and stakeholders and suggest improvements
v. Monitoring and supervision of programme implementation
vi. Annual/ periodic review and feedback to Apex Review and Monitoring Committee.

The NSC can co-opt members/ representations of other Ministry/ Department or technical experts from specialty domain as per the requirement. All members of NSC from S. No. i to vi shall be ex-officio being represented by their position in the respective Ministry/ Department/ Institution. Members at S. No. vii & ix and co-opted members (if any) will be nominated for fixed period of time or as notified by the DA&FW from time to time.

The Apex Review and Monitoring Committee and National Steering-cum-Oversight Committee shall be serviced by the National Horticulture Board (NHB).

2.6 National Accreditation Body for Bharat GAP (NAB BGAP)

The Joint Secretary (MIDH), DA&FW shall be the Chairperson of the NAB. Managing Director, NHB shall be the member Secretary of the NAB Bharat GAP and shall consist of members representing Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, Department of Commerce, FSSAI, Quality Council of India and various Commodity Boards (such as the APEDA, Coconut Development Board, Tea Board, Spices Board, Coffee Board).

The NAB shall have the power to co-opt members as per the requirement from technical fields and/or as notified by the Chairperson, NAB from time to time. Roles and responsibilities of the NAB shall include:

(i) Constitution of Technical Committees
(ii) Approval of programme structure and documents including amendments & modifications.
(iii) Periodic supervision, monitoring and surveillance of the programme implementation.
(iv) Review, upgradation and harmonization of the programme as per the requirements from time to time.
(v) Accreditation of certification programmes of the Certification Bodies
(vi) Evaluation, surveillance and monitoring of the accredited certification Bodies
(vii) Extension, renewal or suspension of the accredited certification bodies
(viii) Any follow up action or punitive action needed against certification bodies as per the recommendation of evaluation/ surveillance committees.
(ix) Any other responsibilities assigned by the Department of Agriculture and farmers Welfare from time to time

The quorum for NAB meeting shall be 30% of the total strength, but in any case not less than 3 in addition to Member Secretary.

2.7 Technical Committee

The NAB shall constitute need based Technical Committees (TCs) comprising of experts, practitioners and industry representatives. Technical Committee shall be constituted for specific purpose and stands dissolved, once the recommendations are submitted. Necessary ToRs for such committees shall be decided by the NAB.

2.8 Evaluation Committee

The NAB and accreditation secretariat shall constitute Evaluation Committees to evaluate the implementation of certification programme. The NAB shall approve a panel of experts

qualified in the relevant field and properly trained and shall be well versed in audit procedures for evaluation process of assessment of Bharat GAP. These experts shall be drawn from organizations or independent auditors that are not involved in certification activities. The Evaluation Committee shall be drawn from this panel of experts and shall comprise of three experts. Two experts shall constitute the quorum. Such Evaluation Committee will evaluate the Certification Body at least once in a year and shall submit its evaluation report to NHB after completion of the evaluation. The Certification Body shall not be evaluated by the same evaluation committee member for two consecutive years, to ensure transparency and professionalism.

Chapter 3
Crop Production Requirements and Guidelines

3.1 Scope

3.1.1 This document describes additional certification rules and guidance for implementation of Bharat Good Agricultural Practices in crop production process. The rules and guidance are applicable to crops and commodities published by the accreditation Secretariat from time to time.

3.1.2 These rules and guidance shall be applicable for following categories of product and processes:

a. Seeds and planting material (not for human consumption) for procurement and production
b. Cultivation aspects such as agronomy, diversity, nutrient management, and plant protection
c. Harvest related rules and exceptions,
d. Postharvest handling including on-farm processing,
e. Sales and trading
f. Traceability

3.1.3 Applicable production systems include;

a. Cultivated in open fields
b. Under protected cultivation like poly tunnels, shade nets, green houses, with or without soil.
c. Hydroponic,
d. Aeroponics

3.1.4 Applicable crops and their products being covered under Bharat GAP

a. Fresh fruits and vegetables as per exhaustive list published by the accreditation secretariat and amended from time to time (to be available on certification portal)
b. Flowers and Ornamentals
c. Combination crops provided they are being grown as intercrops along with fresh fruits and vegetables using similar practices and same input factors.

3.1.5 Only products that are produced by producers themselves will be certified. Producers cannot receive certification for the production of products that are not produced by themselves.

3.1.6 Bharat GAP certification rules shall not apply on wild crops and wild harvest collection.

3.2 Package of Practices for crop production

Recommended package of practices developed by national and local research institutes such as ICAR institutes, State Agricultural Universities (SAU), Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) or as recommended by State Agriculture Departments shall form the basis of cultivation practices.

3.3 Site selection and Soil health

Site should be free from aerial, water borne, mineral, metal, and industrial waste contamination with known history preferably for last 5 years, but documentation should be available at least for last one year. Should not be prone for flooding or inundation. In case if any risk is identified, mitigation measures to be implemented. Adequate arrangements shall be in place for waste management.

3.4 Seeds and Planting Material

Preferably recommended and approved verities to be taken. Seeds and planting material shall be healthy and free from diseases. In case of Genetically modified varieties, only approved varieties shall be used with adequate measure to not allow their mixing with non-GM seeds/ produce and client shall be informed about the GMO status.

3.5 Soil health management

Soil health to be maintained by time-to-time application of mature compost or other applicable organic and biological processes. Recycling the crop and cattle waste through composting and/ or mulching should be resorted. Diversity is the key to soil health, therefore intercropping, multi-cropping and crop rotations shall find place in crop planning. Soil tillage including summer ploughing shall be as per the recommended practices but precautions to be taken to not allow soil erosion. Soil and substrate fumigation or soil solarization can be done under exceptional situations and under the recommendations of technical experts.

3.6 Nutrient management

Recommended package of practices should be the basis of nutrient applications. Soil test-based soil corrections for pH or micronutrients may also be considered. Balance use of chemical fertilizers along with organic manures, biofertilizers and biostimulants as per recommended Package of Practices (PoPs) to be adopted. Only approved chemical fertilizers as per prevailing law to be used. Traditional organic and natural farming practices can be used.

To avoid weed seed infestation and microbial contamination risk, compost shall be prepared through aerobic composting where temperature of the pile during composting process rises and help kill weed seeds.

While selecting doses, application methodology and time of application it shall be ensured that their application do not create any contamination risk to

environment, water bodies or animals and nutrient use efficiency is maintained.

Use of sewage sludge or compost made from sewage, sludge or city waste is prohibited.

3.7 Water management

Water quality shall be of irrigation water grade. Water analysis shall be done on annual basis to monitor the quality.

Irrigation should be preferably through efficient irrigation systems such as closed water channels, pipes, sprinklers and/ or drip irrigation. In case of open channels, strategies shall be in place to avoid wastage and over-irrigation.

Sewage water, industrial waste water or water having high salt concentration shall not be used.

Efforts should be made to conserve rainwater through farm ponds or percolation tanks.

3.8 Plant Protection

Integrated pest management where physical, mechanical, cultural, and biological practices of pest management are preferred in first place and use of chemical alternatives is resorted to only as last option are to be adopted.

Management of diversity, intercropping, multi-cropping, crop rotation, use of insectary and flowering plants on borders and cover crops shall be integrated in the cropping plan. Augmentation of friendly insects and bioagents may also be explored. Cultivators should be aware of IPM practices, identification of pests, ETL and AESA based management practices.

Biological control products such as use of microbial biopesticides shall be the preferred approach. Traditional botanical pesticides can also be used.

3.9 Choice for Plant Protection Products (PPP)

Use of chemical Plant Protection Products shall be as per the recommended package of practices from ICAR, SAUs, KVK and central/ State Agriculture/ Horticulture Departments.

Only the pesticides registered by the CIBRC and recommended for specific crops to be used in recommended doses at recommended time. Banned pesticides or expired pesticides shall not be used. Label recommendations for crops, doses and time of application shall be adhered.

In cases where no label claims are available for a crop then only the recommended PPPs from ICAR institutes or Sate Agricultural Universities shall be used in recommended doses, time and frequency.

Preharvest interval as prescribed by CIBRC and local research institutes (ICAR, SAUs, KVKs) shall be known to producers and shall be adhered. Producers are required to display the list of permitted and recommended pesticides, their recommended doses, time of applications and preharvest interval at prominent places.

3.10 Storage and Handling of PPPs

All PPPs shall be stored in separate places away from fertilizing and harvested products. Their storage shall not contaminate the soil and environment and shall not pose risk to humans and animals.

Application equipment shall be in good working condition and while mixing with water or diluent label recommendations shall be followed.

3.11 Outsourcing of farming operations/ Sub-contactors

Any activity on farm directly related to production process or its postharvest handling can be outsourced or sub-contracted. Producers need to ensure that all outsourced activities and sub-contractors including the manpower and machines deployed comply relevant principles and criteria and are subject to audit by CB. But hiring of labour or machine for any activity directly under the supervision of producer is not treated as outsourcing.

3.12 Harvesting

Harvesting machines and equipment shall be clean and free from debris of non-certified fraction. Harvested produce shall be kept in clean containers/ bags and stored in clean and ventilated godowns.

Systems and procedures shall be in place to protect Bharat GAP certified harvest products from contamination and comingling with non-certified produce. Special care is to be taken in cases of parallel production. Separate harvesting and threshing spaces away from non-certified produce shall be used and stored. While handling the postharvest produce all efforts to be made that produce do not get contaminated with foreign materials such as stone, sand, insects, glass, plastic, debris etc.

Storage conditions shall be as per the temperature and humidity requirement of the produce.

Adequate pest control measures shall be taken for the protection of harvested produce from rodents, microbial and other abiotic and biotic factors.

3.13 Harvest Exclusion

If produce is sold in the field before harvest and the buyer is responsible for harvesting, the buyer shall also be required to register for Bharat GAP Certification and follow standard requirements. In cases where buyer do not wish to register for Bharat GAP certification the harvested produce shall not qualify for Bharat GAP certification.

"Harvest exclusion" applies where all (100% quantity of all grades excluding wastage quantity) produce does not belong to the producer anymore at some point of time prior to harvest commencing and the producer has no control over the harvesting process. It is also not an activity that is subcontracted by the producer.

For continuation of Bharat GAP certification under the harvest buyer, the producer shall apply for exclusion from its scope, per product during registration with detailed justification and inclusion in the scope of buyer. The certification body (CB) will make the decision as to whether harvesting may be excluded or not based on the following requirements. The producer shall have a contract with the buyer that states that the harvester / buyer will do all of the following:

- Take ownership of the produce before harvesting
- Take responsibility for ensuring that harvest takes place only after the Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI) has been observed
- Handle the produce after harvest (not just during harvest)
- Buy all the produce (harvest exclusion is not possible if the producer harvests some part of the crop and sells another part before harvest)
- If the producer does not know the buyer at the time of registration with Bharat GAP., the following shall be provided:
  - A declaration from the producer to inform the buyer (new owner who is harvester AND post-harvest handler) about the pre-harvest interval (PHI)
  - A contract with the buyer as soon as the buyer has been identified that includes all control points. If harvesting is excluded for the producer or producer group, produce handling shall also be excluded for that producer or producer group.

3.14 Postharvest Produce exclusion

Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products such as storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances.

On Farm Drying of Spices after harvest by open yard or close cabinet dryer method is included. Details of the specific process (per product) applicable to the producer shall be included in the checklist notes.

If produce handling does not take place under the ownership of the applicant, it shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

Produce handling shall not be included when harvesting is excluded (see clause 13 'Harvest Exclusion' above).

Produce handling shall always be included as long as the product belongs to the producer during handling (by the producer or subcontractor), unless there is written evidence (contract, agreement, etc.) that the producer has no control over the packing/handling/storage, the product is not returned to the producer and the producer is not responsible for the product anymore.

If a producer does not perform product handling on farm, but at the facility of another producer who is also Bharat GAP certified (including product handling), the CB may accept another CB's certificate, or the CB may decide to perform its own inspection of the Postharvest Unit (PHU).

3.15 Parallel Production

In crop certification, parallel production (cultivation of similar or same variety crop) in one production site is not allowed unless there are distinctive visible differences detectable by the average consumer between the certified and non-certified product. CBs make detailed guidelines on such issues.

3.16 Residue Management System

3.16.1 Basic requirement for RMS

a. Residue Management System (RMS) aims to provide evidence that use of plant protection products by Bharat GAP producers complies with the MRLs prescribed under food law of trading country (FSS Act 1986 in India, available at https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Contaminants_Regulations_20_08_2020.pdf .

b. Residue Management System comprise of individuals and institutions responsible for risk assessment, sampling, testing, and publishing the test results on MRLs of the produce being certified under BHARAT GAP certification. Individuals and institutions involved in RMS shall be independent of producers.

c. RMS system under Bharat GAP can be operated by Certification Bodies, Authorized testing laboratories, independent third-party sampling and testing body duly authorized by the Accreditation Secretariat or the agencies appointed by the Accreditation Secretariat. Individual producers cannot operate their own RMS, however producer groups can operate their own RMS on their member producers. Producer groups cannot operate RMS for other group or individuals.

d. Registration under RMS is producer and crop specific. The producer needs to arrange other sampling means for those products not included in the RMS and the CB needs to evaluate that during the inspection accordingly.

3.16.2 Role and responsibilities of RMS and RMS agencies

- Risk assessment on the need for sampling from crops, produce or harvesting operations.

- Commodities, batches/ lots to be sampled and number of samples to be collected.
- Preservation of samples and safe delivery to testing labs
- Testing of samples in authorized testing laboratories.
- Capacity building of producers and producer groups on MRLs being published from time to time,
- Publishing results of tests with information/ report to certification body and accreditation body.
- All RMS results shall be published on the Bharat GAP certification portal.

3.16.3 Sampling Bodies

a. **First party sampling** – When the individual producer or producer group member takes the sample from its own production. In such cases while CB may accept the sampling for certification purpose but this cannot constitute RMS test.
b. **Second party sampling** – When a separate but identifiable part of an larger organization that is involved in production, processing or trading of Bharat GAP produce collects samples. Second party sampling bodies provide sampling services only to their related organization. A second-party sampling body may form a part of a user or supplier organization, or an intermediate or end customer of the products sampled. Producer group RMS also falls under this category.
c. **Third party sampling** – Third party sampling organization is separate and independent organization, that is not part of purchase, supply, production and produce ownership. Inspection and certification bodies or agencies authorised by the Accreditation Secretariat shall be deemed third party sampling organizations.

3.16.4 Risk Assessment

a. Risk assessment shall be done by RMS operators. Producers (individual or group) cannot undertake risk assessment of their own production system.
b. The risk assessment shall include all relevant factors into consideration such as crop/product, climatic conditions, history, active ingredients (AI), size of company and number of Production sites, continuous harvest, PPP registration restrictions, destination market MRLs, etc.
c. Risk assessment to be done at most critical period and locations for each crop.
d. The sampling frequency (number of samples to be taken per crop per season) shall be based on this risk analysis.
e. The analysis method to be used by the laboratories shall be determined. The range of active ingredient of PPP used to be analysed by the laboratory shall be defined based on a crop specific risk assessment. The risk assessment shall take into consideration: -
    - PPPs that could have been applied on the crop
    - PPPs actually applied

- Any other contaminants (e.g., persistent environmental residues)

f. The risk assessment shall be carried out annually and annual monitoring plan shall include products, number of participants, number of samples, period of sampling, and type of analysis.

3.16.5 Important check points to be considered in risk assessment.

a. How many samples were drawn and tested for residues in last one year or since registration, and what is the results (how many were found to be exceeding the MRLs).
b. Name of the active ingredient found in excess of MRLs,
c. Does the active ingredient detected in exceedance was used and available on records,
d. Explanation for the active ingredients detected but not applied or not recorded,
e. What preventive measures taken to prevent recurrence of such exceedance,
f. In case if the same active ingredient is proposed to be used again then how the exceedance can be avoided and justification for its use (recommendation of research institute),
g. Does operator have knowledge of MRLs and recommendation of authorized institute,
h. Does operator propose to use new active ingredient for avoidance of MRL exceedance and justification for change,
i. Does operator use chemicals in postharvest operations. If yes note details.

3.16.6 Sampling procedure

a. Samples shall be drawn as per the Food Safety and Standards (Laboratory and Sampling Analysis) Regulation, 2011 and General Guidelines on sampling (https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Lab_Sample_Regulations_04_03_2021.pdf and https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/GENERAL_GUIDELINES_ON_SAMPLING.pdf).
b. If needed the sampling protocols of importing countries can also be adopted. Usually the sampling procedures shall be in accordance with ISO 7002 (Agricultural Products), ISO 874 (Fresh Fruit and Vegetables), or Codex Alimentarius CAC /GL 33-1999.
c. Inert bags shall be used which shall be labelled and sealed. Labelling shall be clear and should not be distorted in transit to maintain the identity and integrity.
d. Samples shall be traceable to individual producers. Preferably, the sampling location shall also be recorded (e.g. lot number, field number, greenhouse number, etc.)
e. Sampling shall take place from harvestable or harvested produce.
f. Mixed or pool of samples that contains sampled materials from more than one producers are not allowed. Composite samples are only

allowed on a risk assessment basis and first a lot is made by mixing the produce, sampled and tested and then sold as such to customers.

3.17 Testing Results

a. Testing laboratory shall be NABL accredited as per ISO 17025 and its testing protocols shall conform to ISO 17025 and approved by NABL.
a. Testing lab shall be accredited for the relevant testing methods (e.g. GCMS, LCMS).
b. The test results shall be compared with the applicable legislation (country of production and/or country of destination).
c. The test results shall always be reported in writing to the producer concerned.
d. The test results shall be traceable to the farm concerned.
e. Test carried by producer's clients are only valid if they are traceable to producers.

3.18 Procedure in cases of MRL exceedance

a. Producers shall have documented policy and procedures handling the produce where MRLs are exceeded or use of illegal/not approved plant protection products is detected.
b. Recall/Withdrawal Procedure shall apply in such cases.
c. Producers shall keep records of all actions carried out in connection with incidences related to plant protection product residues.
d. The RMS shall inform the producer and the CB in case of an exceedance of the legal limit. This shall not lead to an automatic sanctioning of the producer; however, the CB shall investigate each case and take necessary action.

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Chapter 3A
BHARAT Good Agricultural Practices (Bharat GAP) – CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Standard requirements (Principles and Criteria)

Section	Principle head	Principle	Criteria	Level
1.0	**Documentation and internal assessment**			
1.1	Internal Documentation	Have documented policy and procedures for documentation. All documents shall be maintained for a minimum period of 2 years unless required and mandated by CB/AB.	Documentation policy shall include: • Systems of documentation • Periodic review and approvals • Shall be accessible for inspection by CB. Prior to CB inspection all records shall be complete for last 3 months. Any missing record for particular control point will be non-compliance to that CP.	Minor
1.2.	Internal self-assessment	All individual operators shall undertake at least one annual internal self-assessment. All grower groups shall undertake one QMS audit and one farm assessment in respect of all its members once a year. All grower group without QMS shall undertake one internal peer appraisal for all the members at least once a year	To be conducted by authorized person(s). Internal assessment shall cover all applicable principles and compliance criteria and all applicable sites and products. External audit by CB can takes place only after one internal assessment is done and all non-conformities are closed. Corrective actions taken (if any) to be documented. Compliance to all applicable major and 95% minor control points are required	Major
2.0	**Continuous improvement plan and resource management**			
2.1	Continuous improvement plan	A continuous improvement plan is documented.	The producer shall evaluate the farming operation and identify improvements to be undertaken as assessed by the standard. The continuous improvement plan shall consist of relevant self-defined targets and describe how progress toward each target will be monitored.	Minor

			The plan may include: - Description of improvement objective - Current status, with date of initial target establishment - Planned activity - Target outcome with estimated date of achievement	
2.2	Resource management training	Individual responsible for decision making on processes, inputs and application shall be trained and competent in area of responsibility.	Competence to be demonstrated in: • Availability of technical literature on PoP from competent institutions (SAU, ICAR, KVK) • Technical competence in inputs selection, dose, application methodology & time of application • Precautions needed and protection measures to be adopted, • Records of all trainings to be maintained.	Major
3.0	**Outsourced activities and sub-contractors**			
3.1	Outsourced activities and sub-contractors	The producer ensures that outsourced activities comply with the principles and criteria of the standard which are relevant to the services provided.	The producer shall oversee the activities undertaken by the subcontractors to ensure compliance with the relevant principles and criteria in the standard of Bharat GAP	Minor
4.0	**Traceability**			
4.1	Traceability	All registered products shall be traceable back to and from the certified farms where they were produced	Documented identification and traceability system to ensure that products from different plots/ members are assigned with batch/ lot no and adequately labelled. Sales record to be maintained for all products with quantities and shall corroborate with the inventory management. Quantity, produced, stored and/ or purchased shall be recorded.	Major

			Records shall be available both for internal and external assessment.	
5.0	**Parallel production and mass balance**			
5.1	Parallel production and separation	Effective system shall be in place to identify and manage separation in time and place for certified and non-certified products during the entire production chain on farms undertaking parallel production operations	Defined procedures for identification and separation, like separate holding area, storage, identifiable labels and separate documentation for certified and non-certified products. Sales/ purchase records, inventory management and dispatches shall show effective management to prevent mixing and comingling.	Major
6.0	**Mass Balance**			
6.1	Mass balance records	Mass balancing to be demonstrated from production, process, storage to sales	Up-to-date stock shall always be maintained, and documents shall be maintained for quantities received after production, storage, sales and balance available in stock	Major
7.0	**Handling non-compliant products and recall**			
7.1	Recall and withdrawal	Documented procedures are there to manage the recall and withdrawal of products from market	Documentary evidence to be maintained for recall/ withdrawal, reasons for recall, inventory management for such products and how they are handled or disposed-off. Reasons and events for recall to be identified and measures needed to be integrated for taking due precaution in future. Details of any recall in the past one year to be made available for inspection	Major
7.2	Non-conforming products	Documented procedures are in place to manage and handle non-conforming products	Products may be non-conforming due to food safety issues, quality issues, MRL exceedance or contamination. Such products need to be	Major

			identified and segregated and redirected for alternative sales, other use or for disposal/ destruction. Products posing food safety shall not be harvested and discarded. While discarding safety and contamination issue to be considered	
8.0	**Laboratory testing**			
8.1	Lab testing	Lab testing to be done based on risk assessment, its management protocols and industry requirement	Testing laboratories shall be ISO17025 accredited. Analysis shall include water quality, plant protection chemical residues, heavy metals, microbial, chemical, and physical contamination or any other parameter identified by CB	Major
9.0	**Equipment and Devices**			
9.1	Equipment maintenance and storage	Equipment, tools, and devices are fit for purpose, maintained and stored safely. Transport vehicles also to be cleaned and disinfected before use.	Equipment, tools, and devices coming into contact with products or used in PPP or fertilizer application shall be made of materials that are safe for contact with products and designed and constructed to ensure that they can be cleaned, disinfected, and maintained to avoid contamination. Equipment maintenance, calibration (where applicable), and repairs shall be documented. Maintenance activities shall not present risks to food safety, the environment, or workers. Maintenance and calibration schedule be documented and verified at least once annually.	Minor

			Equipment shall be stored in a way that prevent product contamination and do not pose any hazard to workers, environment and food safety. Vehicles and equipment used for loading, transport, or storage of harvested products shall be cleaned and maintained and stored to prevent product contamination (animal manure, fuel spills, etc.).	
10.0	**Logo Use**			
10.1	Logo Use	The Bharat GAP word, trademark, and QR code or logo, as well as the Bharat GAP Number (BGN) are used according to "Bharat GAP trademarks use: Policy and guidelines."	The producer shall use the Bharat GAP word, trademark, and QR code or logo, as well as the BGN, Indian Location Number (ILN), or sub-ILN according to "Bharat GAP trademarks.	Major
11.0	**Hygiene management**			
11.1	Hygiene	Documented policy procedures are in place for hygiene risk assessment, management, and mitigation	Hygiene risk assessment shall cover, physical, chemical, biological risks, human waste, cross contamination from environment and nearby fields. Hygiene procedures in sync with risks shall be identified and prevention/ mitigation measures to be displayed at prominent places. Adequate facilities should be available for cleaning, washing, health assessment of workers, barring entry of sick or injured workers and availability of first aid kits.	Major

			All persons shall be trained in hygiene management and time to time refreshers are provided.	
11.2	Access to facilities	Farms shall have access to facilities such as washrooms and toilets at reasonable distance from farm. Production sites should be free from activities like smoking, chewing, drinking.	Workers shall be trained to adopt good hygiene practices and utilize facilities. No contamination through human activity be allowed.	Minor
11.3	Contamination from animal sources	The production sites shall be free from possible contamination through animal activity	Appropriate measures to be taken to avoid contamination through animal activity by managing their movement and waste disposal	Minor
11.4	Containers used for packing	Postharvest handling, storage, and transport containers to be safe and hygienic	All transport and storage containers shall be made of material that do not post any risk of contamination. All containers and surfaces coming in contact with produce shall be cleaned and disinfected and shall not be used for handling and storage of non-certified products or other contaminating products	Major
12.0	**Workers health, safety and welfare**			
12.1	Risk assessment policy	Operator shall have documented policy and procedures for assessment of risks to workers from farming operations and measures to deal with such emergencies	Possible risks may include: • Handling of machines, electrical connections, • Inflammable materials • Chemical exposure • Environmental conditions such as extreme temperatures	Major
12.2	Training and capacity building	All staff shall be provided with health and safety training according to operations and risk assessment	Training should include topics related to: • Accident and emergency response • Natural disasters • Workers health, including illness	Major

			• Exposure to chemicals and associated health protection measures • List and contact no of emergency personals such as police, fire, ambulance, doctor, nearest hospital etc • Display of mitigation measures at appropriate places	
12.3	First Aid	Operator shall provide training to personals on first aid and have ready first aid kits	Name and contact no of responsible person for first aid to be displayed at common places First aid kits to be maintained and renewed timely	Minor
12.4	Personal protective gear	Workers, visitors or handlers shall be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure they are used by the workers	• Personal protective equipment shall be as per the operational requirement, • Maintained in clean and working condition, • Protective clothes to be washed, cleaned, and disinfected, • Ensure that all workers use PPE, • Adequate stock to be maintained for disposable PPE, • Label instructions for use of chemicals to be followed	Minor
13.0	**Site Management**			
13.1	Site history	Site history for last 5 years to be studied and recorded for at least last one year. Minimum last 3 months is mandatory	It shall be ensure that the land in question has not been used for any hazardous activity or have been exposed to chemical or heavy metal contamination or used as dump site or prone to frequent flooding or have risk of getting contaminated from flow of contaminated water	Major

13.2	Risk assessment	Operator shall conduct risk assessment for all production sites and products as per policy and procedure and document	Possible risks include: • Biological, physical and chemical hazards • Microbial hazards, • cross contamination from nearby sources	Major
13.3	Risk management	Risk management plan as per identified risks should be in place, reviewed regularly and implemented	• Ensure that layout plan and flow of operations are suitable to activity and minimizes food safety risks, • Describe control measures for each risk and keep adequate mitigation material is stock, • Timely adoption of cleaning, pest control and other hygienic practices • Check possible risks and ensure mitigation measures for all sites, water sources, storages, handling facilities chemical storages, • All sites to be maintained clean, hygienic and contamination free • Effective plan and implementation of waste management protocols	Major
14.0	**Environment sustainability and Biodiversity management**			
14.1	Soil health improvement	Operator shall integrate measures for soil health management and soil organic carbon improvement	Documents and evidence should indicate that operator is using practices that add to the soil health and soil organic carbon build up. Following to be observed: • Annual soil testing reports and status of soil organic carbon • Crop residue shall not be burned and should be recycled into soil as compost or as mulch.	Recommendation

			• Use of liquid manures/ slurries for microbial enrichment of soil	
14.2	Preservation of natural ecosystems	Natural ecosystems and forests are not destroyed to transform into agricultural land	Documents and evidence shall indicate that no natural and forest area has been transformed to agricultural use. Zoom cultivation practice (cutting forests for crop cultivation in hills) is not permitted	Major
14.3	Biodiversity management	Biodiversity is managed to enable its protection and enhancement.	A generic biodiversity plan is developed and shall include: • Baseline: Initial situation of biodiversity • Measures: How to enable protection and enhance biodiversity based on the baseline status • Monitoring summary of results of the implementation of the measures • Adjustment: refining the measures based on monitoring results	Minor
14.4	Energy efficiency	Operator shall bring in strategies to reduce dependence on non-renewable sources of energy	Operators need to document and demonstrate efforts for bringing in sustainable and energy efficient technologies such as: • Use of solar energy • Integration of energy efficient irrigation systems • Use of light weight machines • Or any other activity helping in energy conservation	Recommendation
15.0	**Waste management**			

15.1	Sources of pollution	Waste products and sources of pollution to be identified and handling machines to be kept clean	Possible sources of waste products (paper, cardboard, plastic sheets and containers), unused chemicals and their solutions, oil, fuel etc to be identified, removed and contamination chances minimized, Non-degradable materials such as plastic to be removed and disposed off as per prescribed methods. All handling machines and internal transport to be cleaned and disinfected. Storages of chemicals and fuels to be kept protected and away from spillage contamination risks	Major
15.2	Organic Waste	Organic wastes to be managed for prevention of environmental contamination	Organic materials to be composted at appropriate sites and away from possible contamination risk. Composting method should be non-contaminating and aims to kill pathogens, weed seeds and pest eggs.	Recommendation
15.3	Waste water management	Waste water should be disposed in a way that minimizes the environmental, health and safety risks	Waste water from cleaning, washing, should be disposed off in a way that do not pose any contamination, health or safety risk. Drainage shall not pose risk to water sources or contaminate the delivery systems.	Minor
15.4	Food waste	Food waste to be prevented and managed	Food waste should be prevented through: • Surplus produce to be diverted for food, fodder or feed • Recycled through composting or • Processed for other uses (such as for fuel)	Recommendation

16.0	**Plant propagation material**			
16.1	Choice of varieties	Only recommended varieties to be used	Recommended varieties from local Department or research institutions to be used. Varieties/ planting material to be sourced from reliable sources or accredited nurseries	Recommendation
16.2	Disease free seeds and planting material	Disease free and resistant to prevailing pests and diseases, seeds and planting material to used	Disease free seed/ planting material as per recommendation of competent authorities to be used. Planting material to be monitored for presence of disease/ pests and infected stocks to be removed. Source, quality and quantity to be recorded.	Recommendation
16.3	Chemical treatments	Records to be maintained for all treatment chemicals to be maintained	Recommended package of practices from local authorities and allowed plant protection chemicals to be used. Details of chemicals such as name, active ingredient, recommended doses, quantity used, method of application, time of application etc to be recorded. In case of purchased treated stock, details on labels to be recorded.	Major
17.0	**Genetically modified Organisms/ seeds/ planting material**			
17.1	Use of GMOs	Only permitted and duly authorized under country regulation, GMO seeds/ planting material to be used	Records including permission for their use should be documented	Minor
17.2	Information to client	Clients shall be intimated for use of GMO seeds/ planting material and its no-objection to be obtained	Records for such intimation and communication to be maintained	Major

17.3	Contamination control	Contamination of GMOs with non-GMOs to be avoided	Precautions to be maintained and documented to ensure that GMOs do not get mixed with other non-GMO products. Separate sales record to be maintained	Major
18.0	**Soil and substrate management**			
18.1	Soil maps	Soil maps to be prepared and maintained	Based on soil profile and soil tests maps to be prepared with back up documents	Recommendation
18.2	Optimization of soil health	Develop soil management plan in consultation with experts	Based upon expert advice and local package of practices management practices have been integrated for soil health management and crop-based nutrition needs are documented and implemented. Reviewed annually and improved upon if needed.	Major
18.3	Crop rotation/ multi cropping	Crop rotations and muti-cropping/ intercropping to be encouraged	To maintain soil health and diversity crop rotation and multi-cropping practices, planting of hedge rows, trees, insectary plants/ cover crops to be integrated and documented.	Minor
18.4	Soil fumigation	To be resorted only in exceptional cases with justification	In cases where soil is sick or infested soil fumigation may be resorted, as per expert's recommendations (to be recorded). Practices to be documented and pre-plating interval to be adhered	Minor
18.5	Source of substrate (if used)	Substrate shall be from natural source	There are records that prove the origin of the substrates of natural origin being used. These records demonstrate that the substrates do not come from designated conservation areas.	Major
18.6	Sterilization	Substrate treatment may be resorted by heat or chemical treatments	To make the substrate free from microbial and weed seed contamination solar solarization or heat solarization can be done. Practices to be recorded.	Minor

			If chemical treatment is done then details of chemical, active ingredient, dose and time of treatment to be recorded	
19.0	**Fertilizers and Biostimulants**			
19.1	Fertilizer use	Recommended package of practices including fertilizer, biostimulants application, their doses and time of application to be recorded	Quantity of fertilizers used, Doses in terms of nutrients (NPK etc)/ha, Time of application with dates Their purchase records and label details	Major
19.2	Fertilizer storage	Fertilizers shall be stored in appropriate manner that does not pose any threat to food safety and soil/ environment contamination	Method of storage, precautions taken to be documented. Fertilizer chemicals to be stored separately from plant protection chemicals and recorded	Minor
19.3	Organic fertilizers	Need and application risk assessment to be done	Based upon the need and risks prevention organic fertilizers may be used and details of their quality, quantity, time of application to be recorded. If possible, their quality analysis report to be maintained. In case of purchased one, record their label claims. In case of purchased ones record of their label claims to be maintained	Major
19.4	Human sewage sludge	Use of human sewage and sludge is prohibited	Besides human sewage sludge and product or fertilizer made from human sewage and sludge or city waste should not be used	Major
19.5	Nutrient contents	Details of nutrient contents (NPK or others) shall be known and recorded	Total nutrient contents from all sources (chemical, organic) to be calculated and recorded. Details be available for last 12 months. Label details and recommendations to be maintained in made available for inspection	Minor

20.0	**Water management**			
20.1	Water quality	Risk assessment to be done on quality of water. Water shall be of irrigation grade	Quality to be assessed for water used in production and post-production. Annual test reports shall be maintained. Water from contaminated sources, such as drains, contaminated rivers/ canals, ground water with high salt content shall not be used	Major
20.2	Water sources and use	All steps to be recorded	Following to be recorded: • Source of water • Water delivery system (open channel, pipes, sprinkler or drip) • No of irrigations and approximate quantity of water used/ crop	Minor
20.3	Sewage treated water	Risk assessment shall be done based on test reports of treated sewage water Treated sewage water can be used in grain crops, plantations and perennials but should not be used in leafy vegetable or short duration herbs/ vegetables. Treated water shall not be used in postharvest and cleaning operations.	Details of risk assessment method and test report to be maintained, Time of application, no of applications and quantity used shall be recorded.	Major
20.4	Irrigation practices and equipment upkeep	Irrigation tools are kept up to date to gauge the water use and better efficiency	All irrigation tools shall be kept clean and maintained. Measure to be in place to measure the quantum of water used per irrigation and number of irrigations done	Minor
20.5	Rain water conservation	Measures should be adopted to conserve rain water	Farm ponds, percolation tanks should be created for rainwater conservation and percolation. Capacities of water holding to calculated	Recommendation

21.0	**Integrated pest management**			
21.1	Training on IPM	Package of practices developed by local research institutes shall be the basis of IPM and training to the workers	Crop specific IPM packages should be available on farm for time to time referencing. Crop specific IPM training should be conducted annually	Recommendation
21.2	Knowledge about pests, diseases and weeds	Producer and its personals are aware of the type of pest, diseases and weeds which may affect the crop growth	Adequate literature on prevalent pests, diseases and weeds is available on farm. Annual training on identification of pests and diseases, their symptoms and calculation of Economic threshold limits to be known	Recommendation
21.3	IPM Plan	Producer shall develop an IPM strategy and implements	IPM implementation plan includes: Use of rotations, intercrops, insectary crops, border rows with flowering plants, use of traps such as light trap, pheromone trap and sticky blue and yellow plates. Strategies implemented needs to be documented	Major
21.4	Use of natural pest enemies	Producer shall seek the advice of experts for augmentation of natural enemies of pests	Details of expert advice, measures taken, types of natural enemies of pests augmented and measures to protect them be documented. Impact of such strategies also need to be documented and need for their repeated application be determined	Minor
21.5	Evidence for prevention, monitoring and intervention	Operator shall show evidence of implementation of at least one activity for each that fall into the category of prevention, monitoring, and intervention	Operator shall document and show evidence of implementing strategies for: a. Reducing the incidence and intensity of pest attacks, thereby reducing the need for intervention b. Activity that will determine when, and to what extent, pests and their natural enemies are present, and using this information to	Major

			plan what pest management techniques are required. c. that in situations where pest attack adversely affects the economic value of a crop, intervention with specific pest control methods will take place. Where possible, non-chemical approaches must be considered d.	
21.6	Anti resistance label recommendation	Have anti-resistance label recommendations been followed to maintain the effectiveness of available plant protection products?	When the level of a pest, disease or weed requires repeated controls in the crops, there is evidence that anti-resistance recommendations (where legal and effective alternatives are available) are followed if specified by the product label.	Major
21.7	List of pests/ diseases in the area	List out the common pests and diseases endemic to the area and those that occurred on the crop during the past three crop seasons.	Verify the occurrence of the pests and diseases in the area and their ETL based on SAU/ICAR/State Depts./any other govt. approved agency.	Recommendation
22.0	**Plant protection product Management**			
22.1	Selection of products	Only the plant protection products (PPP) registered and approved for use in the particular crop is to be used. In India all pesticides are approved and registered for use by CIBRC of Govt of India	Operator shall have detailed list of registered plant protection products and the crops on which their use is allowed.	Major
22.2	Use of approved PPPs.	Operators need to ensure that plant protection product applied is appropriate for the target pest and is recommended on the product label?	Only approved and recommended PPP as per recommended package of practices by local research institutes (SAU/ICAR/KVK/ Department) be used and documented,	Major

			All label instructions for use, dose and time of application to be followed and documented.	
22.3	Awareness of banned chemicals	Operator shall be aware of the banned chemicals and is there a process that prevents chemicals that are banned in the target country from being used on crops destined for sale in that country?	The documented plant protection product application records shall confirm that no plant protection product that have been used within the last 12 months on the crops grown under Bharat GAP has been prohibited by the legal authorities	Major
22.4	Competence of producer/ advisor	The producer and the advisors shall demonstrate their competence in advising the use of PPPs.	Person making the choice for use of PPPs shall have to demonstrate the competence through knowledge and available literature at his disposal. Advisors shall be technically qualified or trained for such advisories.	Major
22.5	Appropriateness of chemical	Is the crop protection chemical applied, appropriate for the target pest/disease? Is the current list of approved chemicals for the crop is available with the grower?	Check if the chemical applied against target pest/disease is as per the recommendation of the label/the SAU/ NRC/any other govt. approved agency concerned with the crop.	Minor
22.6	Banned chemicals	Banned or non-approved chemical shall not be used	Check with the approved list that only approved chemicals have been used	Major
22.7	Documentation of use and application	All plant protection product application shall be recorded,	All plant protection product application shall be recorded specifying: a. Brand name and active ingredient b. Production sites and plot no. where used, c. Application date, d. Person who applied/ sprayed e. Name of the pest against which application is intended, f. Quantity or dose applied, g. No of applications done, h. Machinery or equipment used for application	Major

22.8	Pre-harvest interval	Have the registered pre-harvest intervals prescribed by CIB or approved PHIs by relevant govt. agencies been observed?	The producer shall demonstrate that all pre-harvest intervals have been observed for plant protection products applied to the crops, through the use of clear documented procedures such as plant protection product application records and crop harvest dates from treated locations. Specifically in continuous harvesting situations, there are systems in place in the field, orchard or greenhouse, e.g. warning signs, time of application etc., to ensure compliance with all pre-harvest intervals.	Major
23.0	**Application equipment**			
23.1	Up keep of application machinery and calibration	Plant protection product application machinery shall be kept in good condition and verified annually to ensure accurate application?	The plant protection product application machinery is kept in a good state of repair with documented evidence of up to date maintenance sheets for all repairs, oil changes, etc. undertaken. The plant protection product application machinery (automatic and non-automatic) shall be verified for correct operation within the last 12 months and this is certified or documented either by participation in an official scheme (where it exists) or by having been carried out by a person who can demonstrate their competence. No N/A.	Recommendation
23.2	Label instructions	When mixing plant protection products, are the correct handling and filling	Facilities, including appropriate measuring equipment, must be adequate for mixing plant protection products, so that the correct	Minor

		procedures followed as stated on the label?	handling and filling procedures, as stated on the label, can be followed.	
24.0	**Disposal of surplus application mix**			
24.1	Disposal of surplus application mix	Does surplus application mix or tank washings disposed of according to recommended procedure (by CIB or by authorised research or extension institute)or as per label instructions?	Surplus mix or tank washings are disposed of according recommended procedures or are applied over an untreated part of the crop. There shall be evidence that the recommended doses (as stated on the label) have not been exceeded and all the treatment have been recorded in the same manner and detail as a normal plant protection product application.	Minor
25.0	**Disposal of empty containers and obsolete products**			
25.1	Cleaning of used containers	Empty PPP containers shall be washed before being stored or used	Empty PPP container shall be triple rinsed and rinsate disposed off in way not to contaminate field or environment	Minor
25.2	Reuse of empty containers	Empty PPP containers shall not be reused except for handling the same chemical	Empty container shall be disposed-off as per the label recommendations and process documented.	Minor
25.3	Disposal of obsolete chemicals	Obsolete or expired PPP products shall be disposed off as per label recommendations	Label recommendations or recommendations issued by the local research or extension institutes shall be adopted for disposal of such stock and documents maintained for inspection	Recommendation
26.	**PPP residue analysis**			
26.1	Risk assessment	Risk assessment for all applicable products shall be done and MRL requirements to be ascertained	Risk Assessment shall include all products, crops and potential risk of MRL exceedance. Risk assessment may conclude that analysis may not be mandatory if following conditions are met a. No use of PPPs during the production season or during postharvest handling	Major

			b. Evidences are available for residue testing by the customer c. Risk assessment validated by third party certification body, auditor or customer Where risk assessment concludes that analysis is required then the number, type, location and frequency of sampling shall be recorded. The producer may delegate the risk assessment and sampling to third party managed Residue Monitoring System that is approved by Bharat GAP programme.	
26.2	Sampling procedure	Proper and approved sampling procedures should be followed.	Documentary evidence shall demonstrating compliance with applicable sampling procedures. Sampling can be carried out by the laboratory approved by Accreditation Body or by NABL accredited lab, compliant to ISO 17025.	Major
26.3	Record of residue testing	Producer or producer's customer shall provide evidence of annual (or more frequent) residue testing or of participation in a third party plant protection product residue monitoring system, which is traceable to the production location and that covers the plant protection products applied to the crop/product.	There shall be documented evidence or records tht demonstrate that either of annual plant protection product residue analysis results for the Bharat GAP registered product crops, or of participation in a third party plant protection product residue monitoring system which is traceable to the farm.	Major

26.4	Knowledge of MRL of target market	Does the producer (or the producer's customer) able to demonstrate information regarding the market where the producer is intending to trade produce, and the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) of that market?	The producer or the producer's customer must have available a list of current applicable MRLs for the market(s) where produce is intended to be traded in (whether domestic or international).	Major
26.5	Action taken to comply with MRL	Necessary action shall be taken to meet the MRLs of the market the producer is intending to trade his produce in?	Where the MRLs of the market the producer is intending to trade his produce in are stricter than those of the country of production, the producer or the producer's customer can demonstrate that during the production cycle these MRLs have been taken into account.	Major
26.6	Action on non-compliances of MRL	Producer shall have an documented action plan in place in the event of an MRL being exceeded, either of the country of production or of the countries where produce is intended to be traded in?	There is a clear documented procedure of the remedial steps and actions, (this will include communication to customers, product tracking exercise, etc.) to be taken where a plant protection product residue analysis indicates an MRL (either of the country of production or of the countries where his harvested product is intended to be traded in if different) is exceeded.	Major
26.7	Accreditation of laboratory	The laboratory used for residue testing shall be accredited by a competent national authority to ISO 17025 or equivalent standard?	There is clear documented evidence either on the letter headings or copies of accreditations etc. that the laboratories used for plant protection product residue analysis have been accredited, or are in the process of accreditation to the applicable scope by a competent national authority to ISO 17025 or an equivalent standard.	Minor
26.8	Use of other inputs	Up to date records shall be maintained for all inputs and products used in the	Records on application, justification, dose, quantity and application time to be maintained	Minor

		production and handling other than categories mentioned above	for products used in water, soil, hydroponic systems, pH correction agents or any botanical or biological nature	
27.0	**Storage of PPP and other inputs**			
27.1	Storage	All PPT, biocontrol and other inputs shall be stored in manner not to pose any contamination and health risks	Storage conditions shall comply the label directions and general directions issued by the control authorities. Storage conditions shall meet following requirements: • Storage located away from production and handling area, • Kept secure and under lock and key • Accessible only to authorized persons trained in their use and handling, • Products used on crops not covered under GAP certification be stored separately.	Major
27.2	Storage conditions	PPP products to be stored in conditions and godowns that do not pose any risk	Following storage conditions to be met • Storage house is in good condition and prevents any chances of contamination, • Well illuminated and all containers are properly labeled, • Temperature maintained at ambient levels, to manage their quality • Provisions to manage exigencies such as spillage etc	Minor
28.0	**Mixing, handling and application**			
28.1	Health check of workers	All workers involved in PPP applications shall be subjected to health checks	Workers shall be subjected to health checks. Only healthy without any signs of illness of cut or wound be allowed for PPP applications, Provided with appropriate protective clothing and other gear,	Major

			Ensure that first aid kits are available in case of emergencies	
28.2	Mixing	Label instructions and recommendations of local research/ extension institutes be followed	Only the trained person shall make the mix formulations. Mixtures shall be made as per the label directions or as per the recommendations by local research/ extension institute Measuring and mixing equipment are available	Major
28.3	Addressing emergencies	Proper arrangements are there to meet any emergencies	All work places shall have charts and instructions displayed Emergency contact numbers are also displayed at prominent places At least few workers are trained in dealing with such exigencies and in first aid	Minor
28.4	Transport of products	All PPP products to be transported in safe and secure manner	The producer shall ensure the safety of PPP products at all time during transport from stores to fields. Ensure that left over materials are brought back and stored. Documents shall be maintained on quantity supplied and quantity used.	Minor
28.5	Invoices and Procurement documentation	All invoices and plant protection product purchase, stocks, storage and use shall be documented	Checks are necessary to ensure that only approved PPP are procured, stored and used in recommended doses	Minor
29.0	**Post harvest handling**			
29.1	Storage	All harvested products shall be stored to minimize food safety risks	All harvested products are stored in clean and ventilated godowns to minimize the risk of contamination and hygiene risks	Major
29.2	Cleanliness	All storage, handling area and handling containers/ machines are regularly cleaned and maintained hygienically	All storage and handling area shall be cleaned and washed at repeated intervals. All precautions to be observed to ensure hygiene,	Major

			All handling containers, machines and tools are cleaned, disinfected and hygienic Cleaning and maintenance records to be maintained including the cleaning operations	
29.3	Packaging material	Packaging material shall be appropriate to the product, storage conditions and transport to avoid any unintended contamination	All packaging material including reusable crates be washed, disinfected and kept clean, All packaging material to be kept away from certified product storage, Containers/ batches are properly labelled. Certified and non-certified products to be kept in separate godowns.	Minor
29.4	Cleaning equipment and agents	Cleaning equipment, agents, lubricants, disinfectants storage do not pose any contamination risk	All cleaning equipment are maintained in good working condition and regularly cleaned. All cleaning agents, lubricants and disinfectants to be stored away from certified goods store and handling area.	Major
29.5	Contamination and co-mingling	Systems are in place to ensure that foreign materials do not get mixed or contaminate the certified produce	While handling the postharvest produce all efforts to be made that produce do not get contaminated with foreign materials such as stone, sand, insects, glass, plastic, debris etc.	Major
29.6	Temperature and humidity control	Controlled storage conditions shall be maintained	As per the requirement of the produce necessary storage conditions such as temperature, humidity, modified storage environment etc to be maintained and recorded	Minor
29.7	Pest control	Pest control plan shall be in place and effectively implemented	A pest management plan shall be in place and displayed through charts All efforts to be made to keep storage and handling area free from pests, rodents etc.	Major

			There shall visual evidences that pest management, monitoring and corrective measures are effective and are being followed.	
29.8	Pest control inspections	Records are maintained for pest control inspections and corrective actions taken	Inspections shall be carried out at repeated intervals and corrective measures are implemented and records are maintained.	Minor
29.9	Product labelling	Final product labelling shall be appropriate and identifies the certified product from non-certified	Where the final product packing and labelling is part of the scope of certification, product labelling to be done as per applicable requirements in tune with sales/ customers requirement/ specifications. Packaging material or its design and details may be provided by the customer	Minor

Total principle categories 29
Total Principles 99
Principles major 52
Principles minor 34
Recommendations 13

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Chapter 4
Accreditation Process

4.1 Accreditation Requirements

4.1.1 Purpose

This document contains the requirements for criteria and procedure for accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies or Certification Bodies (CBs), willing to apply for BHARAT GAP Certification under Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (BHARAT GAP) programme.

Requirements mentioned herein are applicable to all organizations that need to plan and conduct internal or external audits of Bharat GAP systems under Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (BHARAT GAP) programme

4.1.2 Scope of Accreditation

This document specifies the requirements that a third party certification body operating under BHARAT GAP Certification or related certification programme shall meet if it is to be recognized by the National Accreditation Body as competent and reliable in the operation of related certification.

4.1.3 Criteria

The Certification Bodies (CBs) seeking accreditation for BHARAT GAP Certification shall comply with the requirements specified in ISO/IEC 17065: 2012. Agencies shall also preferably be accredited for ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 by NABCB of QCI or any other accreditation body, being member/signatory of IAF or have already been assessed by QCI for IndGAP.

Note: A copy of ISO/IEC 17065 :2012 can be obtained from the Bureau of Indian Standards.

4.1.4 General Requirements

4.1.4.1 Legal Entity

i. The Applicant Certification Body shall be registered as a legal entity under relevant acts (such as Companies Act, registrar Societies Act, Trust Act, Cooperative Act etc) in India, or shall be defined part of a larger legal entity, so that it can be held legally responsible for all its certification activities.
ii. In case of multinational companies, the applicant agency shall have its functional office in India, registered under relevant Indian Act.
iii. An agency under Government Department or any Government organization shall be considered as deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its Governmental status.

4.1.4.2 Organizational structure

i. The applicant body shall have organizational structure with defined roles and responsibilities of management, certification and any committee within the ambit of its certification programme.

ii. The applicant certification body shall have documented policy and procedures to ensure that its personnel have appropriate knowledge and skills relevant to the type of certification system and geographic areas in which it operates.

iii. The certification body shall employ, or have access to, a sufficient number of personnel to cover its operations related to the certification schemes and to the applicable standards.

4.1.4.3 Liability and financing

i. The certification body shall have the financial stability and resources required for the operation of the certification system.
ii. The certification body shall evaluate the risks arising from its certification activities and that it has adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations.
iii. The certification body shall ensure that its senior executive and staff, are free from any commercial, financial and other pressures which might influence the certification process

4.1.4.4 Documented Quality Management System

The applicant Certification Body (CB) shall have documented policy and procedures for implementation of its entire inspection and certification programme in the form of Quality Manual. The Quality Manual shall comprise of following at minimum:

i. Quality policy or statement of intent
ii. Brief description of legal status and its activities
iii. Organizational structure/ hierarchy with names, qualifications, experience including roles, responsibilities and functions of personals involved in quality management and certification
iv. Policy and procedures for management of:
    a. Competencies
    b. Impartiality and Non-discrimination
    c. Independence
    d. Confidentiality
    e. Conflict of interest
    f. Credibility
    g. Accountability and responsibility

v. Policy and procedures for receipt of applications, review of application and grant of registration
vi. Policy and procedures for conduct of internal management review and certification decision review
vii. Administrative procedures for document control, record keeping and maintenance
viii. Policy and procedure for selection, recruitment, time to time training, monitoring and efficiency assessment
ix. Policy and procedures for handling non-conformities, management and verification of corrective and preventive actions.
x. Procedure for implementation of entire inspection and certification programme including procedure formats, checklists as per standards and scheme.
xi. Procedure for evaluating products and processes necessary for implementation of certification programme
xii. Policy and procedures for grant, suspension, withdrawal and termination of certification
xiii. Policy and procedures for dealing with complaints, appeals and disputes including the process for their resolution with time lines.

4.1.5 Management of competence for personnel involved in the certification process

4.1.5.1 The procedure shall require the certification body to:

i. Determine the criteria for the competence of personnel for each function in the certification process, taking into account the requirements of the schemes;
ii. Identify training needs and provide, as necessary, training programmes on certification processes, requirements, methodologies, activities and other relevant certification scheme requirements;
iii. Demonstrate that the personnel have the required competencies for the duties and responsibilities they undertake;
iv. Formally authorize personnel for functions in the certification process;
v. Monitor the performance of the personnel.

4.1.5.2 The certification body shall maintain the following records on the personnel involved in the certification process-

i. Name and Address;
ii. Details of Employer(s) and position held;
iii. Educational qualification and professional status;
iv. Experience and Training;
v. The assessment of competence;
vi. Performance monitoring;
vii. Authorizations held within the certification body;
viii. Date of most recent updating of each record.

4.1.6 Personnel involved in the certification activities

4.1.6.1 The certification body shall deploy or have access to, a sufficient number of inspectors and technical experts to cover its activities and to handle the volume of certification performed. The certification body shall deploy personnel having sufficient competence for managing the requirements specified in the certification scheme.

4.1.6.2 The certification body shall make clear their duties, responsibilities and authorities in public domain through their websites.

4.1.6.3 The certification body shall have defined processes for selecting, training, formally authorizing inspectors and for selecting technical experts used in the certification activity. The initial competence evaluation of an evaluator shall include a demonstration of applicable personal attributes and the ability to apply required knowledge and skills during inspections, as determined by a competent evaluator or observing the inspector conducting an inspection.

4.1.6.4 The certification body shall identify training needs and provide training to ensure its personnel are competent for the functions they perform.

4.1.6.5 The group or individual that takes the decision on granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification shall understand the applicable standard and certification requirements, and shall have demonstrated competence to evaluate the processes and related recommendations of the evaluation team.

4.1.6.6 The certification body shall have documented procedures and ensure the satisfactory performance of all personnel involved in the evaluation and certification activities.

4.1.6.7 The documented monitoring procedures for evaluators shall include a combination of on- site observation, review of evaluation reports and feedback from clients or from the market.

4.1.6.8 All certification review personnel must possess experience (minimum one year) and expertise relevant to certification review.

4.1.7 Competence

The certification body shall have documented policy and procedures for determining the competence criteria for personnel involved in the management and performance of audits and other certification activities. Records of training and competency reviews shall be maintained.

All the Certification body personnel especially Inspectors, Inspection Planners and Reviewers shall be well versed with ISO 19011:2018 practices i.e. Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems.

4.1.7.1 Competency requirements for an Inspector

Education- A degree in Agriculture/Horticulture/Biological/ Plant Sciences/ Animal Sciences, Food Science or Biotechnology from a recognized university.

Experience- Minimum of two years of Experience (Work or Auditing) in Agriculture/Horticulture or Food Industry (Production /Manufacturing, Retailing, Inspection or enforcement or related disciplines). Fresh graduates can also be appointed as Inspectors but shall have to work under supervision of Senior Auditors for at least one year and have undergone 40 hrs training on Good Agriculture Practices.

Knowledge-

- Knowledge about ISO 19011
- Successfully completed Lead Auditor Course in any of the management system (QMS/EMS/IMS/FSMS/ FSSC 22000, BRC, IndGAP/GGAP etc)
- Knowledge about ISO 17065
- Knowledge about Country's Good Agricultural Practices.

4.1.7.2 Competency of Reviewer

Education- A degree in Agriculture/Horticulture/Biological/ Plant Sciences/ Animal Sciences, Food Science or Biotechnology from a recognized university.

Experience- Minimum of three years of Experience (Work or Auditing) in Agriculture/Horticulture or Food Industry (Production /Manufacturing, Retailing, Inspection or enforcement or the equivalent) or in any certification systems conforming to the requirements under ISO-17065.

Knowledge-

- Knowledge about ISO 19011
- Successfully have completed Lead Auditor Course (40 hours) in any of the management system (QMS/EMS/IMS/FSMS etc)
- Knowledge about ISO 17065
- Knowledge about Country's Good Agricultural Practices.

4.1.8 **Use of services from individual external evaluators and external technical experts**

4.1.8.1 In cases of hiring external auditors/ evaluators and external technical experts, certification body shall ensure that external resources shall have same competence and qualification as prescribed for internal personnel.

4.1.8.2 Whenever services of external evaluators and technical experts are used, it shall enter into an agreement committing them to comply with applicable policies and procedures as defined by the certification body.

4.1.8.3 The agreement shall address aspects relating to confidentiality and to independence and impartiality of the certification body. Each external evaluator/ expert shall notify the certification body of any existing or prior association with any organization and certification body shall take into consideration for any possible risks.

NOTE: Use of individual auditors and technical experts under such agreements does not constitute outsourcing as described under 4.1.9.1.

4.1.9 **Outsourcing of services**

4.1.9.1 The CB shall not outsource any activity other than testing**.**

4.1.9.2 When the certification body outsources testing, the laboratory shall meet the applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 and shall be NABL accredited.

4.1.10 Contract with the personnel

4.1.10.1 The certification body shall require, its personnel involved in the certification process to sign a contract or other document by which they commit themselves to the following:

i. to comply with the rules defined by the certification body, including those relating to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other interests;
ii. declare any prior and/or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with: a supplier or designer of products, or a provider or developer of services, or an operator or developer of processes to the evaluation or certification of which they are to be assigned;
iii. To reveal any situation known to them that may present them or the certification body with a conflict of interest.

4.1.10.2 Certification bodies shall use this information as input into identifying risks to impartiality raised by the activities of such personnel, or by the organizations that employ them.

4.1.11Certification agreement

4.1.11.1 The certification body shall have documented policy and procedures for entering into legally enforceable agreement for all of its certification activities with its operators/ clients. All contracts and agreements for certification or related services shall take into account the responsibilities of all the parties (certification body, sub-contractors and operators).

4.1.11.2 The certification agreement shall commit its operators to (at minimum):

i. Always fulfil the certification requirements in full and communicate any changes;
ii. Provide full access to its facilities and facilitate necessary arrangements for conduct of the physical inspection, including access to documentation and records, and relevant location(s), area(s), and personnel
iii. Facilitate and cooperate in investigation of complaints;
iv. Makes claims regarding certification only in respect of the scope for which certification has been granted;
v. Does not use its certification/ logo/ mark in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its certification which the certification body may consider misleading or unauthorized;
vi. Upon suspension or cancellation/withdrawal of certification, discontinues its use from all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto and returns as required by the certification scheme any certification documents and takes any other measure;
vii. Endeavours to ensure that no certificate or report nor any part thereof is used in a misleading manner;
viii. If the client provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety
ix. Uses the certification mark only on produce it has found to comply with the requirements if applicable;
x. Applies certification mark on labels, packing boxes, bags or accompanying information leaflets/ brochures etc for each certified produce;
xi. Keep record of all complaints relating to the compliance with certification requirement and to make these records available to the certification body when requested, and takes appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in produces, processes or services that affect compliance with the requirements for certification;
xii. Document the actions taken for verification by the certification body
xiii. The client shall inform the certification body, without delay, of matters that may affect ability to conform to the certification requirements.

4.1.12 Responsibility for certification decisions

4.1.12.1 The certification body shall be responsible for and shall retain full authority and responsibility for its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, maintaining, recertifying, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing of certification.

4.1.12.2 The certification body shall ensure that its certification decision, or any decision in the handling of complaints and appeals, are taken by authority (individual or group) that is impartial with respect to the procedure and produce.

4.1.13 Use of license, certificates and marks of conformity

4.1.13.1 The certification body shall exercise full control as specified by the certification scheme over ownership, use and display of licenses, certificates, marks of conformity, and any other mechanisms for indicating a product is certified.

4.1.13.2 Incorrect references to the certification scheme, or misleading use of licenses, certificates, marks, or any other mechanism for indicating a product is certified, found in documentation or other publicity, shall be dealt with by suitable action.

NOTE - Guidance for actions to address such issues can be taken from ISO Guide 27 and can include corrective actions, withdrawal of certificate, publication of the transgression and, if necessary, legal action.

4.1.14 Management of impartiality

The certification body shall have documented policy and procedures for management of impartiality and shall make publicly available statement that it understands the importance of impartiality in carrying out its certification activities, manages conflict of interests and ensures the objectivity of its certification activities.

4.1.14.1 Management of impartiality shall be compliant to the requirements as laid down under ISO-17065 including for impartiality in certification decisions, identifying risks to impartiality, management of impartiality in cases of identified risks, and any relationship that threatens the impartiality of the certification body linked to ownership, governance, management, personnel, shared resources, finances, contracts, marketing and payment of a sales commission or other inducement.

4.1.14.2 In cases where a risk to impartiality is identified, the body shall be able to demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such risk.

4.1.14.3 Certification body shall ensure that if any relationship poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, then certification shall not be provided.

4.1.15 Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality

4.1.15.1 The certification body shall safeguard the impartiality of its activities and shall provide for an Impartiality Committee mechanism through which significantly interested parties like producer, suppliers, users, consumers and conformity assessment experts, can provide input on:

i. the policies and principles relating to the impartiality of its certification activities,
ii. counteracting any tendency on the part of a certification body to allow commercial or other considerations to prevent the consistent impartial provision of certification activities,

iii. matters affecting impartiality and confidence in certification, including openness and public perception

4.1.15.2 The terms of reference, duties, authorities and responsibilities of the mechanism shall be formally documented to ensure:

i. representation of a balance of interests such that no single interest predominates (internal or external personnel of the certification body are considered to be a single interest, and shall not predominate),

ii. access to all the information necessary to enable it to fulfill all its functions

4.1.15.3 If impartiality is not being achieved by the certification body, the impartiality committee will be authorized to take appropriate action (e.g. informing authorities, accreditation bodies, and stakeholders). In taking appropriate action, the confidentiality requirements relating to the client and certification body shall be respected.

4.1.15.4 Although every interest cannot be represented in the mechanism, a certification body shall identify and invite key interests.

4.1.15.5 The meetings of the Impartiality Committee may be witnessed by NHB/NABCB and/or they may seek representation on the same which shall be provided by the Certification body.

4.1.16 Non-discriminatory conditions

The policies and procedures under which the certification body operates, and the administration of them, shall be non-discriminatory. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicants, in compliance of ISO/IEC 17065.

4.1.17 Confidentiality

4.1.17.1 Certification body shall be responsible, through legally enforceable commitments, for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities. Except for information that the client makes publicly available, or when agreed between the certification body and the client (e.g. for the purpose of responding to complaints), all other information is considered proprietary information and shall be regarded as confidential. The certification body shall inform the client, in advance, of the information it intends to place in the public domain.

4.1.17.2 When the certification body is required by law or authorized by contractual arrangements to release confidential information, the client or person concerned shall, unless prohibited by law, be notified of the information provided.

4.1.17.3 Information about the client obtained from sources other than the client (e.g. from the complainant or from regulators) shall be treated as confidential.

4.1.18 Publicly available information

The certification body shall maintain (through websites, publications, electronic media or other means), and make available upon request, the following:

i. information about (or reference to) the certification scheme(s), including evaluation procedures, rules and procedures for granting, for maintaining, for extending or reducing the scope of, for suspending, for withdrawing or for refusing certification;
ii. description of the means by which the certification body obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to clients;
iii. description of the rights and duties of applicants and clients, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the certification body's name and certification mark and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;
iv. information about procedures for handling complaints and appeals.

4.1.19 Certification documents

4.1.19.1 The certification body shall provide certification documents through certification portal in electronic format.

4.1.19.2 The effective date of certification shall not be before the date of the certification decision.

4.1.19.3 The certification document(s) shall be as per the format provided by Bharat GAP certification portal

4.1.20 Directory of certified clients

The certification body shall maintain and make publicly available a directory of valid certifications that as a minimum shall show the name, relevant certification criteria (normative document), scope and geographical location (e.g. city and country) for each certified client.

4.1.21 Information exchange between a certification body and its clients

4.1.21.1 **Information on the certification activity and requirements-** The certification body shall provide update to its clients on the following:

a. a detailed description of the initial and continuing certification activity,
b. the certification criteria defined by the standard for certification
c. information about the applicable fees
d. the certification body's requirements for its clients
    i. to comply with certification requirements,
    ii. to make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the on-site evaluations, including provision for examining documentation and the access to all processes and areas, records and personnel for the purposes of initial certification, surveillance, recertification and resolution of complaints, and
    iii. to make provisions, where applicable, to accommodate the presence of observers (e.g. accreditation auditors or trainee evaluators);

e. documents describing the rights and duties of certified clients, including requirements,
f. information on procedures for handling complaints and appeals.

4.1.21.2 **Notice of changes by a certification body -** The certification body shall give its certified clients due notice of any changes to its requirements for certification. The certification body shall verify that each certified client complies with the new requirements.

4.1.21.3 **Notice of changes by a client -** The certification body shall have legally enforceable arrangements to ensure that the certified client informs the certification body, without delay, of matters that may affect the capability of the client's system to continue to fulfil the requirements of the standard used for certification including:

a. the legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership,
b. organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision-making or technical staff),
c. production sites,
d. scope of operations under certification, and
e. major changes to the production unit and processes.

4.1.22 Transfer of Certification

4.1.22.1 Certificates granted by an approved CB are eligible for transfer to another approved CB.

4.1.22.2 Transfer should normally only be of a current valid accredited certificate but, in the case of a certificate issued by a certification body that has ceased trading, or that has had its accreditation withdrawn, the accepting certification body may, at its discretion, consider such a certificate for transfer on the basis described in this guidance.

4.1.22.3 The accepting Certification body shall ascertain the reasons for seeking a transfer, establish that the client's certified activities fall within the accredited scope of the accepting certification body.

4.1.22.4 The accepting certification body shall verify the validity of certification, status of outstanding nonconformities with the issuing certification body unless it has ceased trading. Outstanding nonconformities should be closed out, if practical, with the issuing certification/registration body, before transfer. Otherwise they should be closed out by the accepting certification/registration body.

4.1.22.5 Certificates which are known to have been suspended or to be under threat of suspension should not be accepted for transfer.

4.1.22.6 The accepting certification body shall issue a certificate, dated from the date of completion of the review, following the normal decision making process.

4.1.23 Obligations of the product certification body approved under the Scheme

4.1.23.1 The approved product certification body shall commit to fulfill continually the requirements for approval set by these standards and scheme and for the areas where approval is sought or granted.

4.1.23.2 The approved product certification body shall claim approval only with respect to the scope for which it has been granted accreditation.

4.1.23.3 The approved certification body shall not use and permit the use of the Mark in such a manner as to bring National Horticulture Board, Department of Agriculture and farmers Welfare into disrepute.

4.1.23.4 The approved certification body shall inform without delay, any significant changes relevant to its accreditation, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to;

a. its legal, commercial, ownership or organizational status,
b. the organization, top management and key personnel,
c. main policies,
d. resources and premises,
e. scope of accreditation, and
f. other such matters that may affect the ability of the CB to fulfill requirements for accreditation.

4.1.24 Structural requirements

4.1.24.1 **Organizational structure and top management**

4.1.24.2 Certification activities shall be structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality.

4.1.24.3 The certification body shall document its organizational structure, showing duties, responsibilities and authorities of management and other certification personnel and any committees. When the certification body is a defined part of a legal entity, the structure shall include the line of authority and the relationship to other parts within the same legal entity.

4.1.24.4 The management of the certification body shall identify the board, group of persons, or person having overall authority and responsibility for each of the following:

i. development of policies relating to the operation of the certification body;
ii. supervision of the implementation of the policies and procedures;
iii. supervision of the finances of the certification body;
iv. development of certification activities;
v. development of certification requirements;
vi. evaluation;
vii. review;

viii. decisions on certification;
ix. delegation of authority to committees or personnel, as required, to undertake defined activities on its behalf;
x. contractual arrangements;
xi. provision of adequate resources for certification activities;
xii. responsiveness to complaints and appeals;
xiii. personnel competence requirements;
xiv. management system of the certification body.

4.1.24.5 The certification body shall have formal rules for the appointment, terms of reference and operation of any committees that are involved in the certification process. Such committees shall be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures that might influence decisions. The certification body shall retain authority to appoint and withdraw members of such committees.

4.1. 25 Annual Report

The Certification Body shall be required to prepare and submit an annual report covering all the details of the certification activities of the calendar year (January to December) in the prescribed format to Accreditation Secretariat every year by 31st January of the following year.

4.1. 26 Internal audit and management review

i. The Certification Body shall conduct periodic internal audits, on an annual basis, in a planned and systematic manner to ensure effective implementation of the certification program.
ii. The internal audit shall cover evaluation of inspection staff including outcome of the shadow audits/witness inspections.
iii. The Certification Body shall ensure that:
   - personnel responsible for the competency(s) audited are informed of the outcome of such audit.
   - corrective action is taken in a timely and appropriate manner and
   - results of the audit are documented.
iv. The Certification Body's management shall periodically review its quality system to ensure effective implementation of the Certification programme. Such reviews shall be documented.

4.2 Accreditation Process

4.2.1 Application for accreditation

i. Applicant organizations seeking accreditation as a Certification Body under Bharat GAP programme shall make an application to the Accreditation Secretariat (National Horticulture Board – NHB) along with all the requisite details, documents and applicable fees.

ii. All applications are made on-line through the Bharat GAP Certification portal.
iii. Once the entire format is filled and all documents are uploaded, submit the application, take out printouts, one copy to be retained as applicants copy and another signed copy to be sent to Accreditation secretariat along with a copy of all attachments uploaded, agreements and other supporting documents which could not be attached on the portal.
iv. Upon receipt of application and documents, the Accreditation Secretariat (NHB) will screen the application, determine eligibility and intimate applicant body for any deficiency within 60 days of receipt of application.
v. The application format, required documents to be uploaded/ provided with application is available on GAP Certification portal.
vi. Detailed accreditation requirements and eligibility criteria is prescribed in this chapter under Accreditation requirements (Clause 4.1)

4.2.2 Summary Eligibility Criteria

i. The applicant body should be a Legal Entity
ii. Have an established registered office in India
iii. Compliant to the requirements and accredited under ISO-17065
iv. Have defined and functional organizational structure with authorities of Management, roles and responsibilities.
v. Adequate financial arrangement to cover liabilities
vi. Financial status supported with balance sheets
vii. Well defined and Functional Quality Management System for operations and implementation of the certification programme (Quality Manual)
viii. Detailed certification procedure manual (Operational Manual)
ix. Description of its activities specifically in the field of certification for last three years.
x. Qualified and experienced personnel to perform their roles and functions based on operational requirements.
xi. The entity and its personnel shall be free from conflict of interest.

4.2.2.1 The applicant organization shall ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria before applying for accreditation. If at any point of time, it is found that the applicant body has breached the impartiality/conflict of interest and other mandatory obligations, their candidature will be rejected.

4.2.3 Evaluation of application

i. The review of application shall comprise of document review, physical evaluation/onsite audit and witness audit.
ii. The physical evaluation/onsite audit of the applicant body shall comprise of office audit and witness audit to determine the competence against requirements and preparedness of the agency in undertaking the certification process.

iii. The onsite audit will include evaluation of the quality management system, competence and skill sets of its personnel, fulfilment of the accreditation criteria, inspection and certification process and any other requirement within the scope of the audit.

iv. The witness audit will be carried out for assessing the audit skills of the applicant body's inspector(s).

v. On receipt of observations of the onsite audit and corrective action taken by the applicant body against the non-conformities raised by the evaluation committee the accreditation secretariat shall determine the competence and preparedness of the applicant body, prepare a detailed assessment report for review and consideration of NAB.

vi. The assessment report of applicant body shall be placed before NAB for review and decision on grant of accreditation.

4.2.4 Grant of Accreditation

On being found compliant, the National Accreditation Body shall grant the accreditation.

4.2.5 Accreditation contract

Accredited Certification Body shall be required to sign an accreditation contract and commit to the code of conduct.

4.2.6 Certificate of Accreditation

On receipt of the duly executed Accreditation Contract, code of conduct, and tariff structure from the accredited Certification Body, Accreditation secretariat (NHB), on behalf of the NAB shall issue the Certificate of Accreditation to the accredited Certification Body valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issuance of the certificate clearly mentioning the categories of accreditation.

The accredited Certification Body shall ensure to display the accreditation number on all its certificates and approved labels.

The accreditation granted may be renewed in accordance with the procedure laid down under Bharat GAP programme.

4.2.7 Annual Surveillance and Evaluations of Accredited Certification Bodies

All the Accredited Certification Bodies under the Bharat GAP programme shall undergo an annual evaluation/assessment process by the Evaluation Committees.

4.2.8 Unannounced evaluation visits

In addition to an annual surveillance visit, as per the procedure determined by the accreditation secretariat, unannounced evaluation visits shall also be organized. Further,

additional unannounced inspections may be conducted, in case of complaints and investigations, or as directed by the NAB.

4.2.9 Renewal of Accreditation

i. Accredited Certification Body need to apply for renewal/ extension of accreditation at least 4 months in advance of accreditation validity date.
ii. The extension of accreditation for a further period of 3 years shall be subject to evaluation and performance as assessed by the evaluation committees.
iii. In the event of major/repeated non-conformities in the certification programme reported by the EC, NAB shall have the power to reduce the scope of certification, area of jurisdiction or reduce validity period of accreditation or reject the renewal of accreditation for reasons to be recorded in writing.

4.2.10 Complaints

i. In cases of complaint against Certification Body NAB/ accreditation secretariat shall investigate the complaint by obtaining relevant documents from the concerned stakeholder(s).
ii. During the course of the investigation, if major irregularities/ non-conformities are observed, Accreditation secretariat shall issue a show cause notice to the operator /Certification Body within 30 days from the receipt of the investigation report.
iii. The operator/Certification Body shall respond to the show cause notice within 15 days from the date of receipt of such Show Cause Notice.
iv. Thereafter, a final investigation report shall be prepared by NHB and placed before the NAB/Sub Committee of NAB for its decision.

4.2.11 Appeal

i. The accredited Certification Body/Operator who has been found guilty of violation of provision(s) of Bharat GAP and has appropriately been sanctioned by the NAB, shall have the option to file an appeal against the decision (whole or part) imposed by the NAB within a period of 30 days from the date of issuance of communication conveying such NAB decision.
ii. Such an appeal shall be filed with the Chairman NAB in his capacity as ‘Appellate Authority’.
iii. The appellate authority shall, provide the appellant, a reasonable opportunity of being heard, before passing any orders. The appellant authority may undertake further inquiries if required, and shall pass such orders as it thinks fit. The appellant authority may pass an order either confirming, modifying or reversing the decision or order appealed against, or may remand the case back to the NAB with such directions as it may think fit, for a fresh decision, as the case may be, after taking additional evidence, if necessary.
iv. The appeal shall desirably be disposed-off within six months.
v. The order made by the appellate authority shall be final.

Chapter 5
Certification Process

5.1 Bharat GAP Certification

Bharat Good Agricultural Practices is important because it reinforces responsible farming methods from site selection and land preparation to harvesting and handling. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), GAP applies available knowledge to address environmental, economic, and social sustainability for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and healthy agricultural products. Implementing Good Agricultural Practices can improve the livelihood of producers and the local economy as a whole, contributing to fulfil national development objectives or sustainable development goals.

5.2 Objective

To provide an objective, transparent and uniform process for assessment and certification of Bharat Good Agricultural Practices for fresh fruits and vegetables certified products from farm to the fork.

5.3 Scope

The document covers the policy and procedures for standard requirements, standard implementation processes, compliance assessment methodologies and grant and regulation of certification mark for Bharat Good Agriculture Practices (Bharat GAP) for the following crops/ commodities:

a. Fresh fruits and vegetables and spices as per exhaustive list published by the accreditation secretariat and amended from time to time (to be available on certification portal)
b. Flowers and Ornamentals
c. Combination crops provided they are being grown as intercrops along with fresh fruits and vegetables using similar practices and same input factors.

5.4 Certification Options

Bharat GAP certification shall be available under following two categories:

5.4.1 **Individual producer certification** - Individual producer/ operator (farmer or any single individual legal entity) with all its production sites located within the same geographical area. Individual entities having different production sites at different places shall be treated as different individual producer.

5.4.2 **Grower group certification**

5.4.2.1 **Grower group certification with QMS** - Open to group of farmers/ producers aggregated under one single legal entity and having well defined Quality Management System (QMS) also referred as Internal Control System (ICS).

5.4.2.2 **Small Grower group certification without QMS** – For small grower group where farmers are located in close-by area and group operates in participatory mode without legal QMS with flexible distribution for direct sales.

Chapter 5A
Certification Process for Individual Producers

5.5 Certification process for individual farmer/operator

5.5 .1 Information to be made available by Certification Body (CB) to operators,

The CB shall maintain and make publicly available accurate information describing its certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification, and geographical areas in which it operates. The information shall include reference to the

a. Certification Criteria,
b. Procedure for obtaining certification,
c. Format of application form,
d. List of documents required to be submitted along with the application,
e. Information on fee for application, initial certification and continuing certification,
f. documents describing the rights and duties of certified clients, and
g. information on procedures for handling complaints and appeals.
h. The producer has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered to be confidential. In such case the information shall have to be provided during the on-site inspection.

5.5.2 General

a. Applicant as a first step need to choose Certification Body (CB) duly accredited by the National Accreditation Body for Bharat GAP. List of accredited CBs can be downloaded from the NHB Website. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the chosen CB is accredited for the selected scope and Bharat GAP certification process.
b. Applicants need to apply for Bharat GAP certification on-line through Bharat GAP certification and Traceability portal.
c. Certification Body (CB) shall review the application and on being found complete, approve the registration online along with the UIN generated from the on-line portal. On approval of registration, the CB shall issue a registration receipt.
d. By registering, the producer commits to always complying with the Bharat GAP certification requirements. Producer shall also commit to update any change during any stage of certification and inform to CB. Producer also commit to pay the applicable fees as prescribed by the CB.
e. Confidentiality, data use and data release:
    i. During registration the CB shall obtain written permission from producer/ operator to use their data for internal processes and sanctioning procedures by CB and accreditation body.
    ii. The CB and Accreditation Body can use the data for Government reporting and analyzing, without specifying the name, address and UIN of producers,
    iii. No data other than needed at (ii) above can be released by the CB or accreditation body to any other party without written consent of the applicant.
f. CB and producer shall enter into a binding agreement which may be valid for three years,

g. The applicant shall not register the same land parcel, product/crop with more than one CB or with more than one option (i.e. as individual producer and as member of a producer group).
h. The CB shall ensure that the applicant confirms and declare that there is no duplication in terms of seeking certification
i. The applicant can register same or different products under different standard or under other certification systems (other than Bharat GAP).
j. The applicant can choose to register the full or part of its production/ farm (Parallel ownership - PO) for certification.

5.5.3 Application

- Applicants before attempting to apply on-line needs to ensure that they have necessary details available or have access to documents for uploading as below:
  - Name, address and contact details of applicant (Mobile no is mandatory for verification through OTP),
  - Full name of Responsible person on behalf of applicant (if any) with full address, email and mobile phone No as per availability.
  - Proof of legal identity of applicant such as AADHAR/Voter ID card or Bank Passbook in case of individual farmer.
  - Details of Crops/ product/ processes being requested for certification,
  - Details of production unit, including site map, facility/ farm map along with Geo-coordinates. Farm needs to be supported with Geo-fencing,
  - Proof of ownership of the land/ facilities or legal lease agreements. In cases where production site or sites are not owned by the applicant there shall be signed agreement that clearly indicates that the land-owner shall not have any responsibility and input/ decision making capacity for the rented out site/ land. In all such cases the applicant/ certificate holder shall be responsible for production and its handling and sales.
  - Past certification status and details of sanctions imposed (if any)
  - Any registration with Govt departments such as FSSAI/ GST/ export councils etc relevant to production and trade of requested commodity (if any)
  - Annual area under production and farm produce to be covered,
  - Details on parallel production and parallel ownership (If any). Parallel production is allowed only if the crop are clearly distinguished by an average consumer at harvesting stage.
  - Details of sub contracted operations (if any)
  - Details of Certification bodies if any other products registered with other CBs/CABs

5.5.4 Review of application

CB shall review the application for adequacy and in case if any deficiencies are observed, CB can return the application and seek for completion.

The applications found to be complete and supported with all documents sought shall be accepted and registered with a unique identification number, and acknowledged.

The certification body shall reject or refuse to grant registration under following circumstances;

- If the operators has been found to be punished/ debarred under law for unfair practices till the duration of punishment/ debarment
- Have earlier either misused the Certification/ certification mark, or whose earlier certificate was cancelled because of violation of terms and conditions/misuse of certification mark.
- Found to be misusing the Certification/certification Mark while their application is being processed for grant of certificate, and rejected after giving a due notice of 15 days.

5.5.5 Registration

- On being satisfied with the genuineness and completeness of application the CB shall inform the applicant about its eligibility for registration.
- Along with registration approval the CB shall ask for entering into certification agreement. The format of agreement shall be provided by the CB. Agreement is generally in the hard copy and is between CB and the applicant producer.
- The registration process, in case of initial certification and/or transfers, shall be finalized before inspection can take place.

5.5.6 Payment of Fee

Before granting the registration CB can request for payment of fee. All fees to CB shall be paid directly by the operator to the CB. In cases of non-receipt of fee CB may decide not to proceed with certification process.

5.5.7 Re-registration/ transfer to a new CB

- If a producer who has already been registered, changes CB or applies to a new CB for certification of a different product, the producer shall communicate the UIN to the new CB. Failure to do so will result in aborting the process.
- Certificate holders who are sanctioned cannot change CB until the outgoing CB closes the corresponding non-conformance and its fees are paid in full.

5.5.8 Principles and Criteria (P&Cs)

Certification bodies shall develop and publish exhaustive Principles and Criteria (P&Cs) checklist based on the standards and the same shall be used both for internal and external evaluation.

5.5.9 Internal self-assessment of quality assurance

- The individual operators/ processors shall carry out an internal self-assessment at least once a year before the audit by CB.
- Self-assessment shall cover all registered production sites, products, processes and applicable control points,
- Self-assessment form shall be filled on-line on certification portal
- The self-assessment shall be against the complete checklist of the applicable scope(s) as prescribed on the certification portal.
- The self-assessment checklist shall also comprise of comments and evidences observed for all non-applicable and non-compliant control points.
- The completed internal self-assessment checklist shall be available to the evaluator during the external inspection by CB.

5.5.10 Audit/ Inspection process by CB

- Each producer/ operator shall be subjected to one announced initial audit and thereafter one audit every year.

- Auditing shall be done during the active growth phase of crop and preferably close to or at the time of harvesting.
- 10% of the total registered producers shall be subjected to unannounced audits. Unannounced audit shall count for annual audit.
- CB shall assign the responsibility of evaluation to a trained and qualified auditor and made identity of the auditor known to the operator. The CB need to ensure that the Inspector has no conflict of interests,
- The inspector shall not inspect the same operator continuously for more than two occasions.
- The inspector shall have adequate information about the operator and its processes, such as description of activities, processes, maps, process and product specifications, inputs used, earlier inspection reports, irregularities, infringements, conditions/ sanctions imposed and disciplinary measures etc.
- The CB audit shall cover:
  - All registered products and processes
  - All registered production sites
  - All registered Postharvest handling units and
  - Any other related or linked facility including administrative office
- The checklist used should cover all P&C points specific to the operations and standards.
- The auditor shall have access to all relevant facilities, including accounts and other documentation of the operator. Certification Bodies shall have access to any Non-GAP production unit, or units associated under same ownership or management.
- Internal self-assessment report shall also be considered as a part of inspection process
- The inspector shall undertake necessary risk assessment for possible non-compliance during the inspection. When an irregularity is committed by the operator relating to organic production as non-compliance, the entire lot or production affected by irregularity shall be removed from the production site / chain and sanctions shall be imposed on the operator.
- Inspection checklist, reports and inspection shall, follow a specified method to facilitate a non-discriminatory and objective inspection procedure.
- Inspection can be undertaken in two modules:
  - Off-site module: This consists of a desk review of documentation sent by the producer to the CB before the inspection.
  - On-site module: This consists of an on-site inspection of the remaining content of the checklist, the production process on-site, and verification of the information assessed off-site.
- The inspector shall fill the inspection report on-site and sign it. The inspection report need to be countersigned by the authorised representative of the operator. Refusal to countersign by the operator shall amount to non-cooperation and the inspection will be treated as null and void leading to suspension of certification process.
- Copy of the inspection report shall be shared with the operator along with list of non-compliances if any, and the result of compliance in percentage.

5.5.10.1 Initial audit

- Initial audit applies to producers/ operators seeking certification for the first time,
- Produces/ operators adding new product or process to the existing scope
- Producer/ operator changing their scope from individual to group certification
- Requirements to be met in first/ initial audit include:

- CB audit can be taken up only after 3 months of registration
- Entire scope to be audited before issue of certificate
- All applicable P&Cs shall be covered in auditing
- Only products and processes audited shall be subjected to certification
- Products/ crops harvested before audit shall be excluded from the scope of certification
- Records of all operations from registration onwards shall be audited. Any prior record shall not make part of audit process

5.5.10.2 Subsequent audits

- Each operator shall be subjected to annual audit before issue of new certificate
- At least 10% of the total operators shall be subjected to unannounced audit. Unannounced audits shall count as annual renewal audit.
- Subsequent annual audits can be done anytime during 8 months window starting from 4 months prior to expiry date up to 4 months after the expiry date. CB need to extend the validity period for justified reasons for allowing audits beyond expiry date. But in any case the extension cannot be granted beyond 4 months of expiry date and no audits can be undertaken after that period.
- At least there shall be a gap of six months between two recertification audits.

5.5.11. Policy for determination of operators for unannounced audit and timings of audit

- CB shall develop and document policy for determination of randomized sample for unannounced audit
- Same operator shall not be considered for unannounced audit in consecutive years
- In case if any operator requires unannounced audit as risks identified then such operators shall be in addition to 10% unannounced audit. In high risk cases the unannounced audit can be additional to annual audit (such additional audits shall not count as annual audit)
- CB shall develop policies for timing of audit. Generally, audit shall take place close to harvest or at the time of harvest. But in cases where crops and harvesting keeps on going round the year or operator is growing 2 or more c crops per year then CB shall make policies for representative audit and keep changing the cropping season every year.

5.5.12 Certification Process

5.5.12.1 The evaluation/ audit team shall assess the entire process based on standard checklist covering all P&Cs. Any non-conformity observed during audit shall be communicated to the producer in writing. Producer may be allowed time to rectify the shortcomings and file non-conformity compliance report. Certification decision can be done on final evaluation report including the compliance submitted by the producer on non-conformities.

5.5.12.2 Compliance levels for certification

To be eligible for GAP certification the producer needs to comply to the following compliance levels:

a. Major – 100% compliance with all applicable critical control points is mandatory,
b. Minor – 95% compliance with all applicable major control points is mandatory,

c. Recommendation – These are recommendations, and no minimum compliance percentage is necessary.

Calculation for compliance level under Minor

$$\frac{\text{Total no of applicable minor control points} - \text{Non-compliant minor control points}}{\text{Total no of applicable control points}} \times 100 = \text{Total major compliance level in \%}$$

Example – Suppose if there are 50 applicable minor control points (total no of Minor control points – Non applicable Minor control points) and 2 control points are non-compliant (means 48 compliant Control points) then compliance level shall be 48 x 100/50 = 96%.

In case if compliance level is in fraction of a number, then it shall be rounded off to next number.

The compliance level calculation shall be done only after the self assessment and external evaluation by the CB is done.

5.5.13 Certification decision

a. The CB shall decide on certification within 28 days of completion of external audit by CB.
b. In case if some non-conformities were observed and producer/ operator is given an opportunity to comply those, then a maximum period of certification decision shall be 28 + 28 days.
c. In case where operator does not close the non-conformities within the stipulated time then the CB shall decide on certification within 56 days of external audit by CB.
d. Although a non-conformity report is provided to the producer/ operator, but after communication of result if producer/ operator requests, the CB shall provide full CB audit report including the audit checklist within 5 working days of the certification decision. It is not obligatory for CB to provide full audit report before internal technical review and certification decision.
e. Any complaint or appeal against the decision of CB shall be taken up as per the documented policy and procedures of CB.
f. In case if operator is not satisfied with the complaint resolution by the CB or CB does not resolve the complaint in time, the operator can appeal to accreditation secretariat. Accreditation body shall close the complaint as per its documented policy and procedures.

5.5.14 Grant of certification

5.5.14.1 Grant of certification by CB shall be subject fulfilment of following:

a. complete compliance to the Certification Criteria based on evaluation reports resulting in positive certification decision,
b. certification scheme requirements, and
c. satisfactory resolution of nonconformities raised

5.5.14.2 Certificate can be issued in hard copy on paper or as e-certificate. All certificates shall be issued from the Bharat GAP certification portal.

5.5.14.3 Certificates are issued only to the legal entity. In case of individual farmer, the certificate shall be issued to the producer member whose identity has been established through AADHAR/ Voting ID card/ Bank passbook.

5.5.14.4 Certificates are non-transferable. In case where the project site is transferred to another legal entity the same can be done only after the certification is granted and subsequent certification takes place after subsequent audit and the new legal entity is registered as new applicant with new UIN.

5.5.14.5 Conditional certificates are not allowed,

5.5.14.6 The certificate shall remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of certification decision.

5.5.14. 7 The validity can be reduced on the request of producer/ operation in cases where there is need for subsequent changes or change of legal entity.

5.5.15 Renewal of certification and extension of certification period

5.5.15.1 Application for renewal needs to be submitted at least 60 days before the expiry date.

5.5.15.2 Under exceptional circumstances, to be recorded with justification, the validity of certificate can be extended up to 4 months on the request of the operator, submitted before the expiry date, but the operator must renew the certification before the extended date. Failing the certification shall stand expired or cancelled and the operator will be required to start the certification process afresh.

5.5.15.3 Extended certificate shall be renewed from the original date of expiry and operator need to pay the full certification fee.

5.5.15.4 Operator cannot change the CB during extension period. They need to renew the certificate and then change the CB after getting NOC.

5.5.15.5 Expired certificates cannot be extended or renewed.

5.5.16 Burden of proof

5.5.16.1 When a complaint is received from the traders or accreditation secretariat, such as higher level of pesticide residue above MRL, microbial contamination or mixing of non-certified product, that can have potential threat to Bharat GAP certification integrity, then it will be the responsibility of certificate holder and concerned CB to contest the claim by verifying and providing evidence of compliance.

5.5.16.2 To investigate the complaint, the CB may conduct additional announced or unannounced audit or on-site visit.

5.5.16.3 The CB shall mandatorily report the findings and action taken to the accreditation secretariat within 30 days of the information received. Failure to do so shall be treated as non-compliance of CB and action shall be taken as per the sanction procedure of accreditation body.

5.5.16.4 In cases of operator facing a complaint regarding food safety, working ethics or facing a trial on criminal cases in any court of law related to the production and processes under certification the CB shall inform the operator and accreditation secretariat within 48 hrs of receipt of information.

5.5.17 Non-compliance and non-conformance

- **Non-compliance (with P&Cs) –** Any minor or recommendation in the CPCC checklist is not fulfilled as per the requirement of P&Cs

- **Non-conformance –** Where any Major or more than 5% of applicable minor P&C are not fulfilled
- **Contractual non-conformance –** Breach of any of the contracted agreement between CB and operator.

5.5.18 Sanctions

5.5.18.1 In cases where non-compliances or continuous non-conformities are detected the CB shall impose sanctions (such as warning, suspension, withdrawal of certification or termination of certification) as per the sanction procedures of CBs.

5.5.18.2 Producers cannot change the CB until the non-conformities that led to the sanction is satisfactorily closed by the CB.

5.5.18.3 Only the CB that has imposed the sanction is entitled to close the non-conformity and lift the sanction, after verification of timely corrective action.

5.5.19 Warning

5.5.19.1 In all cases of non-conformance including in standard implementation, documentation, certification procedure or under contractual obligations, CB shall issue a warning letter to the operators,

5.5.19.2 Warning can be given at the time of audit as provisional warning or can be given by the certification committee of CB.

5.5.19.3 During Initial audit - If producer/ operator failed to comply with corrective actions needed under 100% Major control points or 95% under Minor control points or under any of the contractual obligations within 3 months of date of audit, a complete CB audit shall be performed again before a certificate is issued.

5.5.19.4 Subsequent audit – Operator need to close all non-conformities within 30 days. In case if operator failed to comply and submit necessary compliance report a notice for suspension may be issued and still operator fails to close non-conformities in another 15 days then the certification shall be suspended with immediate effect.

5.5.19.5 In cases of serious threat to the integrity of certification process or infringement of the applicable laws the certification can be suspended without giving a notice.

5.5.20 Suspension

5.5.20.1 If an operator fails to comply with the requirements within 30 days even after giving warning, the CB shall suspend the certification within 48 hrs.

5.5.20.2 If any infringement of any regulatory laws is detected in the operation, or there are risk of outbreak of disease due to certification project, CB shall suspend the certification temporarily and investigate the problem and then take final decision based on investigation report.

5.5.20.3 Only the CB that imposed the suspension can lift the suspension. Operators are not allowed to change the CAB during suspension period.

5.5.20.4 Suspension can be selective on particular product, process or area or can be on entire operation of the operator.

5.5.20.5 Suspension order by CB shall specify the period during which corrections are to be applied, but this period shall not extend beyond 12 months.

5.5.20.6 During the period of suspension, the operator is not allowed to use the logo of Bharat GAP certification on products of suspended operation.

5.5.20.7 If producer notifies the correction report before the last date of suspension, then CB shall undertake necessary assessment process, may be on-site, off-site or limited to operation found to be non-compliant. At the discretion of CB full CB audit can also be done before suspension is lifted.

5.5.20.8 If operator fails to comply with the sanctions in specified time, then the entire certification process shall be terminated by the CB.

5.5.21 Voluntary withdrawal or suspension

5.5.21.1 An operator may opt for voluntary suspension with suspension request to CB for one, several or of whole certification operation, in cases where operator finds problems or is unable to comply to the requirements and seeks time for corrective actions. But voluntary suspension cannot be sought if operator is under surveillance of CB for serious non-compliances.

5.5.21.2 The suspension period shall be counted for certification cycle and operator is bound to pay the fee for full period including that of suspension period.

5.5.21.3 The deadline for closing non-conformities can be extended by the CB on request by the operator.

5.5.22 Cancellation/ termination of certification

5.5.22.1 A certification project/ operation can be terminated or cancelled for the following reasons:

a. In case of fraud identified by CB or regulatory authorities or lack of trust by CB
b. If operator has been found to misusing the Bharat GAP label
c. If operator is making false claims about its certification status

5.5.22.2 Cancellation/ termination of the contract results in total withdrawal of certification status and authority to use Bharat GAP Logo including the use of past Bharat GAP certification status in their literature or documents.

5.5.22.3 Same operator shall be considered for re-registration only after 24 months of termination.

Chapter 5B
Certification Process for Producer Groups with QMS

5.6 Certification process for Producer Groups

This section is applicable to group of producers. Individual legal operators with multiple sites (owned or sub-contracted) shall also be considered under the grower group category. Under this category the certification shall be granted to the legal authority of the group and individual farmer/ production sites shall not be entitled to certificate and sale of certified produce as independent entity. All sales, purchases shall be done through the legal entity of the group. The applicant operator shall be responsible for ensuring that all production sites and group members comply with the certification requirements.

5.6.1 Legal status and Administration

5.6.1 **Legal status** – All applicant operators (grower groups) shall be legal entities duly registered under relevant act,

5.6.1.1 The legal entity shall enter into contractual agreement with all its members/ farmers. And shall be managing the certification activities through Quality Management System (QMS),

5.6.1.2 Although one legal entity can operate only one QMS but under special circumstances CBs can allow multiple QMS under one legal entity.

5.6.1.3 If two QMS merge into one, then the new QMS will be registered as new legal entity.

5.6.1.4 The legal entity shall be the certificate holder and responsible for all registered producers/ farmers/ sites including the chain of custody and finally placing the product on the market.

5.6.2 Group Members

5.6.2.1 Small individual producers can make a group and manage QMS under one single legal authority (herein after referred as QMS)

5.6.2.2 A group with QMS can comprise of minimum of 51 producers.

5.6.2.3 All members shall enter into written contract with the legal entity (QMS). The agreement shall include as a minimum (but not limited to) following:

- Name of QMS and legal identification
- Name, address, and legal identification of each member (AADHAR Card/ voter ID card or Bank passbook)
- Details of production sites, number of plots, total area under the control of member and the area offered for certification with size in ha, GPS coordinates (longitude and latitudes) with geo-fencing
- Details of area and products being offered for certification and area and products not offered for certification.
- Signed pledge as a commitment to comply to the certification requirements,
- Commit to comply with the groups documented policy and procedures,
- Commitment to accept sanctions if imposed by the group's QMS or CB
- Signature of the member along with the signature of authorized representative of QMS.

5.6.2.4 Registered group members shall be legally responsible to comply with certification requirements on their production sites while they continue to be committed to the QMS

5.6.2.5 Individual members shall not be certificate holders and shall not market their produce under the name and logo of Bharat GAP certification. If they do so their product shall not be treated as certified and their produce and quantity shall not be counted as output of QMS.

5.6.2.6 It is the responsibility of the CB to ensure that the QMS and its registered members details are uploaded on to online certification portal as per the format available and revised from time to time.

5.6.3 Essential requirements for Producer Group as QMS

5.6.3.1 The producer group as QMS shall maintain a register having following information at minimum:

i. Name of Producer group as QMS
ii. Name, address, and contact details such as phone no. mobile no (mobile no mandatory) of contact person.
iii. Name, address, and contact details of all the board members/ Directors of legal entity,
iv. Details of legal documents with their copies such as registration certificate of legal entity, FSSAI license number, GST number, PAN Card, etc.
v. Detailed map of production area with location of each production site. If production site is spread over large area (such as many villages) then first a large map showing villages, then individual village map and then area-wise maps showing each production site with GPS coordinates.
vi. List of members with their names, address, contact details, size of their land holding, area offered for Bharat GAP certification and area not covered under certification, crops/ products under certification and not covered under certification,
vii. List/ name of CBs (if any) with whom the group is registered for other products and/ or other certifications along with their details of certifications, products covered etc.

5.6.4 Management and Organization of QMS

5.6.4.1 QMS is an institutional structure of producers group where CB delegates responsibility of ensuring and managing all certification requirement in respect of each member registered and have entered into a contractual agreement.

5.6.4.2 Each QMS shall have its own operation manual specifying the institutional structure, role and responsibilities of each person, method of internal assessment, documentation, certification recommendation, management of inputs and farm output purchase, sale, aggregation, and post-harvest handling.

5.6.4.3 Institutional structure – Each QMS shall have following persons with their specified roles and responsibilities (in case of small group one person can undertake more than 1 responsibility, but internal inspectors shall be at minimum of one per 75 members):

i. Manager QMS – Overall responsible for operation and management of QMS
ii. Internal QMS auditors – For conducting QMS audits and verification of internal farm audits. Their number will depend upon the number of producers/ farmers in the group.
iii. Internal inspectors – For conducting annual field audits of each member in the group. Their number will depend upon the number of producers/ farmers in the group.
iv. Documentation- – For regular organization of group meetings, organizing trainings and facilitating technical support services

v. Technical experts – may on part time basis and required only during need.

5.6.4.4 Internal QMS auditors and internal inspectors shall have access to all field facilities and storages of all the members and have authority to make independent and technically justifiable decisions on compliance assessment by individual production sites.

5.6.5 Competency and Training of QMS Staff

a. The CB shall prescribe minimum educational requirements, experience, and training needs for each of the QMS staff,
b. QMS management needs to ensure that all staff meets the minimum competency requirement and is well versed with its role and responsibilities,
c. QMS auditors and internal inspectors shall be independent of members and shall not have any conflict of interest,
d. Technical qualification, experience and training details need to be maintained in each QMS members personal file and shall be open to audit by CB,
e. QMS management shall ensure that all the QMS members are subject to annual orientation and technical trainings to ensure consistency and uniformity in their operation,
f. At least one member shall be well versed with the changes in certification protocols, regulatory requirements, and prevailing laws.

5.6.6 Document Control

a. Each QMS shall maintain at minimum, following documents:
b. The Quality Manual
c. The Operating manual with procedures to be adopted and working instructions,
d. Checklists (work instructions) and inspection forms,
e. Production records with details of inputs used, farm processes and harvest records
f. Copy of standards in local language
g. Copy of standards and certification procedures provided to each group member in local language.
h. Stock registers, farm produce records, sale and purchase records shall be managed in way to establish the traceability.
i. All operational documents are available to the concerned staff members and members are fully aware of the details need to be filled in.
j. Quality manual and operating manual shall be checked regularly and time to time improvement to be incorporated. In case of any changes in standards or certification requirements QMS manager shall have the responsibility to incorporate changes in quality and operating manual and apprise all the members through meetings/ orientation/ training.
k. CB shall prescribe document control methodology to all its registered QMS for uniformity in documentation across all QMS
l. All copy of documents shall be available at a place where QMS is located

5.6.7 Document control requirements

a. Each QMS need to maintain records to demonstrate the effective functioning of QMS and compliance with the standards and certification procedures of Bharat GAP certification,
b. Documents shall be reviewed and approved by authorized QMS person and copy of reviewed documents shall be available at QMS office.
c. All control documents shall be identified with numbers. All records shall be kept for a minimum period of two years,

d. Records can be maintained in hard copy in files/ books or in soft copy in computers. QMS need to ensure the safety of electronic documentation with time-to-time backup. QMS can develop procedures for safety of documents. Electronic documents can be password protected.
e. There shall be a responsible person for upkeep, maintenance, and storage of documents.

5.6.8 Management of Complaints

a. QMS shall have a documented policy and procedure for complaint handling from group members or from customers or from public against the group, group members and trading partners. The policy needs to be made available to all group members and CB shall be informed periodically on complaint redressals.
b. In cases where complaint is against any member or trading partner, the Group QMS shall investigate the matter and resolve the complaint with information to the CB.
c. In case if complaint is against some food quality risks or legal matters or court cases, then the QMS shall inform the CB with details and CB shall act as per their complaint resolution policy.

5.6.9 Internal Audits

5.6.9.1 All producer groups having QMS shall have at least one annual (a) Internal QMS audit and (b) Internal Field audit of every member covering all production sites. One Internal QMS audit and one internal field audit shall be completed before the external inspection by the CB.

5.6.9.2 Internal QMS Audit

a. The internal QMS audit shall be based on Bharat GAP QMS requirements,
b. All QMS auditors shall be competent as per the requirements of qualifications, experience, and training, mainly in food safety and GAP standards application.
c. In cases where internal auditors are new, they shall undergo at least 2 shadow auditing under the supervision of trained and experienced internal auditors.
d. Internal QMS auditors shall be independent of the audit area and shall have no conflict of interest.
e. QMS staff involved in the day to day management of QMS shall not be eligible for internal audits.
f. Records on past internal QMS audit, internal field audit, follow up actions for corrective measures shall be available for internal QMS auditors and open for audit by CB.
g. Complete QMS checklists, covering all QMS check points with comments of auditors shall be available on-site for auditing. Internal QMS auditors need to ensure that all check lists are having names and signatures of QMS member representative along with the name and signature of internal QMS auditor.

5.6.9.3 Internal members field/site audits

a. The internal field auditors shall be competent as per requirements of QMS and have adequate exposure in internal field audits. In case if a new auditor is inducted then the same auditor shall undergo minimum of 2 shadow audits under the supervision of trained auditor.
b. The internal members field/ site audit shall be based on Bharat GAP standard checklist and shall be carried out at the members registered site covering all fields, crops, handling facilities and postharvest operations.

c. Audit shall cover document audit of all production records, use of inputs (fertilizers and plant protection), time of input usage, quantity used, labels of inputs, and stock management records. It may also include interview with the persons associated with their use and application.
d. Timing of internal field audit shall be during crop growth stage, before harvest or close to harvest.
e. Internal field auditors shall be free from conflict of interest and independent of the area and persons audited.
f. The internal field audit report shall comprise of following:
    i. Name and location ID of the member
    ii. Date of inspection/audit
    iii. Name and contact details of group member or its representative,
    iv. Name of Internal field auditor
    v. Comments of internal field auditor against each control point. Specific mention to be made for all major and minor control points which are applicable or non-applicable as compliant Yes, compliant No and comments in corresponding column. Recommendatory control points being recommendatory in nature need no comments.
    vi. List of non-compliances and time granted for corrective actions,
    vii. Compliance status in terms of percentage with calculation of compliance
    viii. Duration of the audit from opening meeting to closing meeting
    ix. All internal field audit reports shall need to be signed by the group member or its representative being audited and internal field auditor.
g. Internal field auditing report shall be reviewed by the internal QMS auditor and decided upon on the compliant status of the member.
h. In case if there is only one QMS auditor and internal field auditor then QMS manager shall review and approve the report.
i. Where the internal audits take place continuously over 12 months period, a predefined schedule shall be followed. But this will not be applicable for initial audit.

5.6.10 Non-compliances, corrective actions and sanctions

a. Each QMS shall have documented policy and procedures for non-compliance handling, corrective actions and sanctions duly approved by the CB.
b. Non-compliances shall be evaluated in time bound manner by the QMS, and timelines fixed for corrective action.
c. Timelines and responsibility for corrective actions to be defined.
d. All internal sanctions to be defined and implemented by QMS,
e. Partial sanction on product cannot be implemented. In case any member is found to be non-compliant then all the products and processes of that member shall be sanctioned
f. QMS shall ensure that immediately after completion of internal QMS and field audit list of non-compliances and sanctioned members are notified to CB.
g. Group members are not allowed to change the group unless they are cleared of all non-compliances and sanctions,
h. Records shall be maintained at QMS for non-compliances, their resolution, changes made in operational procedures and decisions made with persons responsible for decision making,
i. On closing of non-compliances or adequate corrective measures, QMS can lift the sanction imposed on the member and record the process for future reference and external audit.

5.6.11 Product traceability

a. QMS shall have documented policy and procedures for management of produce traceability from production of crops to harvest and sales with clearcut separation between certified and non-certified products at group level and at individual member level.
b. QMS shall carry out mass balance exercise at least once a year for individual members, at aggregation points and at group level. Mass balancing and chain of custody shall also be audited ay the external certification inspector.
c. Systems shall be in place to identify the certified and non-certified products at all stages of handling and measures are in place to ensure that there are no chances of co-mingling or mixing. All product containers/ bags shall be adequately labelled and stored separately in time and place.
d. All products/ bulk harvest shall be mandatorily labelled with name of commodity and identification number of the producer with quantity. To ensure separation all non-certified harvest/ produce also need to be labelled with distinct colures and differently colored or types of bags/ containers,
e. Postharvest handling processes such as grading and washing etc shall also be carried out separately in time and place,
f. Document traceability needs to be maintained at different stages from individual producer to group level and shall ensure mass balancing audit.
g. All transaction documents such as transaction certificates or records of digital transactions in Traceability portal shall be maintained and frequently checked with physical status.
h. Records shall include product name, identification number, quantity (incoming from members and outgoing to warehouse or for sale etc), purchase orders, supply invoices/ challans etc.
i. Sale purchase records with list and past sale records for all buyers along with their certification status and certificates.
j. In case of processing, records for process methodology raw material input, processed material output, quantity lost in process or rejected or conversion ratio.

5.6.12 Sale return or Product withdrawal

a. QMS shall have documented procedure for receipt of sale return with reasons for return, re-entry into stock records for further re-sales or in case if the product has been damaged or expired then the procedure for its disposal. Proper records need to be maintained with return invoices.
b. In case of voluntary withdrawal or mandated by the CB due to detection of non-compliances, residues, or any other reason the person responsible shall investigate the matter, decide on future course of action, make necessary entries in records and arrange for disposal of the same. In all such cases the customers shall be informed of the events, reasons and action taken for necessary corrective measures.

5.6.13 Entry of new members/ addition of new sites

a. New members or new sites/ additional area of the members can be added in a sequence of registration, internal compliance assessment and then external inspection. Name of the new member or the area/ site is to be added in certification only after the approval of CB.
b. CB at their discretion can allow up to 10% of the strength of total group size as new entrants through off-site verification. But in case if the number increase by more than 10% then their certification shall be accepted only after full annual audit by CB.

5.6.14 Use of Certification Logo

On being certified and after issue of scope certificate producer group can use the Bharat GAP Logo on its certified produce as per the Bharat GAP logo use policy. The Logo shall be used only on the products and quantity that are certified. The actual yields need to be uploaded on the certification portal. All transactions beyond the farm after certification is issued shall accompany the Transaction Certificate.

5.6.15 Issue of Transaction Certificate

Transaction certificate shall be issued from the Bharat GAP certification portal. Off-line Transaction certificates re not valid transaction documents for Bharat GAP certified products.

5.6.16. Registration with CB

5.6.16.1 General

a. Applicant group QMS (QMS) as a first step need to choose Certification Body (CB) duly accredited by the National Accreditation Body for Bharat GAP. List of accredited CBs can be downloaded from the NHB Website www.nhb.gov.in.It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the chosen CB is accredited for the selected scope and Bharat GAP certification process.
b. All applications shall be made online through Bharat GAP Certification portal.
c. Necessary format for application and process of application is available on Bhart GAP certification portal.
d. CB shall review the application on-line and on being found complete approve the registration online along with the UIN. On approval of registration, the CB shall issue a registration receipt from the online certification portal.
e. By registering, the QMS commits to always complying with the Bharat GAP certification requirements.
f. QMS shall commit to pay the applicable fees as prescribed by the CB. Responsibility of communicating with the CB and updating the details from time to time shall be of the QMS Manager.
g. Confidentiality, data use and data release:
    i. During registration the CB shall obtain written permission from producer group QMS Manager to use their data for internal processes and sanctioning procedures by CB and accreditation body.
    ii. The CB and Accreditation Body can use the data for Government reporting and analyzing, without specifying the name, address and UIN of producers
    iii. No data other than needed at (ii) above can be released by the CB or accreditation body to any other party without written consent of the applicant.
h. CB and producer group QMS shall enter into an binding agreement which may be valid for one/ three years
i. The producer group shall not register the same product/crop with more than one CB. The CB requires to ensure that the applicant QMS confirms and declare that there is no duplication in terms of seeking certification
j. The QMS shall not register the same members or same land parcel and product for more than one option (i.e. as individual producer and as member of a producer group).
k. The QMS can register same or different products under different standard or under other certification systems (other than GAP).

l. The applicant QMS can choose to register the full or part of its production/ farm (Parallel ownership - PO) for certification.
m. Any producer/ QMS who produces or own products originating from GAP and Non-GAP operations at the same time needs to register for Parallel Ownership. General regulations for Parallel Ownership are given in these rules.

5.6.16.2Application

a. Certification Body (CB) shall maintain and make publicly available information describing its certification process, templates of application and other formats needed to be provided by the operators to the CBs,
b. Application will be made in prescribed format through Bharat GAP Certification Portal).
c. All operations initiated after the registration/ crops sown after the registration with CB shall qualify for certification process.
d. Before making application through the certification portal the applicants shall ensure that they have access to following information/ documents:
    - Name, address and contact details of group's legal entity
    - Full name of Responsible person on behalf of legal entity with contact number full address, fax, email as per availability. Mobile no is mandatory,
    - Proof of legal identity
    - Details and institutional structure of QMS with roles and responsibilities of each person
    - List of members with following details:
        - Name, address and contact details of each member
        - Details of land parcels with GPS coordinates and geo-fencing
    - Details of Crops/ product/ processes being requested for certification,
    - Details of overall production unit, including site map, facility/ farm map along with Geo-coordinates. Farm needs to be supported with Geo-fencing,
    - Past certification status and details of sanctions imposed (if any)
    - Any registration with Govt departments such as FSSAI/ GST/ export councils etc relevant to production and trade of requested commodity (if any)
    - Annual area under production and farm produce to be covered
    - Details on parallel production and parallel ownership (If any) member-wise. Parallel production is allowed only if the crop can be clearly distinguished.
    - Details of sub contracted operations (if any)
    - Details of Certification bodies if any other products registered with other CBs
    - If produce handling is included, then whether certified and non-certified produce handled in the same produce handling unit along the entire value chain from individual member to aggregation units and processing/ packaging site.
    - Applicant shall along with the application, pay all applicable fees, declare any judicial proceedings relating to their operations/product, any proceedings by any regulatory body suspension/cancellation/ withdrawal of any certification/approvals under any regulations or otherwise.

5.6.16.3Review of application

a. CB shall review the application for adequacy and in case if any deficiencies are observed, CB can return the application and seek for completion.

b. The applications found to be complete and supported with all documents sought shall be accepted and registered with a unique identification number, and acknowledged.

c. The certification body shall reject or refuse to grant registration under following circumstances;
   - If the operators have been found to be punished/ debarred under law for unfair practices till the duration of punishment/ debarment
   - Have earlier either misused the Certification/ certification mark, or whose earlier certificate was cancelled because of violation of terms and conditions/misuse of certification mark.
   - Found to be misusing the Certification/certification Mark while their application is being processed for grant of certificate, and rejected after giving a due notice of 15 days.

5.6.16.4 Registration

a. On being satisfied with the genuineness and completeness of application the CB shall inform the applicant about its eligibility for registration.
b. Applicant and CB shall enter into a binding agreement as per the prescribed format of CB.
c. Applicant shall be assigned with a UIN;
d. Agree in writing to pay the registration fee, as per the policy and procedures of CB.
e. The registration process, in case of initial certification and transfers, shall be finalized before inspection can take place.

5.6.16.5 Re-registration/ transfer to a new CB

a. If a producer group with QMS who has already been registered, changes CB or applies to a new CB for certification of a different product, the producer group shall communicate the UIN to the new CB. Failure to do so will result in aborting the process.
b. Certificate holders who are sanctioned cannot change CB until the outgoing CB closes the corresponding non-conformance and its fees are paid in full.
c. Individual producer group members cannot leave the group and join another group if there is any sanction pending on the group member imposed by the group QMS or CB till it is closed.
d. Subsequent CB can issue certificate only after the registration process is complete and CB audit is done as per the procedure applicable on new producer group.

5.6.17 External Audit by CB

5.6.17.1 Audit Process

a. External audit by CB shall takes place only after:
   - Internal QMS audit is complete,
   - Internal field audit of all the group members including their production sites and postharvest handling facilities is done,

b. External audit shall comprise of following:
   - Complete QMS audit comprising of document audit, competence assessment of QMS staff, review of internal field audit outcome,
   - Square root of total group members (rounded off to next number) will be selected on random selection basis for individual member field audit,

c. In case of re-certification audit, CB auditor need to ensure that all non-conformities are closed, and action taken is verified before QMS and random member field audit is planned and executed.

d. In case of unannounced audit, minimum of 10% of members are audited besides QMS audit.
e. In case of surveillance audit minimum of 50% of square root of members (rounded off to next number) shall be audited besides QMS audit

5.6.17.2 QMS Audit

a. QMS audit shall be done by CB's QMS auditor,
b. Audit shall be based on QMS audit checklist,
c. QMS audit shall be done annually,
d. Processing and handling units also need to be made part of QMS audit,
e. CB shall ensure that a minimum of 10% producer groups are subject to unannounced audits every year. Notification for unannounced audits shall be given within 48 hrs. of audit. In case if the date and time is not acceptable for the reasons to be given in writing by the producer group, then addition chance will be given. In case if any producer groups fail to cooperate with CB on two occasions for unannounced audit then its certification shall be suspended till the time the unannounced audit is done as per the convenience of CB.

5.6.17.3 Off-site and on-site QMS audit

a. At the discretion of CB, QMS audit can be undertaken in two stages first off-site followed by on-site. But both audits to be done by the same QMS auditor. CB can offer this option to the operator to minimize the on-site man days' cost and to be agreed in writing by the operator.
b. Off-site audit involves desk review of documents submitted by the operator (in hard copy or through certification portal) which involve:
    i. Internal QMS audit,
    ii. Internal field audit of members including evidences uploaded on certification portal,
    iii. Internal register of members,
    iv. Risk assessment procedure,
    v. Residue management and monitoring system, including residue test reports, list of inputs used, their labels,
    vi. NABL accreditation status of labs used for testing purposes.
c. Off-site audit shall be done prior to on-site audit within the same cropping season. In case if the time gap between the off-site and on-site audit is more than 4 weeks, and/or cropping season has changed then on-site audit shall again undertake complete document audit.
d. On-site audit shall comprise of remaining part as per the audit checklist.

5.6.17.4 On-site field audit of group members

a. On-site audit shall be done as per the Checklist and all control point parameters to be covered.
b. Audit shall cover all products, crops, aggregation centers and postharvest handling units.
c. In case if the postharvest collection, handling, and processing units are more than one then all sites shall be audited. But in cases where postharvest operations are being taken at multiple member sites and only the processed/ clean material is brought at central postharvest handling units, then all the records shall be audited, and random audit shall be done for member sites as per the field audit plan.

5.6.17.5 Identification of random member sites (sampling of member sites)

a. At least the square root (rounded-off to the next digit) of total members/ sites shall be audited before issue of certification.
b. In cases where two crop cycles are subjected to audit at different periods of time then the total number of field sites can be split into two parts and only the remaining part to be taken up during second field audit provided that no non-conformities were detected in first past of the audit.
c. But based on risk assessment or when there were non-conformities in first part of audit or inconsistencies are detected in QMS audit, the CAB can increase the number of field site audits.
d. Selection of member/ sites shall be based on risk assessment carried out by CB
e. Selected member sites audit shall be subjected to all products, processes, fields, postharvest handling sites and storages including transport facilities if any. CB auditor can also interview the member for verification of control points.
f. Representative of the QMS and member being audited shall be present during audit and shall sign on the audit report.
g. It will be the responsibility of the QMS manager to ensure that the member field site is available for field audit along with its representative.
h. A sampling plan shall be followed whereby all member/sites are audited within a defined period based on the risk classification of the process or product.
i. If there is no sampling, then the CB may decide to perform all CB farm audits in one or two visits based on risk.

5.6.17.6 Initial audit

a. Initial audit is done when a new operator/ producer group applies for certification and has completed the registration process followed by QMS audit and full internal member's field audits.
b. In cases where existing producer group adds new products/ crops, then also initial audit can be done.
c. Initial audit can also be done when the producer group changes the CB and simultaneously add new members and new crops/ products
d. Initial audit shall comprise of following:
    i. Entire scope of certification shall be audited.
    ii. All existing product and process proposed in the scope of certification shall be covered. Products/ process not available at the time of audit shall not be covered in certification.
    iii. Date of registration is considered as the date of start of certification process and initial audit shall be conducted after three months of registration.
    iv. Products/ crops harvested before the registration and records maintained prior to registration shall not be considered for certification.
e. Under high risk operations, all Postharvest Units shall be audited at least twice in a year, when postharvest processes are in operation

5.6.17.7 Renewal/ annual audits

a. Each producer group shall be audited for the entire scope of certification annually prior to grant of certification.
b. In case if the producer group has changed the CB, then the new CB shall conduct the full audit irrespective of the outcome of audit done by previous CB.
c. At least 10% of the total number of producer groups shall be subjected to unannounced audit every year.

d. Renewal/annual audit can be done any time during the year, starting from 4 months prior to last date of validity and up to 4 months after the date of validity.
e. There shall be minimum of six months' difference between two annual audits. However, surveillance audits and unannounced audits can be done any time during the year.
f. For high-risk operations under fruits and vegetable scope, every postharvest handling units shall be audited annually while in operation. This can be done any time during annual, renewal, surveillance or unannounced audits.

5.6.17.8 Communication of audit outcome

After the completion of on-site and field audit (initial and renewal/ annual audit) the CB auditor shall communicate the result of audit and give the statement of non-compliances. The CB auditor and the representative of QMS shall sign the non-compliance statement. In case if the producer group QMS representative refuses to sign the statement then the inspection shall be treated as null and void and a fresh audit shall be planned with additional fee for the audit which operator need to comply. In the event of non-payment of additional audit fee or again non-signing of the non-conformity statement then the certification of the operator shall be suspended and shall be revoked only after the audit is done and operator signs the compliance/ non-compliance statement.

5.6.17 Certification process

a. The audit team shall ensure 100% compliance of QMS audit and further shall assess the entire process based on standard checklist covering all CPCC.
b. Any non-conformity observed during audit shall be communicated to the producer group QMS in writing.
c. Producer group QMS may be allowed time to rectify the shortcomings and file non-conformity compliance report. Certification decision can be done on final evaluation report including the compliance submitted by the producer on non-conformities.
d. After the audit the CAB shall issue an audit report

5.6.18. Compliance levels for certification

i. To be eligible for GAP certification the producer needs to comply to the following compliance levels:
   - Major – 100% compliance with all applicable critical control points is mandatory,
   - Minor – 95% compliance with all applicable major control points is mandatory,
   - Recommendation – These are recommendations, and no minimum compliance percentage is necessary.

ii. Calculation for compliance level under Major

$$\frac{\text{Total no of applicable major control points} - \text{Non-compliant major control points}}{\text{Total no of applicable control points}} \times 100 = \text{Total major compliance level in \%}$$

Example – Suppose if there are 50 applicable major control points (total no of Major control points – Non applicable Major control points) and 2 control points are non-compliant (means 48 compliant Control points) then compliance level shall be 48 x 100/50 = 96%.

iii. In case if compliance level is in fraction of a number, then it shall be rounded off to nearest number i.e from 2.1 to 2.4 to 2.0 and 2.5 to 2.9 to 3.0.

iv. The producer group shall comply with the agreements signed with CB.

v. The calculation for compliance or non-compliance shall be available for all internal and CB audits.

vi. Compliance calculation shall be done only after all internal and CB farm audits are done.

vii. For producer groups compliance shall be calculated for each sampled and audited site/ member. Each sampled site shall comply with certification requirements. Any applicable control points common to all sites shall be taken into account for all members/sites.

5.6.19 Certification decision

a. The CB shall decide on certification within 28 days of completion of external evaluation by CB.
b. In case if some non-conformities were observed and producer group is given an opportunity to comply those, then a maximum period of certification decision shall be 28 + 28 days.
c. In case where operator does not close the non-conformities within the stipulated time then the CB shall decide on certification within 56 days of external audit by CB.
d. Although a non-conformity report is provided to the producer/ operator, but after communication of result if producer/ operator requests, the CB shall provide full CB audit report including the audit checklist within 5 working days of the certification decision. It is not obligatory for CB to provide full audit report before internal technical review and certification decision.
e. Any complaint or appeal against the decision of CB shall be taken up as per the documented policy and procedures of CB.
f. In case if operator is not satisfied with the complaint resolution by the CB or CB does not resolve the complaint in time, the operator can appeal to accreditation secretariat. Accreditation body shall close the complaint as per its documented policy and procedures.

5.6.20 Grant of certification and distribution of produce

5.6.20.1 Grant of certification

a. Certificate shall be issued only to the legal authority of the QMS registered with the CB.
b. On the request of the operator, the name of the trader/mandator can also be included in the certificate with a disclaimer “Can be exclusively traded through ….. trader name …
c. All certificates shall be issued in electronic format from the certification portal.
d. The certification shall be granted to the legal authority of the group and individual farmer/ production sites shall not be entitled to certificate and sale of certified

produce as independent entity. All sales, purchases shall be done through the legal entity of the group. The applicant operator shall be responsible for ensuring that all production sites and group members comply with the certification requirements.

e. Certificates are non-transferable from one legal unit to another. In case where the entire QMS project site is transferred to another legal entity the same can be done only after the certification is granted and subsequent certification takes place after subsequent audit and the new legal entity is registered as new applicant with new UIN.
f. Conditional certificates are not allowed,
g. The certificate shall remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of certification decision.
h. The validity can be reduced on the request of producer/ operation in cases where there is need for subsequent changes or change of legal entity.

5.6.20.2 Flexible Distribution

In cases where group produce large variety of fresh fruits and vegetables with short duration then group may opt for flexible distribution. In flexible distribution individual members are allowed to directly dispatch or sale/ trade to external agencies and claim these produce as certified Bharat GAP produce. In all such cases the group need to register with CB for flexible distribution. Producers can apply for flexible distribution any time after registration but before CB audit and in harvest coming after CB audit, the application need to be submitted before harvest operations start.

5.6.20.2.1 Requirements for flexible distribution

a. Producer group shall develop effective policies for allowing their members direct sales and documentation of sales. All such direct sales/ distribution records shall be available for CB audit with the group.
b. Group members selling produce outside the group shall be identified and the list of such members to be sent to CB with details of crops.
c. A group member shall opt either for dispatches through group or independent of the group for entire production of their farm.
d. The group shall issue a individual member certificate (to be drawn from Bharat GAP certification portal.
e. The liability for product quality shall rest with the individual group members.
f. All transaction and shipping documents related to distribution of products outside of the producer group shall accompany individual member transaction certificate.
g. The members shall maintain full traceability of all delivered products and to whom it was delivered.
h. Traceability and mass balancing shall be managed and maintained at group level.
i. Postharvest handling outside the member's farm and not under the supervision of the group shall not qualify for Bharat GAP certification.

5.6.21 Renewal of certification and extension of certification period

a. Application for renewal needs to be submitted any time during 120 days before end of validity date but at least 60 days before the validity expiry date.
b. Under exceptional circumstances, to be recorded with justification, the validity of certificate can be extended up to 4 months on the request of the operator, submitted before the expiry date, but the operator must renew the certification before the extended date. Failing the certification shall stand expired or cancelled and the operator will be required to start the certification process afresh.
c. Extended certificate shall be renewed from the original date of expiry and operator need to pay the full certification fee.
d. Operator cannot change the CB during extension period. They need to renew the certificate and then change the CB after getting NOC.
e. Expired certificates cannot be extended or renewed.

5.6.22 Burden of proof

a. In cases of information/ complaint is received from the traders or accreditation secretariat, such as higher level of pesticide residue above MRL, microbial contamination or mixing of non-certified product, that can have potential threat to Bharat GAP certification integrity, then it will be the responsibility of certificate holder and CB to refute the claim by verifying and providing evidence of compliance.
b. To investigate the complaint, the CB may conduct additional announced or unannounced audit or on-site visit.
c. The CB shall mandatorily report the findings and action taken to the accreditation secretariat within 30 days of the information received. Failure to do so shall be treated as non-compliance of CB and action shall be taken as per the sanction procedure of accreditation body.
d. In cases of operator facing a complaint regarding food safety, working ethics or facing a trial on criminal cases in any court of law related to the production and processes under certification the CB shall inform the operator and accreditation secretariat within 48 hrs. of receipt of information.

5.6.23 Non-compliance and non-conformance

a. Non-compliance – A minor or recommendation check point is not fulfilled according to the P&Cs.
b. Non-conformance – Any applicable Major requirement or more than 5% applicable Minor requirements are not fulfilled
c. Contractual non-conformance – Breach of any contractual agreement signed between CB and operator.

5.6.24 Sanctions

a. In cases where non-conformance or continuous non-conformities are detected the CB shall impose sanctions (such as warning, suspension, withdrawal of certification or termination of certification) as per the sanction procedures of CBs.
b. Producers cannot change the CB until the non-conformities that led to the sanction is satisfactorily closed by the CB.
c. Only the CB that has imposed the sanction is entitled to close the non-conformity and lift the sanction, after verification of timely corrective action.

5.6.25 Warning

a. Warning letter to be issued in all cases of non-conformance including in standard implementation, documentation, certification procedure or under contractual obligations,
b. Warning can be given at the time of audit as provisional warning or can be given by the certification committee of CB.
c. During Initial audit - If producer/ operator failed to comply with corrective actions needed under 100% Major control points or 95% under Minor control points or under any of the contractual obligations within 3 months of date of audit, a complete CB audit shall be performed again before a certificate is issued.
d. Subsequent audit – Operator need to close all non-conformities within 28 days. In case if operator failed to comply and submit necessary compliance report a notice for suspension may be issued and still operator fails to close non-conformities in another 15 days then the certification shall be suspended with immediate effect.
e. In cases of serious threat to the integrity of certification process or infringement of th applicable laws the certification can be suspended without giving a notice.

5.6.26 Suspension

a. Subsequent to warning, if an operator fails to comply with the requirements within 28 days then the CB shall suspend the certification within 48 hrs.
b. If any infringement of any regulatory laws is detected in the operation, or there are risk of outbreak of disease due to certification project, CB shall suspend the certification temporarily and investigate the problem and then take final decision based on investigation report.
c. Only the CB that imposed the suspension can lift the suspension. Operators are not allowed to change the CB during suspension period.
d. Suspension can be selective on particular product, process or area or can be on entire operation of the operator.
e. Suspension order by CB shall specify the period during which corrections are to be applied, but this period shall not extend beyond 12 months.
f. During the period of suspension, the operator is not allowed to use the logo of GAP certification on products of suspended operation.
g. If producer notifies the correction report before the last date of suspension, then CB shall undertake necessary assessment process, may on-site, off-site or limited to operation found to be non-compliant. At the discretion of CB full CB audit can also be done before suspension is lifted.
h. If operator fails to comply with the sanctions in specified time, then the entire certification process shall be terminated by the CB.

5.6.27 Voluntary withdrawal or suspension

a. An operator may opt for voluntary suspension with suspension request to CAB for one, several or of whole certification operation, in cases where operator finds problems or is unable to comply to the requirements and seeks time for corrective actions. But voluntary suspension cannot be sought if operator is under surveillance of CAB for serious non-compliances.
b. The suspension period shall be counted for certification cycle and operator is bound to pay the fee for full period including that of suspension period.
c. The deadline for closing non-conformities can be extended by the CAB on request by the operator.

5.6.28 Cancellation/ termination of certification

a. A certification project/ operation can be terminated or cancelled for the following reasons:
   - In case of fraud identified by CB or regulatory authorities or lack of trust by CAB
   - If operator has been found to misusing the Bharat GAP label
   - If operator is making false claims about its certification status

b. Cancellation/ termination of the contract results in total withdrawal of certification status and authority to use Bharat GAP Logo including the use of past Bharat GAP certification status in their literature or documents.

c. Same operator shall be considered for re-registration only after 12 months of termination.

5.6.29 Key Responsibilities and Qualification Requirement for QMS Staff

a. All QMS staff shall have knowledge of agricultural and horticultural system. They may be the agriculture/ horticulture practitioners on their own farms.
b. All QMS staff shall have undergone food safety and good agricultural practices training.
c. Formal training in HACCP, food hygiene training and
d. Training in GAP requirements in agricultural/ horticultural crops
e. QMS auditors and internal farm auditors have working skills in reading, writing and speaking skills in language being used by the QMS and also the local language to have communication with QMS member farmers,
f. Well versed with technical terms and terminology of words and sentences associated with GAP certification systems,
g. Have undergone internal training on quality and operational manual of QMS.
h. Independence and confidentiality – All QMS staff shall be free from any conflict of interest and shall have signed the declaration for transparency and no-conflict of interest. All QMS staff shall also sign the confidentiality agreement with QMS. CBs can provide the templates for such agreements and declarations.

5.6.30 Responsibilities

5.6.30.1 QMS Manager

Responsibilities

a. Overall supervision and responsibility for QMS functioning
b. Development and control of QMS documentation
c. Management of members registers
d. Receipt of internal and external QMS audits and ensuring necessary corrective actions
e. Planning and management of internal audits of all members to ensure compliance with certification requirements,
f. Communication with CAB and timely submission of internal QMS and field audits
g. Generally, QMS manager does not perform QMS and internal farm audits. But can approve the internal reports for onward submission to CAB.

Qualifications needed:

a. Post high school Diploma in agriculture, horticulture or plant sciences with two years of experience in agricultural certification systems or have

experience in handling agricultural operations for two years, including management of self-farm operation systems,
b. Undergone QMS certification training and Internal QMS auditor training,
c. Knowledge about GAP standards, certification requirement and QMS management.
d. Well versed with third party certification systems or have some experience in managing QMS as internal auditor,

5.6.30.2 Internal QMS auditors

Responsibilities

a. QMS audit
b. Review of internal audit reports and auditing of postharvest facilities,
c. Development of compliance reports based on document and field audits,
d. Approval of QMS audit reports in cases where he himself was not auditor. Internal QMS auditor cannot approve the internal reports audited by it.

Qualifications needed

a. Practical knowledge about QMS and GAP certification
b. Undergone training on internal QMS auditors, internal field auditors and QMS documentation or have past experience of working in QMS as auditor or internal farm auditor
c. Undergone two shadow inspections under supervision of Internal QMS auditor

5.6.30.3 Internal Farm auditors

Responsibilities

a. Internal farm auditing as per checklist
b. Preparation of internal farm inspection reports
c. Preparation of non-compliance statements

Qualifications needed

a. Undergone practical training in farm auditing or
b. Have completed two shadow inspections under the supervision of trained internal auditor.

5.6.31 QMS Management Review

a. QMS Members shall undertake an annual management review and document the results. A copy of management review to be provided to all QMS members.
b. This review can also be in the form of meeting where food safety resources, status of action taken based on earlier reviews, external and internal changes and the effectiveness of the QMS.
c. Such review reports shall be made available to CB auditor for auditing

Chapter 5 C
Certification Process for
Small grower Groups without QMS

5.7 Certification process for small farmer groups without QMS

5.7.1 Small groups without legal QMS

This option allows 10-50 small farmers located in close by areas (within a village or close by villages joined by territories) to form an informal group and adopt Bharat GAP certification without any common legal status. All certification requirements including the internal peer appraisal in such groups shall be the collective responsibility of the group.

5.7.2 Requirements for small groups without legal QMS

a. The small group can comprise of minimum 10 to maximum of 50 members belonging to same village or nearby villages with touching territories.
b. Such group can be SHGs or Kisan Clubs having common Bank account. Groups not having common bank account can also join provided they commit to working together in the form of agreements.
c. The members commit to adoption of Bharat GAP practices, abide by the small farmer group rules, and participate in the group activities such as quarterly group meeting, trainings, internal peer appraisal, recommending each members certification status and certification data management through the Bharat GAP portal.
d. The group shall elect one member as leader of the group who shall be responsible for coordination, documentation, and data management.
e. The group shall meet at least four times a year and each member is required to participate in at least 2 group meetings. The group shall also organize at least 2 trainings per year on various aspects as mentioned in P&Cs.
f. Entire documentation shall be maintained at group level and in the custody of group leader. Required data is also to be uploaded on Bharat GAP certification portal. Minimum documentation to be maintained at group level is as follows:
    i. Group operating manual (may be developed by the group and approved by CB or prescribed by the CB).
    ii. Register of group members with details of each member such as name, family details, farm details, area proposed for Bharat GAP certification, supporting land records, map of the farm with GPS coordinates. Copy of agreement between member and group and commitment pledge shall also be maintained in file.
    iii. Training register
    iv. Quarterly meeting register
    v. Peer appraisal records of each member.
    vi. Summary peer appraisal sheets
    vii. Stock registers, farm produce records, sale, and purchase records (even if the sales are taking place in flexible manner)
g. Group shall constitute peer appraisal committees comprising of minimum 2 to maximum 5 members (depending upon the size of the group). Peer appraisal

committees shall undertake internal peer appraisal of each member once in every cropping season.

h. Peer appraisal shall be done as per the standard P&C checklist and assess the compliance of each member as per the criteria (100% major and 95% minor).
i. Peer appraisal is to be done prior to harvesting of the crop and at least 15 days before the CB audit.
j. Once the peer appraisal is complete a peer appraisal summary sheet will be submitted to CB with the request for audit. The summary peer appraisal sheet or records of internal peer appraisal can also be made available to CB during CB audit.

5.7.3 Decision about the crop and procurement of Inputs

As the homogeneity in the cropping and common input factor is the key for grower group certification following requirements are mandatory for growers' small group without legal QMS:

a. The group shall decide in the meeting about the selection of crop as per market demand and all members shall be following the similar cropping sequence.
b. The group shall decide about the inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, biostimulants, hormones etc. as per the standard Package of Practices recommended by ICAR institutes or Sate Agricultural university or Department of Agriculture.
c. The group shall identify the common source/ vendor and shall purchase the agreed input. Inputs can be stored at a common store or may be stored separately at each members premises as per the requirement of Bharat GAP certification.
d. All group members shall follow the similar application protocols. The group shall provide a common crop calendar and crop husbandry practices to all its members every cropping season.
e. Individual member shall maintain its entire farming activity in farm diary as prescribed by the group or as mandated by the CB. The farm diary shall be available for audit by CB.
f. Individual farm records in farm diary shall also be supported with vouchers, invoices, and stock registers (for inputs)
g. Individual farmer shall also maintain its production and sale records in the format as prescribed by the CB.

5.7.4 Internal peer appraisal of group members

The small grower group without legal QMS shall undertake all group level activity in participatory mode, wherein each member is assigned with a task and participate in implementation, training, group meeting, peer appraisal and decision making.

One peer appraisal shall be done in each of the cropping season. Before peer appraisal the group will meet and constitute peer appraisal committees. At least one member in each committee shall be literate enough to fill the checklist and is trained in peer appraisal. The group shall allocate the peer appraisal duties and shall ensure that peers do not appraise their own farm or their family member's

farm. Also, to ensure that peer committee members do not appraise each other on reciprocal basis.

a. The peer appraisal report shall comprise of following:
   i. Name and location ID of the member
   ii. Date of appraisal
   iii. Name and contact details of group member or its representative,
   iv. Name of peer appraisal committee members
   v. Comments of peer appraisal committee against each principle. Specific mention to be made for all major and minor P&Cs which are applicable or non-applicable as compliant Yes, compliant No and comments in corresponding column. Recommendatory control points being recommendatory in nature need no comments.
   vi. List of non-compliances and time granted for corrective actions,
   vii. Compliance status in terms of percentage with calculation of compliance
   viii. Duration of the audit from opening meeting to closing meeting
b. Peer appraisal reports shall be signed by the committee member and appraised farmer member or its representative.
c. Peer appraisal report shall be reviewed in the internal group meeting and decided upon on the compliant status of the member.
d. Where peer appraisals take place continuously over 12 months period, a predefined schedule shall be followed.

All other requirements related to non-compliances, corrective actions and sanctions, Product traceability, Sale return or Product withdrawal, Entry of new members/ addition of new sites shall be as per the requirements prescribed under Grower group with QMS (clause Nos. 5.6.10, 5.6.11, 5.6.12 and 5.6.13).

5.7.5 Registration and application to CB

General requirement for registration with CB, making application to CB, review of application by CB, registration by CB, reregistration/ transfer to new CB shall remain the same as prescribed under grower groups with QMS. (clause Nos 5.6.16.1, 5.6.16.2, 5.6.16.3, 5.6.16.4, 5.6.16.5)

5.7.6 External audit by CB

5.7.6.1 Audit Process

a. External audit by CB shall takes place only after peer appraisal for all the group members is complete,
b. External audit shall comprise of following:
   - Complete document audit, competence assessment of group activities such as meeting, training, peer appraisal committee formation process and appraisal report review and appraisal outcome,
   - Square root of total group members (rounded off to next number) will be selected on random selection basis for individual member field audit,

c. In case of re-certification audit, CB auditor need to ensure that all non-conformities are closed, and action taken is verified before random member field audit is planned and executed.
d. In case of unannounced audit, minimum of 10% of members are audited.

5.7.6.2 On-site field audit of group members

a. On-site audit shall be done as per the Checklist and all control point parameters to be covered.
b. Audit shall cover all products, crops, aggregation centers and postharvest handling units.

5.7.6.3 Identification of random member sites (sampling of member sites)

a. At least the square root (rounded-off to the next digit) of total members/ sites shall be audited before issue of certification.
b. In cases where two crop cycles are subjected to audit at different periods of time then the total number of field sites can be split into two parts and only the remaining part to be taken up during second field audit provided that no non-conformities were detected in first part of the audit.
c. But based on risk assessment or when there were non-conformities in first part of audit or inconsistencies are detected in group management, the CB can increase the number of field site audits.
d. Selection of member/ sites shall be based on risk assessment carried out by CB
e. Selected member sites audit shall be subjected to all products, processes, fields, postharvest handling sites and storages including transport facilities if any. CB auditor can also interview the member for verification of control points.

5.8 Initial and renewal audit

Same as per Grower group with QMS (Clause 5.6.17.6, 5.6.17.7, 5.6.17.8)

5.9 Certification decision, grant of certification, extension of certification, handling of non-compliances, withdrawal, suspension, cancellation

Same as per Grower group with QMS (clause 5.6.17, 5.6.18, 5.6.19 and 5.6.20)

5.10 Flexible distribution

In case of small grower groups without QMS are growing fruits and vegetables which are dispatched directly from fields, flexible distribution approach shall be adopted. In this approach individual members are allowed to sale their produce directly to external agencies and their produce will be treated as Bharat GAP certified. Each member shall provide details of production and direct sales to the group leader for record keeping. Certification portal of Bharat GAP has provisions for grant of individual certificate to members with UID for Group and sub-UID for each member.

Requirements for flexible distribution

a. Producer group shall develop effective policies for allowing their members direct sales and documentation of sales. All such direct sales/ distribution records shall be available for CB audit with the group.
b. Group members selling produce outside the group shall be identified and the list of such members to be sent to CB with details of crops.
c. A group member shall opt either for dispatches through group or independent of the group for entire production of their farm.
d. The group shall issue a individual member certificate (to be drawn from Bharat GAP certification portal.
e. The liability for product quality shall rest with the individual group members.
f. All transaction and shipping documents related to distribution of products outside of the producer group shall accompany individual member transaction certificate.
g. The members shall maintain full traceability of all delivered products and to whom it was delivered.
h. Traceability and mass balancing shall be managed and maintained at group level.
i. Postharvest handling outside the member's farm and not under the supervision of the group shall not qualify for Bharat GAP certification.

Chapter 5D
QMS Requirements Checklist

Control Points (All control points are major)

	Sub section	Requirements
QMS 1	**Legality and administration**	
	a	The producer group shall be a legal entity
	b	The legal entity is required to enter into agreement with CB as per the prescribed format
QMS 2	**Development of institutional structure as QMS**	
	a	Legal entity of producer group shall develop an institutional structure comprising of: a. Manager QMS b. Internal QMS auditor c. Internal farm inspectors d. Training and capacity building expert e. Sales/ purchase manager f. Technical expert
QMS 3	**Producer groups (QMS) and producer group members**	
	a	Producer group (QMS) shall entered into legal binding agreement with all its members as per the common format provided by CB
	b	All the group members shall commit to work under QMS as single legal unit.
QMS 4	**Production site ownership**	
	A	All production sites are owned, contracted or rented under the direct control of the legal entity.
	b	All product handling units (PHUs) shall also be under the direct control of QMS
QMS 5	**Internal register**	
	A	QMS shall maintain an internal a register with details of all its members and production sites
	B	Details required to be filled in register includes: i. Name of producer group member ii. Name of contact person iii. Full address (physical and postal) iv. Contact data (telephone number and e-mail address) v. Other legal entity ID (GST number, ID number, etc.), vi. Products registered vii. Production site identification viii. Production site location ix. Information regarding the relation of the legal entity to the production site (ownership, rental, etc.) x. Products not included for registration xi. Production area and/or quantity for each registered product xii. CB (list of all CBs if a producer makes use of more than one CB, including information regarding for which product or standard each CB is used)

		xiii. Production site status (internal status as a result of the last internal farm audit: approved, suspended, etc.) xiv. Date of last internal farm audit
QMS 6	**Quality management system of the group** (Clause 5.6.4 of chapter 5B)	
	Management and Organization	
	a	QMS institutional structure shall be robust with adequate manpower and shall perform all functions as per documented policy and procedures in the form of: a. Quality manual b. Operational manual and c. Checklists/ formats
QMS 7	**Organizational Structure**	
	a	Organizational structure shall be documented and ensures that within the QMS structure, individuals are responsible for and capable of: i. Managing the QMS (QMS manager(s)) ii. Conducting the internal QMS audit and verifying the internal farm audits (by internal QMS auditor(s)) iii. Conducting for each member/site an annual internal farm audit (by internal farm auditor(s)) iv. Training the internal auditors and the producers v. Providing technical advice to the producer group (voluntary) vi. Manage and document sales/ purchases
	b	Entire QMS staff shall have sufficient authority to make independent and technically justified decisions during the internal audits.
QMS 8	**Competency and training to staff**	
	A	Competency requirements, training, and qualifications for key staff shall be as per the requirements laid down in Chapter 5B.
	B	QMS management staff shall be adequately trained and meet the defined competency requirements: i. The internal QMS auditor(s) and the internal farm auditors shall have no conflict of interest. ii. The competence of internal QMS auditor(s), the internal farm auditor(s), and the QMS manager(s) shall be checked by management and reviewed by the CB. iii. Technical advisers to the members/sites shall meet the requirements described in the applicable P&Cs.
	C	Records of qualifications and training are maintained for all key staff (managers, internal auditors, etc.) shall be maintained
	d	Systems shall be in place to demonstrate that key staff are informed and aware of developments and legislative changes relevant to compliance of Bharat GAP standard.
QMS 9	**Document Control**	
	a	All operational documentation necessary for operation of QMS are adequately controlled. This documentation shall include, but not limited to i. The quality manual ii. Bharat GAP operating procedures iii. Work instructions and policies iv. Recording forms

		v. Relevant external standards (e.g., the current Bharat GAP normative documents)
	b	Relevant documentation shall be available to assigned staff and registered producer group members.
	c	Policy and procedure manuals shall be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the Bharat GAP standard
	d	All controlled documents shall be identified with an issue number, issue/review date, and appropriate page numbers.
	e	Any changes in these documents shall be reviewed and approved by authorized staff
QMS 10	**Records**	
	a	Records shall be maintained to demonstrate effective control and implementation of the QMS (including requirements, policies, and procedures of the quality manual and other relevant QMS documentation) and compliance with the requirements of the relevant Bharat GAP standard.
	b	Records shall be kept for a minimum of two years.
QMS 11	**Complaint handling**	
	a	The QMS shall have a system for effectively managing customer complaints and the relevant part of the complaint system shall be available to the producer group members.
	b	There shall be a documented procedure that describes how complaints are received, registered, identified, investigated, followed up, and reviewed.
	c	The procedure shall be available to customers as required.
	d	The procedure shall cover both complaints against the certificate holder and complaints against individual members/sites.
QMS 12	**Internal Quality management System Audit**	
	a	QMS shall undertake an internal QMS audit and internal farm audits of all members/sites and PHUs, covering all products and processes under the certification scope annually
QMS 13	**Internal inspections**	
	a	The QMS requirements shall be audited at least annually.
	b	Internal QMS auditors shall comply with the requirements of minimum qualification for key staff
	c	Internal QMS auditors shall be independent of the area being audited.
	d	The same person who initially develops the QMS may undertake the required internal QMS audits. However, the person responsible for the day-to-day ongoing management of the QMS is not allowed to conduct the internal QMS audits.
	e	Records of the internal QMS audit, internal audit findings, and follow-up of corrective actions resulting from the internal QMS audit(s) shall be maintained and available.
	f	The completed QMS checklist (including central PHU requirements, where applicable) shall include comments for every QMS requirement and shall be available on-site for review by the CB auditor during the CB audit.

	g	The QMS checklist shall include the name and signature of the audited QMS representative, as well as the name and signature of the internal QMS auditor.
	h	Where the internal QMS audit is not performed in 1 day but continuously over a 12-month period, a predefined schedule shall be in place.
QMS 14	**Internal members/ sites audit**	
	a	Internal farm audits against all relevant Bharat GAP P&C shall be carried out at each registered member/site and PHUs at least once per year.
	b	Internal farm audit timing shall follow the rules defined in the Bharat GAP and scope-specific rules.
	c	Internal farm auditors shall comply with the requirements of minimum qualification.
	d	Internal farm auditors shall be independent of the area being audited. Internal farm auditors cannot audit their own work.
	e	New members/sites shall always be internally audited and approved prior to being entered in the QMS internal register
	f	The original internal farm audit reports and notes shall be maintained and available for the CB audit.
	g	The internal farm audit report shall contain the following information: i. Identification of registered member(s)/site(s) ii. Signature of the registered member and/or person responsible for the production site iii. Date iv. Internal farm auditor name and signature v. Registered products vi. Internal farm audit result against each of the Bharat GAP P&C. vii. Details of any non-compliances identified and period for implementation of corrective actions viii. Internal farm audit results with calculation of compliance ix. Duration of the internal farm audit (record of start and end time) x. Name of internal QMS auditor who approved the audit report. Any other evidence of review and approval is also possible.
	h	The internal QMS auditor shall review and make the decision on whether the member/site is compliant with the Bharat GAP requirements based on the internal farm audit reports presented.
	i	Where the internal audits take place continuously over a 12-month period, a predefined schedule shall be in place. This is not applicable for initial certification audits.
QMS 15	**Non-compliances, corrective actions and sanctions**	
	a	There shall be a documented procedure for handling the non-compliances and corrective actions which may result from internal or CB audits, customer complaints, or failure of the QMS. This procedure shall describe how to identify and evaluate non-conformances and non-compliances detected at the QMS, PHU, and member/site levels.

	b	Corrective actions following non-compliances shall be evaluated and a timescale defined for action.
	c	Responsibility for implementing and resolving corrective actions shall be clearly defined.
	d	QMS shall have a documented system of sanctions which shall apply to all members/sites. All internal sanctions shall be decided by the QMS on this basis.
	e	A product cannot be partially suspended for a member/site (i.e., the entire product shall be suspended).
	f	Mechanisms shall be in place to immediately notify the CB about suspensions or cancellations of registered members/sites.
	g	Records shall be maintained of all sanctions, including evidence of subsequent corrective actions and decision-making processes.
	h	Producer group members cannot change producer groups until the non-conformance that led to the respective sanction is satisfactorily closed.
	i	Producer groups can lift product suspensions and self-suspensions issued by themselves on their accepted producer group members.
QMS 16	**Product traceability and segregation**	
	a	There shall be a documented procedure for identifying registered products and ensuring traceability of all products (conforming and non-conforming) to their members/sites.
	b	A mass balance exercise shall be carried out at least annually for each registered product to demonstrate compliance within the certificate holder's legal entity.
	c	Bharat GAP certified products shall be handled in a manner that prevents their being mixed with products not meeting the requirements. An effective system shall be in place to ensure segregation of products originating from certified and noncertified production processes.
	d	Effective systems and procedures shall be in place to prevent any mislabelling of products originating certified and noncertified production processes.
	e	In case of parallel production QMS shall ensure that all final ready-to-be-sold products are properly identified with Bharat GAP identification number if the product is certified. The Bharat GAP identification number shall not be used to label noncertified products.
	f	There shall be a final document check to ensure correct product dispatch of products originating from certified and noncertified production processes.
	g	All transaction documentation (sales invoices, other sales-related documents, dispatch documentation, etc.) related to sales of products coming from a certified production process shall include the BHARAT GAP identification number of the certificate holder and shall contain a reference to the certification status.

	h	Appropriate to the scale of the operation, procedures shall be established, documented, and maintained for identifying incoming products originating from certified and noncertified production processes from members/sites or purchased from different sources (i.e., other producers or traders). Records shall include: i. Product description ii. BHARAT GAP certification status iii. Quantities of incoming/purchased product(s) iv. List of approved suppliers and supplier details v. Copy of the BHARAT GAP certificates, in case of products originating from certified production processes vi. Traceability data/codes related to the incoming/purchased products vii. Purchase orders/invoices received by the certificate holder
	i	Quantities shall be recorded and a summary maintained so as to facilitate the mass balance verification process. The frequency of the mass balance verification shall be done at least annually for each product.
	j	The PHUs included in the certification scope shall operate procedures that enable registered products to be identifiable and traceable from receipt through handling, storage, and dispatch.
	k	Conversion ratios shall be calculated and available for each relevant handling process. All generated product waste quantities shall be recorded. Losses due to handling, sorting, grading, and other shall be calculated and records of the losses shall be available for each handling process where loss occurs. The losses can be estimated but shall be justifiable and supported by records. A valid estimated record of the quantity or volume of harvested/slaughtered/processed product shall be compared with the records of the amount of product sold.
QMS 17	**Product withdrawal**	
	a	Documented procedures shall be in place to effectively manage the withdrawal of registered products.
	b	The procedure shall be tested in an appropriate manner at least annually. If a real withdrawal occurred during the last 12 months, it can be counted as the annual test.
QMS 18	**Outsources**	
	a	Where any activities are outsourced to third parties, procedures shall exist to ensure that these activities are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the relevant BHARAT GAP standard.
	b	Records shall be maintained to demonstrate the competency of subcontractor is assessed and meets the requirements.
QMS 19	**Registration of additional members/ sites for certification**	
	a	New sites and members may be added to a valid certificate (provided internal approval procedures are met). It is the responsibility of the certificate holder to immediately update the CB on any addition or withdrawal of members/sites to/from the list of approved members/sites.

	b	Up to 10% of new members/sites in one year can be added to the approved list by registering the members or sites without necessarily resorting to further verification by the CB.
	c	If the number of approved members/sites increases by more than 10% in one year, further CB farm audits of the newly added members/sites and an audit of at least the relevant part of the QMS will be required before additional members/sites can be added to the certificate.
	d	Regardless of the number of members/sites and the increase in quantity, if a new product is to be added to the certificate between surveillance CB audits and certification audits, a CB audit shall be carried out to the square root of the members/sites growing the new product.
QMS 20	**Logo use**	
	a	The producer group/multisite producer shall use the BHARAT GAP claim according to the rules in "BHARAT GAP trademarks use: Policy and guidelines."
QMS 21	**Management of QMS**	
	a	The QMS manager shall manage the organization's QMS in order to ensure compliance by all registered members/sites and PHUs.
	b	The QMS manager may conduct internal farm audits (at members/sites) to assess compliance with the certification requirements.
	c	The QMS manager shall produce timely and accurate reports on such internal farm audits.
	d	However, the QMS manager shall not perform internal QMS audits.
	e	If the QMS manager does not perform the internal farm audits, they can approve the members/sites based on the audit reports of the internal farm auditor(s).
QMS 22	**Key tasks for internal QMS auditors**	
	a	The internal QMS auditor audits the QMS and central PHUs of the producer group to assess compliance with the certification requirements
	b	The QMS auditor shall produce timely and accurate reports on such audits.
	c	The QMS auditor may approve the members/sites based on the audit reports of the internal farm auditor(s). If internal QMS auditors conduct the farm audits, they shall not approve those audit reports.
QMS 23	**Key tasks for internal farm auditors**	
	a	The internal farm auditor conducts farm audits at members/sites and their PHUs (of producer group members) to assess compliance with the certification requirements.
	b	The internal farm auditor shall produce timely and accurate reports on such audits.
	c	The internal farm auditor shall not perform internal QMS auditor tasks.
	Qualification requirements	
QMS 24	**Formal qualification for internal QMS staff**	
	a	A post-high school diploma in a discipline related to the scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture); or an agricultural high

		school qualification with two years of experience in the relevant scope after qualification; or any other high school qualification with two years of experience in QMS and three years of experience in the relevant scope after qualification.
QMS 25	**Formal qualifications for internal farm auditors**	
	a	A post-high school diploma in a discipline related to the scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture); or an agricultural high school qualification with two years of experience in the relevant scope after qualification; or any other high school qualification with three years of sector-specific experience (e.g., farm management, including own operations in the relevant product; commercial consultant in the relevant product; field experience relevant to specific products) and participation in educational opportunities relevant to the scope of certification.
QMS 26	**Technical skills and qualifications - QMS manager**	
	a	Completion of internal QMS auditor training related to QMS and training related to the relevant BHARAT GAP standard (total minimum duration of 16 hours).
QMS 27	**Technical skills and qualifications - Internal QMS auditor**	
	a	Practical knowledge of QMS.
	b	Completion of internal QMS auditor training related to QMS (minimum duration 16 hours).
QMS 28	**Technical skills and qualifications - Internal farm auditor Sign-off of internal farm auditors shall only occur as a result of:**	
	a	One-day practical audit training setting out basic principles of auditing.
	b	Observing two CB or internal BHARAT GAP farm audits (or other) by an already qualified auditor, and one successful witness audit by the internal QMS auditor, by a qualified internal farm auditor, or by the CB.
QMS 29	**Technical skills and qualifications - Training in food safety and good agricultural practices for internal QMS and farm auditors**	
	a	Training in the HACCP system either as part of formal qualifications or by the successful completion of formal training based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius or training in food safety management standards (e.g., ISO 22000, BRCGS, IFS, PHA).
	b	Food hygiene training either as part of formal qualifications or by the successful completion of formal training.
	c	For plants scope: plant protection, fertilizer, and integrated pest management training, either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training; all formal trainings by specialists on these topics
	d	In all cases internal auditors shall have practical knowledge about the products they are auditing. Experience may be complemented by trainings on product characteristics and handling operations. These trainings can be done internally.
QMS 30	**Communication skills -**	

	a	QMS manager and internal auditor(s) shall have "working language" skills in the location specific native/working language.
	b	Exceptions to this rule shall be clarified beforehand with the CB before the internal audit.
QMS 31	**Independence and confidentiality**	
	a	Internal auditors are not allowed to audit their own work. Independence of key staff shall be controlled and ensured by the QMS (i.e., an internal QMS auditor cannot evaluate their own operations or a producer they have also consulted in the last two years, the QMS manager cannot perform QMS audits, etc.).
	b	Key staff shall strictly observe the producer group's procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of information and records.

Chapter 5E
Residue Management System Checklist

All control points are major and compliance is must in 100% cases

No.	Principles	Criteria
1	**Organizational requirements for the residue monitoring system (RMS) operator**	
1.1	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operates independently of its participants (producers and suppliers).	The RMS operator shall demonstrate that the RMS operates independently of the participants. Under Option 2 producer group with QMS may operate their own RMS.
1.2	A register is maintained, identifying all participants and participant information.	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operator shall record at least the following information: participant name, address, and identification code or UIN.
1.3	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operator has a signed or confirmed agreement with participant.	The RMS operator and the participant shall have a mutual agreement that specify rights and duties regarding the usage of the RMS. If participation in an RMS is included in the general agreement, then a separate RMS agreement is not required.
2	**Risk assessment**	
2.1	Information regarding maximum residue limits (MRLs) is available.	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operator shall have a list of current applicable MRLs for all destination market(s)
2.2	A risk assessment for all registered is done and maximum residue limits (MRLs) of the destination markets are applied.	The risk assessment shall cover all products covered under the scope and registered with the residue monitoring system (RMS) operator.
2.3	The risk assessment reflects the production conditions of participating producers or registered supplier.	The risk assessment shall take into consideration: product, climate conditions, history, active ingredients, area of production, number of production sites, continuous harvest, plant protection product (PPP) registration restrictions, country of destination, maximum residue limit (MRL) test results, etc.). The most appropriate period for sampling and the sampling location shall be determined for each product.

	2.4	Based on the risk assessment and crops, a sampling frequency is determined to assess compliance with the maximum residue limits (MRLs).	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operator's risk assessment, past history and practices employed is used to determine the number of samples.
	2.5	The analysis methods for the maximum residue limit (MRL) testing are defined.	The analysis method to be used by the laboratories shall be approved under NABL accreditation scope and laboratory is ISO 17025 accredited.
	2.7	An annual sampling plan, based on the annual risk assessment, is developed and available. The maximum residue limit (MRL) test results from the previous year or season to be considered when establishing the sample plan.	The risk assessment shall be carried out annually and includes the products (crops), number of samples, period of sampling, and type of analysis. The following rules apply when determining the level of sampling: 1. If a new product is added to the scope 2. If the number of MRL exceedances is higher than the maximum permitted to maintain the level of sampling, the next higher level of sampling applies in the next year or season. 3. If the number of MRL exceedances is lower than the maximum permitted in two consecutive years, the next lower level of sampling applies in the next year or season. 4. If the number of MRL exceedances is higher than the maximum permitted at tightened level, 100% sampling of all production sites applies in the next year or season. 5. If the RMS operator takes more than the required minimum number of samples, the criterion for switching to a higher or lower level of sampling is to be justified and documented. 6. If the RMS operator is able to demonstrate compliance with the standard level in the two years prior to the year of implementation of RMS, the reduced level applies.
	3	**Sample taking**	
	3.1	Sampling procedures are documented.	Sampling procedures shall comply to the requirements of FSSAI Guidelines for sampling.

3.2	The sample takers are trained and independent.	The sampling may be carried out by persons trained and not connected with production and handling with no conflict of interest, or third-party experts. The sample taker selects the participant and collects samples at random in accordance with the sample plan and tin he required sample volume, and takes care of the packing and shipment of the sample to the lab. Proof of training (internal/external) of the in-house sample taker is documented.
3.3	Records of sampling are maintained.	Samples shall be traceable to individual participants.
3.4	Samples for maximum residue limit (MRL) testing are taken from products that are close to harvest or have been harvested.	The RMS sampling procedure shall define that the samples are taken from products that are close to harvest or have been harvested. Residue samples that are taken at a point in time that is not close to harvest or postharvest, shall not be considered valid samples for MRL testing, regardless of the result.
4	**Test results**	
4.1	The laboratory, used for the maximum residue limit (MRL) analysis, is NABL accredited.	The laboratory that carries out the MRL analysis shall be NABL accredited as per ISO/IEC 17025 and also accredited for the relevant testing methods. The laboratories shall provide evidence of their participation in proficiency tests and applicable certifications.
4.2	The test results are assessed in accordance with the applicable legislation regarding maximum residue limits (MRLs).	The test results shall be assessed in accordance with the applicable legislation. If a counter sample is analyzed, the result of the counter sample is decisive for the RMS.
4.3	The residue monitoring system (RMS) operator has a procedure in place to communicate analysis results to the participant concerned.	At least the maximum residue limit (MRL) test reports, with results showing that MRLs are not met, shall be reported to the participant concerned in writing. On request of the participant, all test reports shall be made available.
4.4	The analysis results are traceable.	Test results shall be traceable to the production site or the premises of the supply chain actor.
5	**Plan of action**	
5.1	The RMS operator has procedures in place to inform the participant if an unauthorized plant protection product (PPP) is detected in the sample for maximum residue limit (MRL) testing.	The RMS operator has a procedure in place to inform the participant in case of MRL exceedances. The finding shall be taken into consideration in the risk assessment.

5.3	The RMS operator keeps records of maximum residue limit (MRL) exceedances.	The RMS operator has a procedure in place to record MRL exceedances.
6	**Records**	
6.1	Residue monitoring system (RMS) records are complete and kept for a minimum of two years.	Records (e.g., test results or correspondence with the participant) shall be kept for a minimum of two years. Records shall include: • System documentation including the risk assessments • Annual updates of the risk assessments • The annual sampling plan • Analysis reports • Records of follow-up actions • Communication with participants • Annual summary of the results
6.2	RMS records are available and made available during the participant's certification body (CB) audit.	If the participants do not keep RMS records on site, the RMS operator has a procedure in place to make records available during the CB audit or on request.

Chapter 5F
Small Grower groups without QMS Audit Checklist

Section No.	Sub-no.	Control Points	Compliance criteria
1.	**General requirement of group**		
	a.	Small group requirement for number of farmers, close location, agreement and group leader. Necessary records on pledge and agreement shall be available with group.	• Number of farmers can be minimum 10 to maximum 50. • Farmers are located within the same village or nearby villages with touching boundaries. • All farmers have signed a pledge and an agreement for working as group on stamp paper and the same is notarized.
	b.	Group is maintaining the register with details of each member	Following details shall be available in register: • Name, • Family details, • Farm details, area proposed for Bharat GAP certification, • Supporting land records, • Map of the farm with GPS coordinates.
	c.	Group shall have access to operating manual, P&C checklist and recommended package of practices (PoPs) for crops being grown	Following documents shall be available with group in hard or soft copy in farmers local language: • Operating manual • P&C Checklist, Small group checklist • Recommended PoPs for crops •
	d.	Group leaders name and contact details	Verify the group leaders' election process and the group leader is maintaining all records.
	e.	Competency of group leader and peer appraisers	Check the information and competency of group members. Are you satisfied that the members are meet minimum competence criteria
	f.	Addition of new members and sites	Check whether new members have been added or new or additional sites have been added after last audit. If yes, verify physically and ensure that documents clearly indicate their addition and status
2.	**Meeting and training records**		
	a.	Ensure that group meets at least 4 times a year	• Check records of meetings with dates and signature of participants • Check that each member participates in at least 50% of meetings. • What issues discussed and recorded,

			• Check that crops to be grown and practices are discussed in meeting and finalized.
	b.	Group arranges 2 trainings per year. (Training and meeting can be organized on the same day but separate records to be maintained)	• Check records of trainings with dates and signature of participants • Check that each member participates in at least 50% of trainings
	c.	Training on peer appraisal methodology	• Group is require to conduct at least one training per year on method of peer appraisals and how P&C checklist is to be filled and recommended. • Check the record and take interview of few members to ascertain their competence.
3.	**Planning for peer appraisals**		
	a.	Constitution of peer appraisal committees	Group needs to constitute 2-5 members peer appraisal committees before every season in group meetings. Check from meeting records
	b.	Allocation of peer appraisal work to committees	Check for allocation of members for peer appraisal, Check committee members are not appraising their own farms or their family members, Check peer appraisal committees are not appraising on reciprocal basis. Check that the same committee members are not appraising the farmer for more than 2 times,
4.	**Peer appraisals**		
	a.	Peer appraisal report to be filled completely	Peer appraisal report should comprise of: i. Name and location ID of the member ii. Date of appraisal iii. Name and contact details of group member or its representative, iv. Name of peer appraisal committee members v. Comments of peer appraisal committee against each principle. Specific mention to be made for all major and minor P&Cs which are applicable or non-applicable as compliant Yes, compliant No and comments in corresponding column. Recommendatory control points being recommendatory in nature need no comments. vi. List of non-compliances and time granted for corrective actions,

			vii. Compliance status in terms of percentage with calculation of compliance viii. Duration of the audit
	a.	Peer appraisals to be done against complete checklist of P&C Peer appraisal to be done close to harvesting	Check full P&C checklist has been filled in respect of all the members, Check for time of peer appraisal. It shall be close to harvest
	b.	Calculation for compliance and recommendation of group	Check that peer appraisers have calculated the compliance against P&Cs and the group has recommended their status as compliant or not
	c.	Detection of Non-compliances/ non-conformance and their closure	Check for NCs observed and communicated and how the members have closed the NCs.
	d.	Peer appraisal summary sheet submitted to CB	Check for peer appraisal summary sheet and compare with individual peer appraisals, Summary report shall be the true representation of assessment done by peers. Are you satisfied.
5.	**Maintenance of individual farm diaries**		
	a.	Each small grower group member shall maintain a farm diary with records of day-to-day activities	Check farm diaries are maintained and all operations are documented
	b.	Records of inputs produced, purchased, and consumed	Check from farm diary about the purchase of inputs, quantity used and quantity in stock.
	c.	Similar inputs and sources are used	Check that all group members are using similar inputs and following similar application protocols. Check for invoices
	d.	Records of produce harvest and its sale with details of quantities and sales documents	Check for harvested quantity, compare with area and inputs used, records of sales.
6.	**Non-compliances, corrective actions and sanctions**		
	a.	Group shall have procedure to identify NCs, procedure for their closure and sanctions	Check the procedures from group's operating manual
	b.	NCs are being recorded	Check the NCs indicated by peer appraisals are being recorded and acted upon by the members
	c.	Sanctions in cases of persistent NCs to be recorded and sanctions applied	Check for groups action and process for application of sanctions. Record how many members have been sanctioned
7.	**Product traceability and segregation**		
	a.	Documents shall be available for recording the group's total produce.	Check for produce harvest register having details of produce harvested and sold, member-wise.

	Note:	Under small grower groups although flexible distribution system is adopted where each member sells its produce directly from its farm but record shall be maintained at group level	
	b.	Mass balance and traceability records	Check that group is maintaining the total production harvest and sales records and the group records matches with individual farm diaries
	c.	Segregation to be maintained between Bharat GAP certified and non-certified produce	Check how the members are maintaining the segregation between certified and non-certified produce. Check with documents and farm diary Are you satisfied or not?
	d.	In case if the group is doing parallel production, then does segregation measures are sufficient	Check the documentation of parallel production crops, their recording and certified produce is kept and maintained away from non-certified ones Does measures are adequate and ensure segregation?
8.	**Complaints handling and product withdrawal**		
	a.	Group shall maintain complaints register and document complaints received	Check whether group has procedures to deal with complaints and recalls. Check the register for any complaints. What action has been taken Whether responsibility was fixed and products were recalled Are you satisfied with the procedure and outcome?
9.	**Residue management system**		
	a.	Type of RMS adopted and outcome of last RMS	Check for RMS adopted When was the sampling done and what was the result in terms of MRLs.
	b.	Action taken on MRL exceedance	Check that in cases of MRL exceedance, what action has been taken by the group Is it sufficient?
10.	**Logo Use**		
	a.	The small producer group producer shall use the BHARAT GAP claim according to the rules in “BHARAT GAP trademarks use: Policy and guidelines	Check how the individual members have used the logo on certified produce. Does it complies the requirement of Logo use conditions?

Chapter 6
Rules for Use of LOGO and Certification Trade Mark

7.1 BHARAT GAP LOGO

Bharat GAP logo is certification trademark for the BHARAT GAP certified products found in compliance of Bharat GAP certification requirements. Bharat GAP logo is indication of genuineness and authenticity of products in compliance of Bharat GAP certification as per the compliance criteria and control points mentioned in Chapter 3 of the Bharat GAP certification system (https://.....).

7.2 Applicability

Only such producers and processors whose products are duly certified by the accredited Certification Body shall be granted with license to use the Bharat GAP logo for the products and quantity. The use of Bharat GAP logo is subject to the terms and conditions as specified in this chapter and as specified in the terms and conditions of license.

7.3 LOGO

7.4 Specifications

7.5 Terms and conditions governing the use of Bharat GAP Logo

These regulations may be called Bharat GAP Certification Trade Mark Rules, 2023.

Definitions – In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires-

1. "Applicant" means any producer or processor, exporter or any other person who applies to the Accredited Certification Body (CB) for grant of a licence to use the Certification Trade Mark.

2. "Certification Trade Mark" means the Bharat GAP logo as shown at Clause 7.3 above.
3. "Accredited Certification Body" means an agency accredited and authorized by NAB of Bharat GAP to operate and promote the Bharat GAP certification services on behalf of the NAB.
4. "Licensee" shall mean a producer who has been granted the licence to use the Certification Trade Mark.
5. "National Accreditation Body at National Horticulture Board (NAB-NHB)" means a body appointed by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare under the Bharat Good Agricultural Practices scheme, operated by the National Horticulture Board, Department of Agriculture and farmers Welfare, Government of India (refer chapter 2 of the Bharat GAP certification scheme, available at https:// …… .
6. Bharat Good Agricultural Practices (BHARAT GAP) refers to a Programme of the Government of India which provides for an institutional mechanism for implementation of the Bharat GAP certification programme.
7. All other words and expressions used in the Regulations and not defined herein shall have the ordinary meanings assigned in the English language.

7.6 LOGO Ownership

National Horticulture Board (NHB) shall be the sole owner and custodian of the logo.

7.7 Terms and Conditions for use of Bharat GAP Logo

7.7.1 The Accredited Certification Body (CB) duly accredited by the NAB under National Horticulture Board, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare shall have the authority to grant license for use of Bharat GAP certification trademark.

7.7.2 While granting the license, the CB shall be merely acting on behalf of the National Accreditation Body for Bharat GAP, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt of India.

7.7.3 The Accredited Certification Body (CB), shall grant the certification trade mark on ascertaining that the applicant operator has fully complied all the requirements of the BHARAT GAP certification standards, compliance criteria and control points.

7.7.4 A license granted to an Applicant to use the Certification Trade Mark in India is a privilege bestowed at will and does not constitute a legally enforceable right, title or interest. At all times this permission is subject to the rights, duties, and restrictions contained in the rules of Bharat GAP certification scheme. By accepting Certification, the Licensee acknowledges and accepts that:

a. Grant of license to use Bharat GAP Certification Trade Mark is not an assignment or grant of any right, title or interest in or to the Certification Trade Mark.

b. No right, title or interest in or to the Certification Trade Mark can be acquired or claimed by virtue of the permission granted herein or through any use of the Certification Trade Mark;
c. All goodwill deriving from use of the Certification Trade Mark inures to and for the benefit of NAB and NHB; and
d. NAB-Bharat GAP is the sole, absolute, and exclusive owner of the Certification Trade Mark.
e. NAB through the Accredited Certification Body(s) shall maintain a register of the licensees who are authorized to use the Certification Trade Mark

6.8 Application for Licence

7.8.1 Applicant operator, having valid Bharat GAP scope certificate shall be eligible for use of Bharat GAP certification Trade Mark for the products certified and covered in the scope granted by the accredited CB.

7.8.2 It will be the responsibility of CB to ensure that the certificate granted under Bharat GAP certification scheme is valid and the commodity and their quantity matches with the approved commodity and quantity under scope certificate.

7.8.3 CBs shall have documented policy and procedures for grant of certification trade mark and the same has been approved by the NAB and all applicant operator shall apply for grant of certification trade mark as per the policy and procedures approved by the CB and the same is available on the website of the CB.

7.8.4 Every application for a licence shall, on receipt by the Accredited Certification Body, be numbered in the order of priority of the receipt and be acknowledged.

6.8.5 The Accredited Certification Body may call for any supplementary information or documentary evidence from the applicant in support of or to substantiate any statement made by him in his application, within such time as may be directed by the Accredited Certification Body, and non-compliance with such direction may have the effect of the application being summarily rejected by the Accredited Certification Body.

6.8.6 On receipt of an application for a licence and before granting a licence, the Accredited Certification Body shall:
a. require evidence to be produced that the product or process in respect of which a licence has been applied conforms to the standards, compliance criteria and control points set out in the Bharat GAP Certification scheme;
b. for the purpose of clause (a), direct the applicant to submit samples to such testing authority as Accredited Certification Body may consider appropriate. The expenses for testing shall be borne by the applicant; and

c. On the basis of any report received under clause (b), the Accredited Certification Body may, as deemed fit, require the applicant to carry out such alterations in, or in addition to, the process of manufacture or production in use by the applicant.

7.9 Grant of Licence

7.9.1 If Accredited Certification Body, is satisfied that the applicant is fit to use the Certification Trade Mark, the Accredited Conformity Assessment Body shall grant a licence in prescribed format authorizing the use of the Certification Trade Mark in respect of the product or class of products produced or manufactured by the applicant in compliance of Bharat GAP certification scheme.

7.9.2 The Applicant shall be entitled to use the Certification Trade Mark and restrict its use to such products, that meet the standards specified under Bharat GAP certification scheme.

7.9.3 The certification trade mark on the product implies that the farm produce (as per Sector) has been produced using good agricultural practices as per the compliance criteria and control points and the produce itself is not certified.

7.9.4 The Certification Trade Mark may be affixed to the products and/or used on packaging or promotional material or in the context of advertising activities. Certification Trade Mark can be used in publicity material, pamphlet, letter heads, business to business communication, other similar stationary; media for exchange of any communication, for promoting the awareness of the Scheme, or the Mark, etc.

7.9.5 The certification trade mark shall not be used:

a. As part of operator company name to imply that Bharat GAP is part of the operator's or its company's business
b. In any manner that could be construed as false, misleading, disrespectful, distasteful, offensive or controversial.
c. In any manner that tarnishes the image of accreditation body or its accredited CBs

7.9.6 In the event of a withdrawal of the right to use the aforesaid Certification Trade Mark, the certificate and Licence shall be returned to the Accredited Certification Body.

7.9.7 The right to use the Certification Trade Mark expires at the same time without giving rise to any indemnification claim against the NAB and/or the Accredited Certification Body.

7.9.8 Where the application for a licence is made by a person, whose licence is cancelled by the Accredited Certification Body due to furnishing of incorrect information or use of the Certification Trade Mark in relation to any product other than that for which it has been granted license, he shall not be eligible to reapply for a period of time as determined by the Accredited Certification Body having regard to the facts and circumstances of each case. In any event, such period shall not exceed one year.

7.10 Fee

The certified producer shall pay fee as prescribed by the NAB and accredited Certification Body, for the use of the Mark.

7.11 Obligations of Licensee

A licensee on grant of license for use of certification trade mark shall be bound to:

a. Comply with the requirements of the licence and comply with these rules or any amendments thereto from time to time;

b. Only claim that that licence for use of logo/ trade mark is limited to the products and quantities approved in the scope certificate and as per the terms and conditions prescribed under these rules.

c. Shall not use the licence in any manner to which the Accredited Certification Body may object and shall not make any statement concerning the authority of the applicant's use of the licence which in the opinion of the Accredited Certification Body may be misleading;

d. Submit to the Accredited Certification Body the sample of labels, packets, publicity material or any other display item for approval and use only the approved text/ version;

e. Upon suspension or termination of the licence, by the accredited Certification Body on what-so-ever may reason, discontinue its use forthwith and withdraw all promotional and advertising matter which contains any reference thereto;