

INTRODUCTION

This guide provides IND-EXPO organic products certification scheme rules and procedures so that any organic operator who is interested in obtaining certification from IND-EXPO can understand, prepare for, and get the most from the process of organic certification to Sri Lanka Standard for Organic Agriculture Production and Processing -SLS 1324:2018 (1st Revision). It provides a general description of the organic certification process, and outlines the certification process. This scheme rules and procedures are applicable only for the organic certification operates by the IND-EXPO certification body and is based on applicable current standards and the connected regulations in Sri Lanka. IND-EXPO Certification Scheme for organic products is designed to meet the specific needs of the organic sector of Sri Lanka and to provide a recognized and accredited third party certificate to organic operators in the country so that they sell their products to customers as genuine organic products. IND-EXPO Certification is therefore comprehensive and it includes the following;

- The current list of fees and the regulations of appeal.
- National Organic Control Units (NOCU) Regulation
- Sri Lanka Standard SLS 1324:2018

This scheme is essentially voluntary in nature, and is based on the requirements of ISO/ IEC 17065:2012 General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems, which provides general rules for third party certification of determining with standards through initial review of an application and the corresponding Organic System Plan and other relevant documents and its acceptance followed by on site audit that takes into account the activities, processes, premises and products of the organic site.

The scheme is centered around all applicable requirements of the Sri Lanka Standard for Organic Agriculture Production and Processing along with applicable legal requirements considering the scope of certification that IND-EXPO provides to the organic operators.

1.0 APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION

1.1 Any organic operator who is interested in obtaining the Organic Certification shall obtain the required set of application package from the IND-EXPO Certification body located at # 01- C, Ocean Tower, Station Road, Colombo 04 by making a fee as per the fee structure. Or application available in www.indexpo.lk website. **(Reference: Fee structure)**

1.2 The application package includes an Application form, Terms and condition (this document), Step to organic, prescribed materials applicable to the applicant's operation, additional specific instructions and requirements and the Fees structure.

1.3 The applicant who desires to obtain the IND-EXPO certification shall submit properly completed, signed and officially franked prescribed application form along with a comprehensive Organic Management Plan (OMP) or Other Management Manual which covers all aspects of the applicant's operation, along with fees. Normally OMP serves as a legally binding contract between the certifier and the certified operation.

1.4 Applicants having more than one production /processing(s) units located at different places out growers and groups separately managed shall submit separate lists

1.5 If the applicant is also certified by another certification agency for the same scope, the applicant should provide IND-EXPO with written consent to receive from the other certifier or certifiers the following upon application:

- Current certification decisions,
- Any major or minor non-compliances
- Evidence of corrective actions(s),
- Copies of transactions certificates or information regarding sales, and/or
- Any denials or suspension/revocations

2.0 APPLICATION REVIEW

2.1 IND-EXPO will evaluate the application and the OMP in detail and other connected documents with the application for completeness and assesses the applicant's capacity to operate as per the application review procedure. IND-EXPO determines that the operation can meet the requirements for certification as outlined in the OMP. IND-EXPO will review the operations and risk factors will also be considered for the estimated time. Main factors to be considered are:

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- a) Type of operation
- b) Number of sites to be audited
- c) Type of internal control system (ICS)
- d) Size of the facilities (number of hectares, animals etc.)
- e) Number of products to be certified
- f) Applicant history - Technical risks

Based on the above IND-EXPO prepares the initial quotation for the on-site assessment and the competence of auditors required to be assigned. IND-EXPO will then assign qualified organic auditor(s) to do an on-site inspection.

3.0 ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

3.1 On-Site assessment is scheduled when the applicant confirms readiness after the completion of the deficiencies raised in the OMP.

3.2 Prior to the On-site Assessment, the Assessment Plan and the details of the Audit Team are communicated to the applicant for approval. Selections of number of auditors depend on the size and sites of the applicant's organic operation and the expertise of the auditors in relation to the organic operation. In all cases, the eligible applicant applying for organic certification is required to be fully audited on all operations.

3.3 The applicant is free to raise objections to the inclusion of any member in the audit team giving reasons. IND-EXPO will consider those if the reasons given are acceptable.

3.4 The audit shall be carried out only after received the approval for the Assessment Plan by the applicant.

3.5 The audit team performs a thorough audit to ascertain whether all requirements in the OMP/procedure and specified standards/Current Local regulations have actually been identified, addressed and implemented. In other words, the auditors during the audit shall verify the following information:

- a) The operations' compliance or capability to comply with the Sri Lanka Standards for Organic Agriculture Production and Processing and other additional regulatory requirements as applicable.
- b) The information provided in the application, including that organic management plan accurately reflects the practices used or to be used by the applicant for certification or by the certified operation.
- c) Random samples may be drawn by the auditor on a methodical basis or may be drawn against complaints or under suspicious of fraud.

- d) The samples testing shall be done in the accredited laboratories (for food material) and for other materials like additional inputs, results of any reputed laboratories within the country or outside the country shall be accepted.
 - e) During the on-site inspection the auditors shall inspect each production and handling unit, facility and site that produces or handles the products and that is included in the request for certification. Applicants must allow the auditor to have complete access to the production and handling operation including non-certified production and handling areas, structures and offices. The auditor(s) shall select samples of products that are included in the application form.
- 3.6** During the audit, auditors will select a sample and conduct the audit according to the protocol and standards.
- 3.7** There are two types of non-compliances namely minor and major. A minor non-compliance is an inability to comply with Sri Lanka Standard but does not have serious consequences for the organic products or Organic System Procedures (OSP). Whereas a major non-conformity is defined as when a systemic failure of the OSP design or implementation that demonstrates the inability or unwilling to comply with Sri Lanka Standard for Organic Production and Processing which leads to severe consequences.
- 3.8** Upon completion of the audit, the audit team submits a detailed report on non-conformities observed to the auditee.
- 3.9** The certified company shall permit to conduct witness audits by the accreditation body at or participation of an observer at any stage of the certification cycle when a request is made by the CB.

4.0 CORRECTIVE ACTION AND FOLLOW UP AUDIT

- 4.1** The applicant shall propose corrective actions for all non-conformities raised during the on-site assessment and shall send to IND-EXPO
- 4.2** Considering the nature and degree of non-conformities, the applicant shall propose the time required for implementation of corrective action and follow up audits.
- 4.3** The applicant shall confirm in writing that the corrective actions for the non- conformities reported in the on-site assessment report are completed.
- 4.4** On receipt of confirmation by applicant, IND-EXPO will confirm that the completed corrective actions are fully implemented by reviewing the documents or with a follow up audit as appropriate.
- 4.5** In case of major non-conformities the applicant may agree with the audit team a time frame not exceeding three months to implement corrective actions but the certification is recommended only after verifying the effectiveness of the actions taken by the applicant through a follow-up audit.

5.0 CERTIFICATION

- 5.1** On completion of a satisfactory result of on-site audit a summary report with all evidences and completed non-conformity reports will be submitted to the Certification Manager.
- 5.2** Certification Manager reviews the completed report fully and if it is in order makes his/her positive recommendations and submit to the Certification Committee for decision. If the report is not in order, further information will be sought from the audit team leader.
- 5.3** The Certification committee shall take the certification decision based on the available documentation. The Certification decision lies under the jurisdiction of the certification committee of IND-EXPO.
- 5.4** Upon approval by the Certification Committee, a Certificate along with certification license conditions will be issued to the company which is valid for three years and subject to compliance with the requirements of the IND-EXPO scheme.
- 5.5** If any changes to the systems or processes are made within this year such changes shall be communicated to IND-EXPO in writing by the certificate holder.
- 5.6** IND-EXPO shall make surprise visits to the any of certificate holder during the certification cycle on random basis. These announced initial /routine audits and unannounced inspections depending on the risk category and additional random against complaints or under suspicious of fraud. For unannounced inspections the operator shall be informed 24 hrs in advance.
- 5.7** In order to assess the continuity of the compliance of the operations, IND-EXPO will implement an annual assessment plan (onsite audits, unannounced visits, analysis plan...). Surveillance audit shall be allocated to audit annually within the three years of certification cycle. In all cases, the certified holder is required to be fully audited on all operations at least once a year in order to maintain the validity of the certification status. In addition, additional evaluations may apply to high risk certified holders.
- 5.8** In case of suspicions by IND-EXPO with regards to the organic status of the product (e.g. further to a notification from another control body etc.), additional evaluation may be required
- 5.9** Fees for these audits will be charged at the prevailing rate included in the fee structure.

6.0 NON-CERTIFICATION

- 6.1** If the corrective actions have not been implemented satisfactorily within the time frame described above, the IND-EXPO cannot grant the certification (i.e. a first certificate or a new certificate following expiry of the previous certificate cannot be issued).
- 6.2** The IND-EXPO immediately informs the certified holder (by email or by registered post) about the non-certification.

7.0 COMPLAINTS

7.1 IND-EXPO (Contact point), entertains complaints from certificate holders and any other interested party regarding the operation of the certification scheme. Certified Holders are free to approach IND-EXPO for any type of complaints against the staff, the certification system or other operators certified by IND-EXPO. Complaints may be verbally directed to IND-EXPO staff and/or through e-mail or post/fax to the IND-EXPO office. Complaints shall be handled confidentially. All complaints shall be addressed to the Director, Organic Product Certification- IND-EXPO.

7.2 The customer complaint procedure has been published in the website of IND-EXPO (ww.indexpo.lk).
Ref: Customer complaint form (QP-10-F-01)

8.0 FEES

8.1 The fees payable by the applicant shall be determined by the Committee and be revised from time to time. The current fee structure is enclosed in this brochure separately.

8.2 All fees as determined as above in 8.1 and intimated to the relevant organization. The fees should be paid, in advance.

9.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 All information given by the applicant to the auditors during audits shall be treated as confidential. All staff involved in certification activities are required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the IND-EXPO. During the audits, auditors declare the individual confidentiality statement.

10.0 USE OF CERTIFICATION LOGO

The logo may be used for certified organic products with prior permission and approval from IND-EXPO by fulfilling the terms and conditions laid down in the guideline for the use of logo. The certified holder shall make the label incorporating the logo and other relevant information and shall send to IND-EXPO for approval. Certified holder may use the label for marketing after the approval.

10.1 Organic Product logo/mark use guideline

10.1.1 The clients cannot use the certification documents, any statement or certification logo on sites or activities which is not included in the scope of the certificate or in any misleading manner

10.1.2 Any statement regarding its certification which IND-EXPO may consider misleading or unauthorized shall not be used

- 10.1.3** Certification is location and product specific. The certification claims shall be related only to the specific client location and product that are covered under the scope of certification and not with any other non-certified locations and products.
- 10.1.4** The “Certification Logo” shall only be used by the company and the “Certification Logo” shall be provided by the CB upon the award of the certificate in which the CB would provide logo in PNG or PDF formats. However, If company request ‘Vector file’ additional payment shall be made by the company to CB
- 10.1.5** The “Certification Logo” may be used on letter heads of the company, in advertisements and materials used for advertising and promotion of the company. If the company changed its scope of certification all the uses of logo including advertising material shall be changed accordingly.
- 10.1.6** The client shall use a statement on their products or packaging mentioning the certification status as below mentioned examples.
- “Organic Certified Product”
 - “Organically Processed Product”
- 10.1.7** The “Certification Logo” shall not be directly applied on the company’s product and its packaging or be associated with the company’s product in such a way as to imply that the product itself is certified by IND-EXPO.

Note: Company shall use the Logo on products once the registration with NOCU is given. Which will be informed to the client.

- 10.1.8** The company shall discontinue the use of the “Certification Logo” immediately upon expiry or termination of the certificate, or for violation of agreement as decided by IND-EXPO.
- 10.1.9** Electronic reproduction or display of any approximation of the logo shall not be allowed.
- 10.1.10** Either the logo should be in black or it should be in the colours similar to the colours of the logo given by CB.

11.0 MISUSE OF CERTIFICATION MARK

A Certificate holder shall not display, advertise or otherwise use the certification logo and the certification document after:

- A lapse of registration, suspension, withdrawn or cancellation of Certification.
- Introducing a change to the Organization procedures/location or any other product related changes which has not been accepted by IND-EXPO and which could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the company’s IND-EXPO certification.
- Failing to implement a change to the certification system issued by IND-EXPO.
- Any other circumstances which adversely affect the IND-EXPO certification.

- In case of reduced Scope of Certification the certified holder shall display or advertise only the amended scope.

12.0 SUSPENSION OF CERTIFICATION

12.1 Certification shall be suspended under the following circumstances:

- If any case of violation of the Sri Lanka regulations issued by the National Organic Control Unit (NOCU) or violation of certification rules and procedures of Ind-EXPO organic products certification which warrants the suspension / cancellation of the certificate.
- When the presence of a risk of a health hazard (residues) is revealed
- If annual audit indicates a total breakdown of the Organic Management Plan (OMP) implementation
- Improper use of certification document, symbol or logo and if it is not rectified to the satisfaction of the IND-EXPO within an agreed period.
- Any other contravention of the rules and regulations of this scheme

12.2 The certificate holder shall be informed of the suspension in writing under registered cover and also through an email (if such facility is available with the certified operator).

12.3 The suspension shall be removed according to the IND-EXPO procedures and the certified holder is notified accordingly, upon the correction of conditions leading to the suspension within the specified period.

12.4 In the case of suspension, the client shall refrain from further promotion of its certification.

13.0 WITHDRAWAL/CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATION

13.1 Certifier shall cancel the certification, withdraw the certification document and cancel any agreement for the use of IND-EXPO certification logo under the following circumstances.

13.2 If an Annual audit confirms the presence of major non-conformities and actions have not been taken effectively within three months period.

13.3 At the request of the company to withdraw the certification.

13.4 If the system rules are changed and the company either will not or cannot ensure conformance to new requirements.

13.5 The certification is cancelled and the certification document is withdrawn if the stipulated conditions of suspension are not rectified within the specified period of time.

13.6 If the company ceases to supply the organic products or organic process stated in the certificate for a period exceeding six (6) months.

- 13.7** When the certified company fails to meet financial obligations as specified by the IND-EXPO
- 13.8** Failure to comply with any other requirements stipulated by the IND-EXPO under organic products certification scheme.
- 13.9** The cancellation shall be notified to the company by a registered letter and the Ind-Expo shall publish the notification of the cancellation and the displayed in the IND-EXPO website.
- 13.10** Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension within a time established by the Certifier shall result in the reduction of the scope of certification.

14.0 CORRECTIVE ACTION

- 14.1** A certified company shall be responsible for taking prompt and adequate action to correct any contravention of the system rules, and for normally notifying the certifying authority of the corrective actions proposed or taken.

15.0 CHANGES TO THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM RULES

- 15.1** In the event of any changes being required to the IND-EXPO certification rules, the Certification Manager shall:
- Provide opportunity for the affected companies to submit comments on the proposed changes.
 - Effective dates for the changes shall be fixed by mutual agreement to allow sufficient time for the company to amend their Organic Product Certification System.

16.0 PUBLICITY

- 16.1** IND-EXPO shall publish in the website(s) the list of certified companies under this certificate scheme
- 16.2** A certified company is entitled to:
- Inform prospective customers, purchasers or purchasing authorities of the full and exact details of the certification.
 - Display the certification document.
 - Use of the IND-EXPO organic products logo as specifically authorized.

17.0 APPEALS

- 17.1** If the certificate holder is not satisfied with the decision taken on, the certificate holder is eligible to appeal, in writing to the Director – IND-EXPO Certification Limited within 14 days of receipt of such decision.

17.2 The decision of the appeal committee on any such appeal shall be final and conclusive.

18.0 OBLIGATIONS

18.1 The certificate holder shall

- Inform IND-EXPO (contact point), promptly about any intended changes to the Organic products or processes, which may affect conformance to the requirements of the standard. Communicate immediately about any changes to the scope of certification.
- Permit to conduct witness audit by the accreditation body at any stage of the certification cycle when a request is made by IND-EXPO in this regard.
- Inform IND-EXPO (contact point) promptly if the certificate holder becomes aware of a risk of or the presence of a health hazard.
- Co-operate with the IND-EXPO in all activities related to the Organic Products Certification scheme.
- Ensure that the audit team, comprising IND-EXPO auditors and in some cases hired auditors, is permitted and assisted to undertake any audit/unannounced inspections.
- Pay all relevant fees as specified by the IND-EXPO applicable for the Organic Products Certification Scheme

19.0 COMMUNICATION

19.1 All communications relating to the Organic Products Certification shall be addressed to the Director/CEO, IND-EXPO Certification Limited, Apt # 01- C, Ocean Tower, Station Road, Colombo 04.

20.0 LIABILITY

20.1 IND-EXPO shall not be liable to the company for any expenses, loss or damages suffered by the company and caused by the company's participation in the scheme or as a result of the assessment of the company's management system by IND-EXPO or its representatives.

21.0 INDEMNITY

21.1 The company shall agree and indemnify IND-EXPO against all losses and expenses suffered by IND-EXPO including but not limited to all claims by any third party against the CB.

22.0 TAXES

22.1 The company shall agree to indemnify and pay IND-EXPO for all taxes, levies, and duties including, but not limited to value added tax (VAT) or withholding tax which IND-EXPO may be liable to pay as a result of providing the services to the company herewith.

23.0 GOVERNING LAW

23.1 These terms and conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

24.0 INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN CB & ITS CERTIFIED CLIENTS

24.1 Company shall ensure transparency and reliability of the information provided to the Certification Body (CB).

24.2 The Company shall ensure that all necessary arrangements are made before an audit, including provision for reviewing of documents, access to all processes and areas, records and personnel.

24.3 Company shall agree to bear the cost of transport arrangements and accommodation (if needed) pertaining to the audit.

24.4 The Company shall inform the CB in writing of any changes related to the following:

- a) Legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership,
- b) Organization and management (Eg. key managerial, decision-making or technical staff),
- c) Contact address and sites,
- d) Scope of operations under the certified management systems, and
- e) Major changes to the management system and processes

24.5 INDEXPO shall give its certified clients due notice of any changes to its requirements for certification. The CB shall verify that each certified company complies with the new requirements.

6.6 The certified client shall inform the Certification Body, without delay, of the occurrence of a serious incident or breach of regulation necessitating the involvement of the competent regulatory authority relevant to the situation(s) arise from such incident or breach.

25.0 CHANGES IN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

20.1 If any major changes are made to the terms and conditions governing the Product Certification Scheme, all certified companies shall be informed in writing by the management of IND-EXPO.