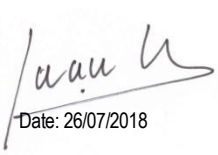
CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA)
Scope: Aquaculture
Sub-scope: Finfish, Crustaceans and Molluscs
Version 5.1 July 2017

GLOBALG.A.P.

EDITED BY	REVISED BY	APPROVED BY	ISSUE #
Technical Department  Date: 26/07/2018	Quality Manager  Date: 26/07/2018	Operations Manager  Date: 26/07/2018	02
CAUSE OF THE NEW REVISION: GLOBALG.A.P. accreditation request for Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) Scope: Aquaculture Module. Sub-scope: Finfish, Crustaceans and Molluscs. Version 5.1 Jul 2017.			

Certification Guideline Index

1. GLOBALG.A.P. CERTIFICATION SYSTEM BY ACERTA

1.1. Introduction

This document describes the certification processes for producers to be certified with ACERTA for the Programme GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) Scope: Aquaculture.

The scope of GLOBALG.A.P. Certification covers the following:

- The controlled production process of primary products. It does not cover wild fish/catch, extractive fisheries or wild harvest.
- Only products included in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list, published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, can be registered for certification. The GLOBALG.A.P. product list is not limited and can be extended based on demand.
- Only products that are produced by producers themselves. Producers cannot receive certification for the production of products that are not produced by themselves.

1.2. Registration in the IFA-GLOBALG.A.P. Programme: Application procedure.

1.2.1. Applicants

An applicant

- Cannot register the same product with different entities.
- Cannot register the same product under different certification options.
- Can register different products with different entities and/or different certification options.
- Cannot register production sites (Production Management Units) or group members in different countries with ACERTA (Exception: GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may give exceptions in a case by case revision or these exceptions may be included into the National Interpretation Guidelines).

a) New Applicant

When a new applicant contacts ACERTA in order to get information of the certification in accordance with the Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA)-GLOBALG.A.P. Programme, Scope: Aquaculture, ACERTA's Commercial Department also contacts the applicant and confirms under which option the applicant wants to be certified.

The applicant is requested some basic information which will let ACERTA prepare a cost estimate.

Next, using the ACERTA management computer system (SIG), the quotation is made and reviewed by the Administration Manager.

The quotation includes the costs derived from the certification process and a specification of the items detailed in it: application procedure, management of the information in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, certification inspection, issuing of the "report", decision taking, and at the customer's request, any previous inspection to the facilities. The method of payment is also specified in the quotation.

The applicant who wants to begin the certification shall send this quotation appropriately accepted. The Technical Department includes the accepted quotation in the SIG and files the computerized copy in the corresponding folder in local server.

Next, the Technical Department will send the applicant the related documentation.

- ***"Certification Request Form"***, document to be sent back to ACERTA completed to formalize the certification procedure. In this document the information concerning all aquaculture products (species) to be certified will be detailed.

- ***"Certification Agreement"***, between ACERTA and the applicant company, document where the conditions which will regulate the commercial relationship are specified. The duration of the contract will be 1 year.
- ***"Certification Guideline"***, document where the activities included in the certification process are detailed.
- ***"Declaration for Options 1"*** (in case of Cooperative Societies - Options 1 individual producer).
- ***"GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement"***, Contract between the Certification Body (CB) and the producer. Sets the legal framework in order to grant the GLOBALG.A.P. Certification.

b) Certification Renewal: Previously certified applicant

Registered producers and/or producers with certified products must re-register annually **before the certificate expiry date.**

For this purpose, 6 months before the expiry date, the Technical Department informs the holder of the certificate (or the relevant office) of the new activities of the certification maintenance to be carried out, by sending the documents to be completed and/or signed:

- ***Predefined quotation***
- ***"Certification Request Form"***
- ***"Certification Agreement"***
- ***"Certification Guidelines"***
- ***"Declaration for Options 1"***
- ***"GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicence and Certification Agreement"***

However, ACERTA shall apply the rules for initial (first) inspection if the certificate expired for more than 12 months.

When a producer changes from one CB to another CB or requests the services of a new CB, it is not considered a first inspection, but subsequent inspection.

1.2.2. Request Form

Once the Technical Department has received all the documents related to the applicant's certification request:

- The Technical Department reviews the ***"Certification Request Form"*** sent by the applicant (including the data provided detailing production sites and Produce Handling Units, and when options 2, the identification of the producers),
- A folder is also created in the local server for each applicant, appropriately identified with its corresponding code in order to file and maintain records.
- Once the ***"Certification Request Form"*** is reviewed, ACERTA will register the producer/Producer Group (including all group members) in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database (if the producer / producer group is registered with ACERTA for the first time) and will accept the information provided in the request form in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, always within 28 calendar days after the registration, the Database will automatically send to the applicant an email confirming the file acceptation by ACERTA and his/her GGN. If the producer has its own GLN, he must declare it and it must be used.
- The Technical Department assigns a registration number (only for producers registered with ACERTA for the first time).

The registration number (inscription number) for producers under option 1 and producer groups consists of the word ACERTA, followed by a four digit number.

Example: ACERTA XXXX.

The inscription number for producer members belonging to option 2 consists of the word ACERTA, followed by a four digit number (the registration number of the Producer Group that belong to), plus a middle dash and another two digits for the identification of the producer included in the producer group.

Example: ACERTA 0012 – 04

- The Technical Department registers the applicant's request in the ACERTA's SIG and create the file number: The file number consists of the acronym "PEU", the code assigned to the customer and the digits corresponding to the year in which the work is carried out, and the number of works carried out to this customer in this year (assigned by the system).

Example: PEU.00344-08/001

Any objective evidence found that indicates that the applicant has been misusing the GLOBALG.A.P. claim shall lead to the exclusion of the applicant from certification for 12 months after evidence of misuse. In addition, the applicants will be listed and the list must be checked before registration in the database. Any case of misuse shall be communicated to the GLOBALG.A.P. members.

GLOBALG.A.P. registration fees are generated once ACERTA registers and accepts the aquaculture products in GLOBALG.A.P. database. This admission starts the invoicing of registration costs. Only ACERTA is allowed to register and accept products in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

1.2.3. Evaluation of Request Form and Issuing of Working Order

The Operation Manager or GLOBALG.A.P. Scheme Manager will draw up a working programme by using the SIG from the review made to the **"Certification Request Form"**. He/she will assign an auditor team, determine the appropriate working days, define the interval of dates to undertake the audits, and inform the auditor or auditor team, in writing, of the assignation and sample to be carried out, by way of the **"Working Order"**.

1.3. Previous visit

At the applicant's request, ACERTA will perform a previous visit.

Initially, the designated auditor team for carrying out the work agrees the date of the visit with the applicant usually by telephone or email. Then, the applicant is sent the ***Audit Plan***, where the date of the inspection is confirmed, and all the information and activities to be carried out and the persons involved, are detailed. Simultaneously, the auditor sends the Technical Department a copy of this document, to be registered in the SIG.

The visit will be carried out by the auditor team, either ACERTA own staff or subcontracted, and it will begin with an initial meeting with the producer or his/her representative. In this previous audit, the compliance of the producers and production sites detailed by the applicant will be assessed in accordance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Programme. It will end with a closing meeting and the findings will be mentioned to the producer.

The auditor team who carries out this visit will prepare a ***Previous Visit Report***, where all non-compliances detected will be detailed and the applicant will be informed of the continuation of the process moving forward. The Technical Department will send a copy of this report to the applicant within 15 days from the end of the previous visit.

In this stage of the process, the applicant shall not be requested a corrective action proposal.

1.4. Audit

If a previous visit has been carried out, from the reception of the report, the applicant may contact ACERTA in order to request the continuation of the process. In the same way, ACERTA will be able to contact the applicant if the time elapsed since the report was sent is considered long enough to know the applicant's intentions as to the continuation of the certification process.

It can be possible that from the initial ***"Certification Request Form"*** to the inspection, one or more modifications related to the scope to be certified can arise. If any change is made regarding the initial recorded information, the producer shall inform ACERTA to carry out the corresponding changes.

Once the auditor designated has received the ***"Working Order"***, the audit date will be agreed with the applicant (by telephone, email…).

In preparation for the inspection, the auditor / inspector will confirm that the information received is correct.

When all the issues related to the scope of the inspection have been set, the auditor will prepare the ***"Audit Plan"***, and send it to the applicant and ACERTA's Technical Department. If the applicant does not agree with any aspect, he/she will be able to notify it within the 3 subsequent days after the communication. In this case, the auditor / inspector or the Technical Department and the applicant shall have to reach an agreement and a new ***"Audit Plan"*** will be sent.

The auditor / inspector shall communicate to the Technical Department any information found during the inspection that it is not correctly reflected in the ***"Certification Request Form"*** or in the ***"Working order"***.

If on the day of the audit, the auditor / inspector considers that it would be reasonable to change the sample because of a justifiable cause, she/he will be able to do it, but it will be necessary to communicate it to ACERTA's Head Office and following the criteria specified in Chapter 2: Inspection Methodology of GLOBALG.A.P. Control Programme.

Once the scope of the inspection has been definitely set, especially the number of producers included in case of Options 2 and the minimum inspections required (in accordance with the criteria established in Chapter 2: Inspection Methodology of GLOBALG.A.P. Control Programme), the cost corresponding to the registration fees established by GLOBALG.A.P. will be charged to the customer.

1.4.1. Audit Development

The certification inspection will begin with an initial meeting in which the auditor team and the representatives of the company will be introduced. The methodology to be followed during the inspection will be explained and the power point document "Presentation of the GLOBALG.A.P. Programme" may be used.

During the audit, for both **options 1 and options 2**, the methodology described and defined in the GLOBALG.A.P. Programme will be followed.

The audit will finish with a closing meeting in which the auditor team will inform the representative of the company of the findings, identifying all the control points in which non compliances have been detected (differentiating Major Musts, Minor Musts and Recommendations).

a) OFF SITE / ON SITE MODULE

ACERTA, its management as well as its technical and commercial departments, after evaluating the producers that certifies and given the voluntary status to offer the OFF SITE module, has decided **NOT TO OFFER the OFF SITE Module** to its clients. Therefore, all announced audits will be exclusively conducted using the **ON SITE Module** format.

1.4.2. Documents

The following documents will be used during the on-site audit:

1. ***Audit report*** (Cover / On-field Check list / Quality System Check list);

The auditor / inspector must use the currently approved Audit Report on file.

2. ***Traceability test***

The auditor / inspector must carry out a traceability test.

3. ***Audit Final Conclusions*** (Field/PHU/QMS Results)

The auditor / inspector will print the appropriate page of ***"Audit Final conclusions"***, Field/PHU/QMS Results (Options 2, if applies), selected from the electronic file "GLOBALG.A.P. Checklist" and the company's representative and the auditor / inspector will both sign the **"Audit Final conclusions"** as evidence of this being carried out, and **a copy will be given to the**

auditee detailing the non-compliant control points detected. An electronic copy will be sent to ACERTA's Head Office. A documented or electronic confirmation by the producer is equal to the 'signature' of the producer.

4. Corrective Action Plan (CA PLAN)

Each non-compliance will be detailed together with the auditor's / inspector's motivation in a **Corrective Action Plan** – a table that is part of the electronic file **"GLOBALG.A.P. Checklist"** – and **a copy of this table** will be given to the producer/producer group in order to facilitate the implementation of the corrective actions (if needed). In this document the auditor/inspector will indicate if the detected non-compliance is a non-conformance.

1.4.3. **Timing**

The deadline for closing the CA PLAN will be:

I. If the non-compliance implies a non-conformance:

(See Control Program Chapter 3: Assessment criteria)

The inspected company will prepare and submit the corrective action proposal, which shall include the description of the measures taken to solve the non-conformance, the term for its implementation and the responsible person, as well as the evidence of the implementation and, where appropriate, the effectiveness of these measures. The applicant has the following timeframes to close the CA PLAN:

(i) For Initial Certification Inspections:

- This section is applicable to producers seeking GLOBALG.A.P. Certification for the first time.
- A maximum term of **3 months since inspection date**.
- If an individual producer or producer group does not comply with **100% of Major Must and 95% Minor Must control points** within 28 days after an initial inspection, the status "open non-conformance" is set in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.
- The status "open non-conformance" cannot be given to producer group members' products.
- If the status "open non-conformance" is set and no corrective actions are sent to close the CA PLAN in a maximum term of **3 months since inspection date** an initial audit will need to be performed again at producer's expense to continue with the certification process (harvesting process will not need to be observed again).

(ii) For Renewal Inspections:

- A maximum term of **28 calendar days since inspection date.**
- Each non-conformance shall be assessed in accordance with *Chapter 3: Assessment Criteria.*
- If **28 calendar days have passed after the initial inspection** before closing the CA PLAN, ACERTA will set the status "suspension of product" in database.

If the non-conformance is against a **Major Must, the General Requirements or contractual**, the period given for compliance before suspension is applied will be decided between the audit team and the Operations Manager or Scheme Manager. This period shall never exceed 28 days and may be shortened according to the criticality of the non-conformance in terms of safety of workers, environment and consumers. An immediate suspension shall be issued where a serious threat to food safety, the safety of workers, the environment, consumers and/or product integrity. The decision will be communicated through a direct communication by warning letter.

If no corrective actions are sent in the established time, ACERTA will apply the required sanction.

In the case that non-compliances are a non-conformances, the auditor / inspector must send all the related documents to the Technical Department as soon as the non-conformance is considered closed, within 28 days (or 3 months if the Open Non-Conformance Status has been issued) after inspection.

When assessing the corrective actions, the adequacy of the measures taken to solve the non-conformances, their implementation stage and their effectiveness will be considered. For this purpose, other audits, analyses, etc., can be also be required, being this determined, in that case, by the Operation Manager or Scheme Manager.

In this case, the applicant will be informed of the necessity of undertaking a new audit, its scope and his/her acceptance, in writing, of the additional costs derived from it, which will be specified also in writing. Once the applicant has accepted it, the Administration Manager will issue and send the corresponding invoice to the applicant.

II. If the non-compliance does not imply a non-conformance:

The producer will be able to choose if he wants to make and submit the corrective action proposal, which shall include the description of the measures taken to solve the non-compliance, the term for its implementation and the responsible person, as well as the evidence of the implementation and, where appropriate, the effectiveness of these measures.

In this case, the evidence of corrective actions will be sent to the auditor / inspector **within 7 calendar days after inspection date**.

The auditor should send all the above documents to the Technical Department no later than 1 week if the producer chooses not to submit corrective actions and 2 weeks if the client chooses to submit the corrective action proposal.

In both cases, from the conclusions obtained from the assessment of the corrective action proposals provided by the applicant, the auditor / inspector makes the **"Corrective Action Assessment Report"** – format included within the digital file **"GLOBALG.A.P. Checklist"** (CA PLAN) – which includes the table of the Corrective Action Plan submitted by the company, where each corrective action has been reviewed by the auditor / inspector, the final result of compliance level and the advice about the certification (or not certification) is stated.

The auditor in charge of the file is responsible for giving the Technical Department all the appropriate documentation in electronic format: **Audit Reports, Traceability test, Final conclusions of the audit, Corrective Action Assessment Report** and **evidence of implementation** (where applicable) provided by the company.

1.5. Certification decision

All the reports will be filed in electronic format by the Technical Department in the corresponding folder in the local server.

In order the certification decision to be taken, the responsible person, in accordance with the decision-making structure detailed in the quality procedure "Assessment of the results and certificate awarding", will take into account what is described in the chapter 3: Assesment Criteria of GlobalG.A.P. Control Program.

To begin the decision-making process, the Technical Department will be in charge of providing the documents to be assessed, including at least: **Certification Request Form, Audit Reports, Final Conclusions of the audit, Traceability Test, Corrective Action Plan Assessment Report** and **evidence of implementation** provided by the company.

The Technical Department will be responsible for this process to be completed, providing to the person responsible for making the **decision** with all the necessary documents for that purpose.

The certification decision will not be delayed more than **28 calendar days** after the producer has shown sufficient evidence of corrective actions and closed the Corrective Action Plan, or 28 calendar days since inspection date, in the case that non-compliances detected do not imply a non-conformance.

1.6. Notification of certification decisión and Certificate.

1.6.1. Favorable decision

As soon as the decision has been satisfactory, according with Control Program Chapter 3: Assessment Criteria, the Technical Department shall update the information in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database and GLOBALG.A.P. will send an automatic notification to the registered e-mail confirming the certification of the producer.

The Technical Department will issue and send the **Certificate of Conformity** and Technical Annex (if applicable) for the corresponding GGN, including all the information required by the General Regulations and according to the information available in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database at that moment. Additionally, the GLOBALG.A.P. and ACERTA's User guidelines of trademark will be provided for the product (cetified fish) once the payment has been confirmed. If the payment is not confirmed, the Technical Department will inform the producer about the satisfactory decision and will send the certificate once the payment has been confirmed.

Validity dates of the certificate will be the following:

Valid from:

- Initial certification: The initial date of validity is the date on which the ACERTA makes the certification decision.
- Subsequent certifications: The "valid from" date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the "valid from" date in the original certificate except when the certification decision is made after the expiration of the previous certificate. In this case the "valid from" date shall coincide with the date of the certification decision.

Valid to:

- Initial certification: Date "valid from" plus 1 year minus 1 day. ACERTA may shorten the certification cycle and the validity but cannot prolong it unless an extension is given following Point 1.11 of this document.
- Subsequent certifications: The validity date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the "valid to" date on the original certificate.

If a new fish product is added during the validity of a certificate, the certification cycle (valid from-valid to) is kept as it was.

If a certificate that was not extended nor "re-accepted" expires and the subsequent inspection (to be performed by the same CB) is going to take place in less than 12 months after the expiration date, a new certification cycle should start. The old cycle can be reinstated by setting the same "valid to" date as before (ACERTA shall apply the rules for initial (first) inspection if the certificate expired for more than 12 months).

The cycle remains the same if the certificate was extended.

a) Other considerations

ACERTA or their subcontracted parties may issue communications other than the certificate related to the producer status (registered, audited, etc.) as long as it is clear that it is not a certificate and it contains the sentence: The actual GLOBALG.A.P. status of this producer is always displayed at: www.globalgap.org/search.

b) Inicial audits and products registered for the first time

This section is applicable to producers seeking GLOBALG.A.P. Certification for the first time, and to producers who want to add a new product to an already existing GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate.

No inspection can take place until ACERTA has accepted the applicant's registration.

Each production process for products (aquaculture species) registered and accepted for certification for the first time **must be completely assessed** (all applicable control points must be verified) **prior to issuing the certificate**.

In initial inspections, once the decision is favourable, a Certificate of Conformity will be issued including all the products whose production process has been completely assessed.

A product that has not yet been harvested after an initial audit, or a new product (not registered in previous cycle) in a renewal audit, shall not be included in the certificate.

It is possible to add a new product to an already existing certificate during an unannounced inspection (Option 1 without QMS) or during a surveillance inspection (Option 2/Option 1 with QMS), provided all applicable control points for this product are verified.

Products that are harvested before registration with GLOBALG.A.P. cannot be certified.

Records that relate to harvest or product handling before the producer has registered with GLOBALG.A.P. are not valid.

In case of multiple species included in the certification process, of which all requirements of the protocol could not be inspected in harvest during the main inspection, then the rules specified in the Control Program point 2.3.2 Certification / Renewal Inspection: section III. Moment – Multiple species, will be followed. Only with a favorable decision for this evaluation, the Certificate and Technical Annex can be modified to include all the species.

c) Renewal Audits

In subsequent years, the certificate issued after the favorable decision of the renewal audit, will include all the renewal species (those that were registered and inspected for this cycle and were in previous certificate) even if the harvest process was not inspected for all of the species during the audit.

1.6.2. Unfavorable decision.

When the decision is unfavorable, the applicant may communicate his/her disagreement within the following **30 calendar days** after receiving the certification decisión notification, or it may request an extraordinary inspection which will have to be carried out within six months, having previously accepted the additional costs derived from it.

If the applicant does not agree with the decision, the Technical Department will provide him/her the Appeals registration form. Once ACERTA has received it duly completed, the appeal procedure described in the quality procedure “Complaints, appeals and lawsuits” will be followed.

1.7. Surveillance audits.

The surveillance inspections is carried out in order to add a species that has not been inspected during the initial/renewal audit, according to the point 2.3.2 Certification / Renewal Inspection: section III. Moment – Multiple species.

When a certificate holder, producer / producer group, with a valid certificate wants to increase production for the same species or add a production site that currently is not included in the certificate, the situation will be evaluated as described in 1.10 Registration of additional producers/production sites, and it will be decided if a surveillance audit is needed.

Also, ACERTA shall carry out surveillance inspections of producers to all the companies certified under option 2 during the valid period of the certificate.

Methodology for conducting these audits is described in Chapter 2 of ACERTA’s Control Program.

1.8. Unannounced audits.

ACERTA shall carry out unannounced audits to 10% of the certified producers in Option 1 and Option 1 multisite without QMS during the valid period of the certificate.

ACERTA shall carry out unannounced audits of the quality system (QMS) to 10% certified producers in Option 2 and Option 1 multisite with QMS during the valid period of the certificate.

The methodology to carry out these audits is explained in Chapter 2 of ACERTA’s Control Program.

In the case of a favourable decision of an Unannounced Audit, ACERTA will send to the auditee a letter informing of the favourable report issued.

1.9. Unannounced Reward Program

Option 1 Producers and Option 1 Multisites without QMS producers may opt to participate in the Unannounced Reward Program.

Producers must meet the following criteria:

- They have been certified during at least two consecutive years; and

- On both years the producer complied 100% with Major Musts and at least 95% with Minor Musts **on the day of the audit**; and
- Had no pending sanctions during the last two years.

In case a non-conformance is detected or the producer changes CB the clock will be reset to year zero. The producer will need to demonstrate compliance during two consecutive years with the above-mentioned criteria in order to participate on the Unannounced Reward Program.

The characteristics of the program are:

- The applicant will inform to ACERTA that is interested in being audited under this program by selecting the corresponding option in Certification request during the registration process.
- Under the Unannounced Reward Program, producers will be excluded from the additional 10% unannounced inspection. However, the annual inspection will be unannounced following the same rules described for unannounced audits.
- Inspections under the Unannounced Reward System shall always be carried out using **the entire IFA checklist**, according to the relevant scopes and sub-scopes.
- Participants of the Unannounced Reward Program are excluded from the off-site module inspection methodology.
- Participation in the Unannounced Reward Program is registered as an attribute in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.
- In justified circumstances (e.g. complaint follow up), CBs still have the right to schedule unannounced inspections during the certificate validity period.
- If the producer also needs to be audited for an add-on and the add-on rules explicitly exclude unannounced add-on assessments, the producer will not be able to participate in the Unannounced Reward Program.

1.10. Registration of additional producers / production sites

- **Option 1:**

Additions in case of Option 1 may be carried out during the cycle of validity of a certificate, always subject to a favourable certification decision taken by ACERTA and based on in situ audit or in a documentary study. This decision will be taken by the Operations Manager.

The decision shall depend on the type of addition and the existing risk. That risk shall depend on several aspects: the percentage of the addition, if there are new species, if the species belongs to a producer or group of producers previously inspected (see section 2.1.2. - Certification / Renewal Audit), the location of the new production site, etc.

- **Option 2 and Option 1 Multisite with QMS:**

During the period of validity of the Certificate, new Producers (in Option 2) / Production Sites (in Option 1 Multisite with QMS) may be added to the list of registered producers / production sites. The producer group or Option 1 Multisite with QMS is responsible for **immediately communicating any changes**, addition or withdrawal to/from the previous list provided to ACERTA.

Up to 10% of new Producers / Production Sites can be added in one year to the certified list without the necessary requirement of a new audit.

When the number of approved registered producers (in Option 2) or production sites (in Option 1 multisites with QMS) increase by **more than 10%** in one year, further external sample inspections of the newly added producers / production sites (as a minimum the square root of the new producers / production sites) and/or optionally a review of the QMS will be required to be performed by ACERTA during that year **before** additional producers / production sites can be added to the approved list.

Regardless of the percentage by which the number of approved registered producers / production sites increases in one year, when the newly registered farms increase the area of previously approved registered products by **more than 10%** in one year, or there is a change of 10% in the producers (in Option 2) or production sites (in Option 1 multisites with QMS), ACERTA shall demand further external sample inspections (as minimum the square roof of the new producers/ production sites) and/or optionally a review of the Quality Management Systems will be required during that year **before** additional farms or producers can be added to the approved list.

Regardless of the number of producers / production sites / farm area, if a new product is to be added to the certificate between surveillance and certification audits, an inspection shall be carried out to the square root of the producers growing the new product (species).

Moreover, members of a producer group may leave the group and register with another group with any of the products (species) that were already registered under the following conditions:

- There isn't any pending sanction on the group member issued by the Group or any issues, relevant to the member, raised by ACERTA that have not been closed out,
- The contract between the group and the member is respected,
- When the group has ceased to exist and/or is cancelled by ACERTA
- Or in special cases where FoodPlus needs to agree on a case by case.

1.11. Extension of the certificate validity

ACERTA may extend the certificate beyond the 12 months for a maximum period of 4 months (12 months + 4 months, 16 months in total), only if there is a valid reason, which has to be recorded. The following conditions must be met:

- The product is re-accepted in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database for a full next cycle within the original validity period of the certificate.
- The full certification license fee and registration fee shall be paid for the next cycle.
- The producer shall be re-inspected during the extension period.

The only reasons that are considered to be valid for an extension are the following:

- ACERTA wants to schedule the on-site inspection/audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process because it was not seen in the previous inspection/audit, because it is considered to be a high-risk process in terms of product safety, or to be able to see a newly added product, process or a new or particular member of a producer group.
- ACERTA needs to be able to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
- ACERTA was not able to conduct the on-site inspection/audit and/or the producer was not able to receive the CB inspection/audit due to circumstances beyond its control (force majeure) e.g.: natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic or unavailability of the producer due to medical reasons.

The producer cannot change the CB in the cycle subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted. In this case, the cycle remains the same.

1.12. Transfer between Certification Bodies

Transfer between Certification Bodies takes place when a producer that is found in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database changes from the original GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB (outgoing CB) to ACERTA (accepting CB).

Only producers found in the GLOBALG.A.P. database and that are **not sanctioned** will be accepted by ACERTA. Producers must first solve any outstanding sanction before being able to transfer to ACERTA. Moreover, for accepting the transfer, the producer shall sign the Sublicence and Certification Agreement with ACERTA.

ACERTA will keep the existing GGN of the transferred producer/producer group.

When a producer or producer group is changing the certification body with which they are associated, they will communicate to ACERTA Certificación, S.L. the previous registration number(s) (GGN) they had with the former certification body or any other one with which the applicant was previously registered in accordance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Programme. This information shall be detailed in the "Certification Request Form". Failure to do this will result in an additional surcharge of the registration fee of EURO 100 to an Option 1 producer and EURO 500 to an option 2 producer group, that will be charged to the producer or producer group.

A certificate is not transferable from one owner to another when a production site changes the legal entity or owner. In this case a complete inspection, following the rules for renewal audit, is required. The new legal entity shall receive a new GGN.

Individual producer members of a producer group are not allowed to leave the group and register with another group (for the products registered) if there is any pending sanction on the producer issued by the group, or there are any issues relevant to the producer raised by the CB that have not been closed.

1.12.1. Producer transfer

This type of transfer of a producer from other CB to ACERTA takes place after the producer's certificates has expired as long as there is no binding service contract between producer and the original CB. The producer will apply for certification for the next cycle to ACERTA. It is not necessary to wait until the current certificate has expired to initiate certification request to ACERTA.

Prior to any transfers the Operations Manager or Scheme Manager or the Technical Department will carry out a review of the certification status of the potential customer checking the GLOBALG.A.P. database and documents provided.

Minimum requirements to be reviewed:

- Firstly, **a search in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database** will be carried out, in order to verify the current status of the producer and the certificate – in terms of authenticity, duration, and scope of activities covered in respect of the site or sites wished to be transfered.
- In particular, when a producer **has a sanction** applied by the outgoing CB, which **has not yet been closed out**. In cases where sanctions are outstanding, the sanction must be resolved and closed out with the outgoing CB **before** any transfer of the producer to ACERTA.
- Whether any **contractual commitments** with the outgoing CB are still outstanding, which would impede a correct transfer.
- A consideration of the last evaluation/re-evaluation reports, subsequent surveillance reports and any outstanding non-conformities arising there from. This consideration should also include any other available, relevant documentation regarding the certification process (i.e.: handwritten notes, verification list, complaints received and corrective actions taken, etc.).

Two situations are possible:

a) Expired certificate

If the date of acceptance (signing of Sublicence and Certification Agreement) and the date of audit are AFTER the certificate from the outgoing CB expired, because it is only possible to audit during a specid harvest time, there will be a period when the producer does not have a valid certificate.

If the certificate with the other CB has expired when ACERTA receives the request form, ACERTA will carry out an **initial audit** (see point 1.6.1. b about Initial inspections and species registered for the first time).

b) Valid certificate

If the date of acceptance (signing of Sublicence and Certification Agreement) and perhaps also the date of audit is BEFORE the certificate from the outgoing CB expired, the certification decision can only take effect as soon as the certificate expires. In this case, the certification cycle of the producer will remain the same as before. If, during the validity of the certificate issued by

the outgoing CB, the accepting CB detects non-conformities that are not closed after 28 days, then ACERTA shall inform GLOBALG.A.P. about the non-conformities detected so that appropriate actions can be taken.

If the producer has a valid certificate with the other CB when ACERTA receives the request form, ACERTA will carry out a **renewal audit** (see point 1.6.1. c about Renewals).

If during a producer transfer, ACERTA did not observe the harvest of all products included in the certification scope during the renewal audit, an unannounced inspection (within the 10% rule) shall be scheduled during the following 12 months, in order to inspect the harvest process of products not yet seen.

1.13. Complaints, appeals and lawsuits

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions are established:

Complaint: Act by which a natural or legal person states his/her disagreement with ACERTA's procedures in any issue related to its activity (administrative, economic, technical, etc).

Appeal: Act by which a natural or legal person states his/her disagreement with a decision made by ACERTA.

Lawsuit: Act by which a natural or legal person or even ACERTA decides to settle the resolution of any discrepancy to the arbitration of a third party.

Complaints: Any natural or legal person will have the right to issue a complaint against ACERTA. The complaints may be communicated orally or in writing. In both cases, ACERTA shall record it in the corresponding Complaints Form. The complaint will be internally assessed by ACERTA. Where required by the complaint, the applicant will be informed of the decisions adopted as soon as possible.

Appeals: Any customer or applicant for certification will have the right to give notice of appeal against the decisions adopted by ACERTA. In this case, he/she shall have to communicate it in writing (fax or letter) addressed to ACERTA's Management, using for this purpose the Appeals Form, and explaining the reasons by which he/she does not agree with the adopted decision. ACERTA's Management will assess the case and will inform the applicant of the decisions adopted within a maximum period of 10 days.

The decisions made are not susceptible to be appealed again.

Lawsuits: Lawsuits arising in connection with the certification or any other activity between ACERTA and other party, will be handled by the Court of Arbitration of the Madrid Chamber of Commerce and Industry that will appoint the arbitrator who will resolve in accordance and following the rules of its own Court.

Note: Notifications about changes on certification requirements is done through ACERTA's web site: www.ACERTA-cert.com