



# **GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations**

## **Rules for Certification Bodies**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document, part of the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations (GR), applies to the Integrated Farm Assurance version 6 Smart (IFA v6 Smart) edition, the Integrated Farm Assurance version 6 GFS (IFA v6 GFS) edition, the Harmonized Produce Safety Standard (HPSS), and the Produce Handling Assurance (PHA) standard.

- a) The IFA scope plants covers the certification of the whole production process of the product from before the plant is in the ground to the unprocessed product. No processing or manufacturing is covered. The aquaculture scope covers hatchery, grow-out, harvest, and postharvest when done by the same legal entity.
- b) The GLOBALG.A.P. standards offer several benefits to producers:
  - (i) Reduce food safety risks in primary production by encouraging the development and adoption of national and regional farm assurance schemes through benchmarking and national interpretation guidelines and with a clear risk-assessed and hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP)-based reference standard serving the consumer and food chain
  - (ii) Serve as a technical communication platform for continuous improvement and transparency across the entire food chain through consultation
  - (iii) Reduce the cost of compliance by avoiding multiple CB audits on mixed farming enterprises through a single “one-stop-shop” approach
  - (iv) Avoid excess regulator burden by proactive adoption in the industry and by achieving global harmonization, leading to a more level playing field
  - (v) Increase the integrity of farm assurance schemes worldwide by defining and enforcing a unified level of CB auditor competence, verification status, reporting, and a harmonized interpretation of criteria
- c) These standards are structured to create customized sets of requirements depending on the producer’s process description during registration (products and process characteristics such as use of irrigation, inclusion of product handling, etc.). Requirements are defined as principles and criteria (P&Cs). The producer will generate a customized set of rules and checklists in a platform provided by FoodPLUS GmbH and operated by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- d) FoodPLUS GmbH/The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat provides the standard and framework for independent, recognized third-party certification of primary production processes based on ISO/IEC 17065.
- e) To get an IFA certificate, applicants shall achieve a certain level of compliance, as defined in the normative documents.
- f) The IFA certificate may be issued for three different scopes: plants and aquaculture.
- g) IFA v6 Smart includes food safety-related P&Cs (including traceability, segregation, food hygiene, etc.) and non-food-safety-related P&Cs (including workers’ health and safety, environmental protection, animal welfare, etc.).
- h) IFA v6 GFS includes food safety-related P&Cs and non-food-safety-related P&Cs (similar to IFA v6 Smart), where the food safety-related requirements are recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).
- i) Legislation relevant to P&Cs more demanding than GLOBALG.A.P. overrides the GLOBALG.A.P. requirement. Where there is no legislation (or legislation is not so strict), GLOBALG.A.P. provides a minimum acceptable level of compliance. Compliance with all applicable legislation is not in itself a condition for certification. The audit carried out by

the GLOBALG.A.P. approved certification body (CB) does not replace public compliance agencies' responsibilities to enforce legislation. Existence of legislation relevant to a specific P&C does not change the level of that P&C to Major Must. The P&C levels shall be kept as defined in the P&C documents and checklists approved and published.

- j) Definitions of terminology used in the GLOBALG.A.P. GR and P&Cs are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. glossary.
- k) Annexes referenced in the P&Cs are guidelines. Guidelines referenced in the P&Cs to guide producers to comply with the requirements are *not* normative documents.
- l) Only products included in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list, published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, may be registered for certification. The GLOBALG.A.P. product list is not limited and may be extended based on demand. Requests to add new products to the product list may be sent to the email address [standard\\_support@globalgap.org](mailto:standard_support@globalgap.org) with the following information:
  - (i) Product
  - (ii) Scientific name
  - (iii) Any additional information (e.g., cultivation, use, alternative names, pictures). This can be supplied via a website link as well.
- m) The term *shall* is used throughout the GLOBALG.A.P. normative documents to indicate mandatory provisions.
- n) FoodPLUS GmbH and GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs or verification bodies (VBs) do not assume any responsibility with respect to any producer's compliance with applicable legislation. No audit, assessment, or certification performed by the CBs (or VBs), or any other action performed by FoodPLUS GmbH or by the CBs (or VBs) aims at certifying legislative compliance of the producer but only compliance with the GLOBALG.A.P. P&Cs.
- o) FoodPLUS GmbH and GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs (or VBs) do not assume any warranty or responsibility and are therefore not legally liable for:
  - (i) The safety of the product originating from production processes certified under a GLOBALG.A.P. standard
  - (ii) The accuracy and completeness of the data in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, even if entered by the GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB (or VB)
  - (iii) Any violations of applicable legislation, other standards, or best practices through the GLOBALG.A.P. standard chosen and applied by the producer

The choice and application of a GLOBALG.A.P. standard is made at the sole discretion and responsibility of the respective producer. It is the responsibility of the producer to ensure that the GLOBALG.A.P. standard is suitable for the producer's processes and does not cause any negative consequences (especially damages) for the producer or any third party.

- p) Accordingly, FoodPLUS GmbH, its employees, and its agents cannot be held liable for any losses, damages, charges, costs, or expenses of whatever nature (including consequential losses) that any producer may suffer or incur by reason of or arising directly or indirectly from complying with a GLOBALG.A.P. standard or the administration by FoodPLUS GmbH, its employees, or its agents or the performance of their respective obligations in connection with such GLOBALG.A.P. standard. This does not apply to the extent that such loss, damages, charges, costs, or expenses arise as a result of the finally and judicially determined gross negligence or willful default of such person (for the avoidance of doubt, this restriction does not constitute an independent basis for a claim).

## 2 TERMINOLOGY

According to the terminology of ISO/IEC 17065, the term audit/auditor should be used for evaluation of management systems and the term inspection/inspector should be used for process evaluation. For the sake of simplicity, in this document:

- Whenever the term “CB auditor” is used, it shall refer to a CB farm auditor or CB QMS auditor.
- Whenever the term “CB audit” is used, it shall refer to a CB farm audit or CB QMS audit.
- Whenever the term “internal auditor” is used, it shall refer to an internal farm auditor or internal QMS auditor.
- Whenever the term “internal audit” is used, it shall refer to an internal farm audit or internal QMS audit.
- Whenever the term “producer” is used, it shall refer to persons (individuals) or businesses (companies, producer groups, or individual producers) that are legally responsible for the production processes and the products of the respective scope, sold by those persons or businesses.
- Whenever the term “producer group/multisite producer” is used, it shall refer to producer groups managed by a QMS and/or individual producers with multisites, respectively.
- Whenever the term “member/site” is used, it shall refer to individual members of a producer group and/or individual production sites of a multisite producer, respectively.
- The terms “certified producer,” “certified producer group,” “certified producer group member,” and “certified production site” will be used. However, producers, producer group members, and production sites are not certified but their production processes are certified.
- “Certified product” refers to a product originating from a certified production process.

## 3 LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT

- a) The GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement establishes the rights and obligations of the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat as the GLOBALG.A.P. system owner and of the CB as the neutral organization for auditing, certification, and licensing activities within the framework of the GLOBALG.A.P. system.
- b) The GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement, including its updates, shall be accepted and signed by the CB as part of the application procedure to become and to remain a GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB and to be listed as such on the GLOBALG.A.P. website.
- c) The GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement, the GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement, and the GLOBALG.A.P. GR complement one another, and GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs shall continuously comply with all.
- d) All GR documents complement one another, and GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs shall continuously comply with all.

## 4 CB APPROVAL PROCESS

### 4.1 CB approval by GLOBALG.A.P.

#### 4.1.1 Provisional approval

- a) The CB shall complete the steps listed below before carrying out any GLOBALG.A.P. audits, issuing any GLOBALG.A.P. certificates (accredited or nonaccredited), or being granted provisional approval.
- (i) The applicant CB shall register in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, send a completed application form in English, and pay an evaluation fee (as per the latest version of the GLOBALG.A.P. fee table) to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat in order to initiate the approval process.
  - (ii) After a positive evaluation of the application and before provisional approval, the applicant CB shall complete the following steps:
    1. Sign the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement
    2. Pay the annual CB license fee (as per the latest version of the GLOBALG.A.P. fee table)
  - (iii) After provisional approval, but before conducting any GLOBALG.A.P. audit, the applicant CB shall complete the following steps:
    1. Receive access to the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems
    2. Register all its auditors in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems (i.e., CB-AT)
    3. Have all its auditors complete the necessary GLOBALG.A.P. online trainings and tests for the relevant scope(s)
    4. Pay the relevant auditor registration fee as per the latest version of the GLOBALG.A.P. fee table
- b) As a condition for provisional approval, the applicant CB intending to certify Option 1 producers shall have at least one CB farm auditor (to perform the audits) *and* one CB QMS auditor (for the CB decision-making committee) who have both completed all applicable qualification requirements (for details, please check [section 8.1](#), requirements k) and l)).

The applicant CB wanting to certify producer groups/multisite producers with a quality management system (QMS) shall have at least one CB QMS auditor (for QMS audits) *and* at least one other CB QMS auditor (for the CB decision-making committee) who have both completed all applicable qualification requirements.

- c) The CB shall nominate a GLOBALG.A.P. scheme manager (pursuant [section 5.2 a\)](#)).
- d) The CB shall nominate an in-house trainer (IHT) (pursuant [section 5.2 b\)](#)) and complete or at least register for the IHT training of the relevant scope(s).
- e) A CB intending to carry out certifications to a benchmarked scheme/checklist shall show evidence of approval by the scheme/checklist owner and fulfill requirements specified in the GLOBALG.A.P. benchmarking regulations.
- f) The CB shall apply to an accreditation body (AB) for accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 in the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. scope(s) and benchmarked checklists or in the relevant full benchmarked scheme (see “GLOBALG.A.P. benchmarking regulations”). A copy of the confirmation of this application to the AB shall be forwarded to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.

- g) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will allow provisionally approved CBs *with a previous* ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation to issue a limited number of non-accredited certificates before final approval. The maximum number of *producers* that may receive non-accredited certificates (Option 1, 2, 3, and 4) *per scope* (plants or aquaculture) is 20.

Example 1: If a CB has one Option 2 producer group of 33 producers, it can only issue a non-accredited certificate for 20 of the 33 producers. The CB cannot issue further certificates for any Option 1 or Option 2 producers until it has received accreditation. Alternatively, the CB can issue 20 certificates for 20 Option 1 producers.

Example 2: A CB can issue a non-accredited certificate for an Option 2 producer group covering 12 producers and 8 non-accredited certificates for 8 Option 1 producers (i.e., not connected to the Option 2 producer group for a total of 20 producers).

Example 3: The CB applies for the approval for IFA scopes plants and aquaculture. 20 producers (Option 1 producers or Option 2 producer group members) may receive non-accredited certificates for the IFA plants scope in total and 20 producers may receive non-accredited certificates for the IFA aquaculture scope.

- h) There is a provision by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to allow provisionally approved CBs with *no previous* ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation and that are not yet accredited for the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. scope to issue a limited number of non-accredited certificates during the application phase for accreditation. The maximum number of *producers* that may receive non-accredited certificates *per scope during first approval* is five.
- i) The non-accredited certificates shall comply with the applicable certificate template requirements but shall contain neither the GLOBALG.A.P. nor the AB logos.

#### 4.1.2 Final approval

The CB shall complete the steps below before issuing any accredited GLOBALG.A.P. certificates and before being granted final approval.

- a) The CB shall obtain ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation for the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. scope(s) and benchmarked checklists or for the relevant benchmarked scheme within six months of the date of provisional approval. This period may be extended for additional time if the CB or the AB provides justified reasons explaining the delay. The CB shall submit the justified reasons to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- b) Once accreditation has been obtained, the CB shall send a copy of the accreditation evidence to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- c) If accreditation has not been achieved within a maximum period of one year, provisional approval may be withdrawn, and the CB shall not appear as provisionally approved on the GLOBALG.A.P. website and shall not issue any GLOBALG.A.P. certificates unless the CB submits justification for the delay. The CB may reapply for provisional approval.
- d) As a condition for final approval, the provisionally approved CB shall have at least one IHT (pursuant [section 5.2](#) b)) who has completed the required IHT training available for the relevant scope and has passed the IHT test.
- e) The CB shall continuously register all CB auditors in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.  
The registered CB farm and QMS auditors shall complete the necessary GLOBALG.A.P. online and face-to-face trainings and tests (CB QMS auditor online and/or CB farm auditor online test) for the relevant scope once these are available in their working language (see section 5.2, [Training and qualification of staff](#)).
- f) The CB shall pay the relevant training fees per registered CB auditor as per the latest version of the GLOBALG.A.P. fee table.



- g) Only after the CB has received ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation and final approval by GLOBALG.A.P. for the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. scope(s) and benchmarked checklist or for the relevant benchmarked scheme may the CB place the GLOBALG.A.P. logos/trademarks on the certificate.
- h) The CB shall use the GLOBALG.A.P. claim, logos/trademarks according to the rules in the “GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: Policy and guidelines.”

#### **4.1.3 Approval extension**

- a) GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs that want to add another GLOBALG.A.P. scope or get approval for another GLOBALG.A.P. standard (e.g., PHA, HPSS, CoC, CFM), add-on, or benchmarked checklist shall follow all steps and requirements listed in [sections 4.1.1](#) and [4.1.2](#). Whenever the standard requires accreditation, the CB shall apply for the accreditation of the new scope or standard before signing the agreement for extension of approval with GLOBALG.A.P.
- b) The precondition for approval extension (provisionally approved status) is the availability of an IHT for the new scope(s), add-on(s), and/or standard(s) for its current version. In the absence of a training opportunity, the CB shall at least register for the next upcoming training. Provisional approval shall be withdrawn if the CB does not attend or fails the applicable IHT training.
- c) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may grant already approved CBs/VBs automatic approval for certain new standard/add-on versions or editions on a case-by-case basis to facilitate the transition process between version/edition updates. CBs/VBs with a Yellow Card or other pending sanction may be excluded from this automatic approval process. The excluded CB/VB shall follow the normal application process for the extension of their scope.

#### **4.2 Termination of approval**

If a CB requests the termination of the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement, the following actions shall be taken:

- a) The CB shall send a formal termination request to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- b) The CB shall inform all clients that their recertification shall be carried out by a different CB.
- c) There is no need for the CB to modify or update any information in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. If the products are not reregistered for the next cycle, once the current certificate expires, the new CB will be able to use the producer’s GLOBALG.A.P. identification number (e.g., GGN) to recertify them.
- d) The CB shall be blocked in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and shall not register new clients or reissue and extend their valid certificates.
- e) The CB shall contact the customer support team for any changes such as modification of existing certificates, shortening of the certificate validity, changing of the access rights of existing producers, amendments to the master data, complaints, etc.
- f) In the case of producers with product suspension, the CB shall lift the sanction before being blocked in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems or leave these producers without a valid certificate for this product.
- g) The CB shall inform the AB.

- h) The CB shall keep accreditation for the relevant scopes/standards until their last certificate expires. The CB shall also remain responsible for certificates until their expiry – e.g., in the case of complaints or Certification Integrity Program (CIPRO) assessments.
- i) The CB shall be listed on the GLOBALG.A.P. website until their last certificate expires. A comment shall be added that the CB shall not contract/certify producers and will terminate its GLOBALG.A.P. approval on a specific date.
- j) GLOBALG.A.P. shall decide whether the CB license fee applies for the current and/or following year and whether any further training shall be attended.

#### **4.3 AB requirements**

- a) The AB to which the CB applies shall be a signatory of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for product certification (IAF Product MLA) with GLOBALG.A.P. subscope of the MLA (levels 4 and 5). In addition, the AB shall have signed the memorandum of understanding with FoodPLUS GmbH.
- b) New ABs that have never accredited any GLOBALG.A.P. standard before shall send a representative to attend at least one CB IHT training and one QMS training. This representative shall attend the trainings in full, but there is no requirement to pass the corresponding tests.
- c) The accreditation document issued by the AB to the CB shall clearly state:
  - (i) The extent of the accreditation scope(s), standard(s), and/or benchmarked scheme/checklist it has been approved for
  - (ii) The relevant GLOBALG.A.P. GR and P&Cs, including their version
  - (iii) Any applicable limitations (e.g., territorial, certification option)
- d) An initial accreditation assessment of any GLOBALG.A.P. scope shall require at least one witness audit within each applied scope.

Example: The CB applies for accreditation for the plants and aquaculture scopes at the same time. The AB shall witness at least one CB audit for the plants scope and one CB audit for the aquaculture scope to grant accreditation for both scopes.

- e) The AB shall grant accreditation for the CB to conduct audits for Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with QMS only if the AB has completed at least one CB QMS witness audit, regardless of the scope.

Example: The CB simultaneously applies for accreditation for the scopes plants and aquaculture including QMS. The AB may witness only a plants CB audit including a CB QMS audit but still grant accreditation for both scopes for Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with a QMS).

- f) Benchmarked schemes and checklists are considered as equivalent scopes (of the respective scope).

Example: The CB applies for IFA scopes plants and for plants benchmarked scheme accreditation at the same time. The AB may decide to witness a CB audit of one standard or of both standards but shall grant accreditation for both of them. This applies to d), e), and g) as well.

- g) The AB shall, during its surveillance program, conduct CB witness audits for all applicable scopes at least every four years but not automatically every scope annually. Selection shall take into consideration QMS, and preference shall be given to the producer group/multisite producer with QMS certificates of the CB. The AB shall justify any increase of witness audit frequency.

Example: If the CB only has accreditation for one single scope (e.g., plants), the AB – after initial accreditation – may witness the CB audit for plants certification only once in a four-year period. If the CB has accreditation for the plants and aquaculture scopes, the AB – after initial accreditation – may carry out only two witness (for plants and for aquaculture) once in a four-year period.

- h) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat provides the AB with access to all AB-relevant records of the Integrity Program and complaint management system through the AB extranet. The AB shall review the content of the AB extranet at least annually and take this into account in its next accreditation assessment. ABs are invited to attend the CIPRO assessments performed by GLOBALG.A.P. integrity assessors.
- i) On request, the AB shall share with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat the latest GLOBALG.A.P. relevant results of the accreditation assessments. In this case, the CB shall be informed.
- j) The AB shall issue a confirmation of application including the applied standard scope to the applicant CB.
- k) In the case of version updates (e.g., v6.1 to v6.2) or in case of new versions (e.g., v6 to v7) the CB shall demonstrate that changes have been implemented, for example, by providing the AB with a gap analysis, evidence of CB auditor training to the new version, copies of amended procedures, and an internal audit report. The AB should assess the adequacy of these materials prior to granting an update to the accreditation schedule. The AB conducts a CB witness audit following the AB's own assessment cycle. A new CB office assessment and/or new witness assessment is not a precondition for granting an update to the accreditation schedule.

## 5 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 General requirements

- a) All the points described in the GLOBALG.A.P. GR shall be accepted and included in the relevant operational document of the CB for GLOBALG.A.P. certification to all scopes/standards/add-ons/benchmarked checklists and be available for AB evaluation.
- b) The CB shall pay the relevant fees as described in the applicable GLOBALG.A.P. fee table.
- c) The CB is responsible for communicating to its GLOBALG.A.P. registered clients all relevant updates, as well as the date of first application and grace period of any new GLOBALG.A.P. versions of normative documents.
- d) GLOBALG.A.P. integrity assessors shall be entitled to participate, upon prior notice and at FoodPLUS GmbH's own cost, in audits carried out by the CB.
- e) The information collected by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat regarding the CB and their activities, including records of the Integrity Program, is made available in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems to ABs for facilitating accreditation evaluation.
- f) The CB shall inform the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat within 24 hours of changes that affect:
  - (i) Personnel relevant for the management of the GLOBALG.A.P. scheme (e.g., change of the scheme manager)
  - (ii) Personnel relevant to the competency of auditors, including IHTs
  - (iii) Operation as an independent CB, in particular withdrawal of accreditation or corporate changes
- g) The CB shall actively cooperate with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat during management of complaints related to the CB or to producers with valid contracts with the CB.
- h) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may instruct CBs to conduct additional announced or unannounced CB audits or on-site visits to investigate complaints.

## 5.2 Training and qualification of staff

- a) Every GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB shall nominate one contact person, called the GLOBALG.A.P. scheme manager, who will be the representative of the CB to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. This person:
- (i) Shall be fluent in English
  - (ii) Shall qualify at least as a CB farm auditor (see section 12, [GLOBALG.A.P. CB farm auditor qualifications \(Options 1 and 3\)](#)) for one of the scopes
  - (iii) Shall be committed to assisting in any harmonization activities performed by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
  - (iv) Shall be available in-house (i.e., not hired occasionally by the CB) and part of the operational and/or management decision-making process of the CB
  - (v) Shall be responsible for reporting on the performance of the quality system of the CB for the purposes of management review and subsequent system improvement of the CB
  - (vi) Shall be responsible for returning to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat the requested signed receipts of any communication requiring written receipt
  - (vii) Shall be responsible for communication and administration of users within the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems
  - (viii) Shall respond to GLOBALG.A.P. operational enquiries as required in the communication (if the GLOBALG.A.P. scheme manager is not available, a substitute shall assume these responsibilities)
  - (ix) Shall distribute all communication received from the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to all CB staff involved in GLOBALG.A.P. activities in all countries
  - (x) Shall attend the annual scheme manager (update) training. This is a yearly task of the CB. If a different scheme manager is appointed in the middle of the year, attendance of the scheme manager update training is not required again for that same year. If the scheme manager is on medical leave (e.g., maternity leave), the CB may send another competent representative. If the CB has critical locations defined by their AB, a representative of each critical location shall also attend the annual scheme manager (update) meeting. Additional fees apply.
  - (xi) Can be the same person as the IHT
  - (xii) If the CB appoints a new scheme manager, this shall be communicated within 24 hours to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- b) All finally approved CBs shall have a specifically trained CB IHT for each scope and version (e.g., IFA plants scope, version 6) who shall be responsible for ensuring that all the CB's registered GLOBALG.A.P. auditors comply with the requirements set in [section 12](#) and [13](#). This person:
- (i) Shall have passed the CB IHT training and test for the relevant scope and version. Failing any part of the test twice will require reattending a GLOBALG.A.P. CB IHT training and successfully passing the test. Failing the test a third time leads to blocking of IHT candidate and a new IHT shall be named and trained.
  - (ii) Shall be available in-house, i.e., not hired occasionally by the CB. The person may be the same person as the scheme manager, and the CB may have more than one IHT covering different standards or scopes.

- (iii) Shall comply with at least CB farm auditor qualification requirements for the respective scope. If the CB has clients with QMS, one of the IHTs shall comply with CB QMS auditor qualifications.
  - (iv) Shall be responsible for training all the respective GLOBALG.A.P. auditors and answering their technical questions
  - (v) Shall complete the required training within three months in the case of a change in personnel. If this is not feasible, the new person shall register within three months for an upcoming training.
  - (vi) Shall attend periodical technical update meetings, as announced by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
  - (vii) Shall follow formal communications by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat, especially the technical news, and have the responsibility to update CB auditors regarding this information
- c) In order to carry out GLOBALG.A.P. audits, the CB shall employ/contract only auditors that fulfill the GLOBALG.A.P. scope-specific requirements (see [section 12](#) and [13](#)). Every auditor has to fulfill all scope-specific requirements (i.e., two people who taken together fulfill the requirements of one CB QMS auditor or CB farm auditor but do not individually fulfill the requirements are not permitted to perform an IFA audit). In the case of combined audits (in which more than one standard and/or add-on are audited together), however, it is allowed to use a CB audit team in which one person fulfills the GLOBALG.A.P. scope-specific requirements and another person has the qualifications for the other standard (e.g., PHA, HPSS, CoC) or add-on.
- d) Only CB QMS auditors complying with the CB QMS auditor qualification requirements and training as defined in [section 13](#) may carry out QMS audits (producer groups/multisite producers with QMS).
- All previously approved CB QMS auditors carrying out QMS audits for version 6 shall pass a QMS auditor version 6 training and test once it is available in their working language.
- If the CIPRO assessment results show a low auditing level, the respective CB QMS auditor shall repeat the CB QMS auditor training.
- e) Every CB farm auditor and CB QMS auditor shall complete the CB farm auditor online tests (including updates of tests) within three months after their release provided they are available in the auditor's working language. The IHT(s) shall monitor the process to ensure that it is complete and genuine. New CB auditors shall complete the self-paced training (online) and pass the CB farm auditor online test, if applicable, for the relevant scopes before being signed off. If auditors work for more than one CB, the self-paced training and CB farm auditor online test for the respective scope need to be completed only once, but the auditor shall be registered with each CB they are working with. IHTs do not need to pass the CB farm auditor online test for the scopes for which they have already passed the IHT test.
- f) The CB shall register all its auditors in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and upload the needed evidence as proof that the auditors comply with the specific qualification requirements. The CB shall review this evidence and approve it when it complies with the requirements. Once approved by the CB, the auditor information is submitted to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat for approval. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat reserves the right to block those persons not complying with the qualification requirements in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- g) The CB shall carry out a witness audit for each of its GLOBALG.A.P. auditors at least once every four years to verify competence.

- h) The CB shall verify, record, and monitor the requirements set for auditor qualification including requirements for initial and update trainings and maintenance of competency.
- i) The CB shall have in place a system for the ongoing calibration and training of its auditors. The CB shall carry out annual internal update trainings for auditors. Records of those trainings shall be retained.
- j) The CB shall ensure that all staff working on GLOBALG.A.P. related issues is trained appropriately according to their task (e.g., in GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems use). Training records shall be kept and shown on request.
- k) After successful completion of the CB IHT training and test, CB auditors may become “registered trainer for GLOBALG.A.P. standards.” This requires a separate application. These IHTs do not need to complete an extra training and test for this purpose. A list of the Registered Trainers is available on the GLOBALG.A.P. website.

### **5.3 CB certification and compliance data communication with GLOBALG.A.P.**

- a) The objective of data communication is to “know at any point in time, instantly and worldwide” the details of certification and compliance data of each registered applicant. Therefore, the CB shall keep the following information up to date in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, according to the GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements and the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules:
  - (i) Its present status and status history
  - (ii) Its products
  - (iii) Their area/volume for each unique producer (legal entity), in all standards and Options (per product), with central validation of certificates and letters of compliance by market participants
  - (iv) Audit and compliance details, which shall be uploaded in Audit Online Hub (AOH) following AOH upload rules (see “GLOBALG.A.P. Audit Online Hub upload rules”)
- b) Consequently, the CB data communication with GLOBALG.A.P. shall:
  - (i) Ensure that when a CB has taken a positive certification decision, no certificate is issued before the product status is updated to “certified” in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems
  - (ii) Ensure that as soon as a sanction has been issued, the producer’s status shall be updated in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems to reflect the current status (the time between issuing the sanction and updating the status in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems shall not exceed more than one working day)
  - (iii) Ensure that the status of all producers in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems is up-to-date
  - (iv) Ensure availability of immediately accessible information on all CB audit details (including those of announced, unannounced, and surveillance audits) as well as details for each certificate

If the certificate holder is facing a complaint regarding food safety (i.e., potentially involved in a foodborne outbreak), workers’ well-being, environmental protection, or animal welfare, or is involved in a court trial or has been found by a court of law to have infringed a national or international law, and these actions can endanger the reputation and credibility of FoodPLUS GmbH and/or the GLOBALG.A.P. standard, the CB shall inform the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat within 24 hours.

## 5.4 CB independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and integrity

- a) In accordance with ISO/IEC 17065, the GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB shall be structured to ensure separation of activities that may cause a conflict of interest. All CB personnel shall operate at high levels of professional integrity; shall be free from commercial, financial, or other pressures that may affect their judgment; and are expressly forbidden from promoting any goods or services during audit activities.
- b) The CB shall have procedures in place to ensure that the same CB farm auditor does not audit an Option 1 producer for more than four consecutive years (regardless of whether the audit is announced or unannounced) (see [section 12.3.6](#)). Under Option 2, the CB QMS auditor in the audit team shall rotate (no more than four consecutive years auditing the same producer group QMS). However, the CB farm auditors in the audit team may remain the same (see [section 13.3.6](#)).
- c) Confidentiality: Information relating to the applicant producer, including details of products and processes, audit reports, and associated documentation, shall be treated as confidential (unless otherwise required by law). No information shall be released to third parties without the prior consent of the applicant producer unless stated otherwise in the GLOBALG.A.P. GR or the GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement (including the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules).
- d) The CB shall establish measures and procedures to prevent bribery and corruption at all levels of its organization.

## 6 PRODUCER REGISTRATION

The GLOBALG.A.P. certification granting procedure shall be clearly defined in CB operational documentation and shall follow the GLOBALG.A.P. GR.

### 6.1 General

- a) All production sites to be certified shall be registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- b) The product scope is linked to the location where that product is produced. Products produced in a nonregistered location shall not be included in the certification scope. Likewise, products that are not registered but are grown in a registered location shall not be included in the certification scope.
- c) Only producer groups or individual producers may apply to register their production process for GLOBALG.A.P. certification.
- d) A certificate and sublicense are issued to the registered producer for production sites where the products are produced (and packed or handled if applicable) and for the products declared.
- e) Only the legal certificate holder (i.e., the legal entity indicated on the certificate) may market products with reference to a GLOBALG.A.P. certificate. Producer group members are not legal certificate holders. Thus, they shall not market any products under their name with reference to the producer group certificate. All products that are sold without reference to the certificate shall be recorded in the producer group mass balance system.

### 6.2 Producer registration

- a) The CB and producer shall agree to “service of notice” terms, which shall include a commitment by the CB to confirm the receipt of formal application for (first) registration within 28 calendar days. The CB confirmation shall include a unique GLOBALG.A.P. identification number (e.g., GGN, CoC Number) generated by the CB in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.

- b) Each CB shall set up and explain to its prospective clients its own detailed fee structure and specify the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fee, which the CB pays to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat for each particular client.
- c) The CB commercial offer (or any document used for similar purpose) signed by the applicant shall include the CB audit duration and its justification. This shall include the different parts of the CB audit to be considered (e.g., QMS, PHU 1, PHU2, producer 1, producer 2, site 1, site 2) and the travel time to and between members/sites.
- d) The CB shall explain to its prospective clients that the payment of the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fee does not guarantee the issuing of a certificate.
- e) The CB shall ask if a producer has previously had a GLOBALG.A.P. identification number and shall decide whether the procedure for transfer between CB as set out in [section 9](#) applies.
- f) If a producer wishes to change to a new CB, the accepting CB shall as a first step for all applicant producers carry out a search in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems to verify that producer's status before any further actions are taken.
- g) If a producer uses the services of more than one CB, each CB shall conduct the respective audits independently.
  - (i) If one of the CBs issues a sanction, all CBs operating with that producer have the obligation to communicate with each other regarding the sanction and, if appropriate, details of actions to be taken across all CBs.
  - (ii) The communication of a sanction to all CBs operating with that producer is also an obligation that the producer shall undertake but may also be made by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat directly to the CBs involved.
- h) The CB shall establish and implement procedures for collecting data updates of the accepted producer, such as production site or product area changes and inclusion/delisting of members within a producer group. As a minimum, these data shall be collected annually before each recertification audit (see "GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements").

### 6.2.1 Registration data requirements

The CB shall:

- a) Record during registration all the information requested in "GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements"
- b) Ensure that all producer group members approved by a producer group QMS and included in the producer group internal register are registered individually in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems according to "GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements." This information shall be kept up to date at all times.
- c) Keep the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems updated accordingly, as described in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems wiki ([wiki.globalgap.org](http://wiki.globalgap.org))

### 6.2.2 Data access rules

- a) The CB shall inform the producer of and explain the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules available on the website.
- b) The CB shall inform the producer of and explain any changes to the data access rules whenever applicable.



- c) Data access rules shall be defined and signed by the producer during registration with the CB. The data owner is responsible for granting and determining the level of data access. The data owner, however, can transfer the responsibility to other users (e.g., the CB).
- d) Data protection: Within the GLOBALG.A.P. system, the data access rules define different levels of authorization, allowing different parties to the system (e.g., producers, CBs, GLOBALG.A.P. market participants, the public) to access different levels of data.

In addition, the producer can provide their personal data to trading partners who have been previously authorized by the producer, or the producer may instruct a third party to provide this data. Such authorization can be revoked online at any time. Any other access to the producer's personal data is illegal and is prevented by the operator of the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems in accordance with the German Federal Data Protection Act (see the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules published on the website).

- e) FoodPLUS GmbH/The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will keep the producer's certification history in its IT systems for a minimum of five years.

## 7 AUDIT PROCESS

### 7.1 Audit scope

During registration, the producer defines the scope of certification. In doing so, the producer generates a customized set of P&Cs and corresponding GLOBALG.A.P. GR which will apply to the audit process. During each CB audit's opening meeting, the CB shall check that the checklist used by the producer for the self-assessment/internal audit is correct according to the certification scope defined during registration.

During registration, questions regarding the producer's specific certification process (e.g., product handling unit (PHU) included/not included, covered crop/open field, GMO applicable/not applicable, seedlings (ova/juveniles) additionally purchased, feed supplied (externally or internally)) are included to filter the P&Cs applicable to each specific producer and thus provide a customized checklist.

The CB shall carry out the audit using the complete checklist of the applicable scope(s) annually.

The CB audit shall cover:

- All registered products and production processes
- All registered production sites
- All registered PHUs
- Where relevant, the administrative sites

In both Option 2 and Option 1, CB audit content shall be organized in a three-year cycle:

- First CB audit (for version 6): all requirements included in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Subsequent CB audit (year 2): operational items as identified in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Subsequent CB audit (year 3): operational items as identified in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Recertification audit: all requirements included in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits), same as initial CB audit

The CB may conduct additional announced or unannounced audits or on-site visits to investigate complaints.

## **7.2 Option 1 producers without a QMS**

For more information on Option 1 individual producers without a QMS, see “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for individual producers.”

### **7.2.1 Announced CB farm audits**

- a) The announced CB farm audit shall follow the three-year cycle described in [section 7.1](#).
- b) The CB may divide the announced CB farm audit into two stages: an off-site stage and an on-site stage. Both stages shall be performed by the same CB farm auditor.
- c) See [section 7.6](#) for guidance on using information and communication technology (ICT) for an audit’s off-site stage (Option 1 or Option 2) (based on IAF MD4:2018).
- d) The off-site stage shall be conducted no more than four weeks (28 days) before the on-site stage. It shall consist of a desk review of documentation sent by the producer to the CB before the on-site stage. The CB shall schedule a date as deadline for the producer to submit the documents to be evaluated off-site. That date shall also trigger the period of four weeks to conduct the on-site stage.
- e) Documentation that may be audited off-site by the CB auditor includes, for example, the self-assessment, risk assessments, procedures required in various P&Cs, aquaculture health plan, analysis programs (frequency, parameters, locations), analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used, list of plant protection products used, proof of laboratory accreditation, certificates or assessment reports of subcontracted activities, and plant protection product/fertilizer/medicine application records. The documentation may be supported by interviews and a remote CB audit of the facilities.
- f) The off-site stage shall be recorded in the audit checklist through sufficient comments for the specific P&Cs. Comments shall be supplied for all Major Must and all non-compliant and not applicable Minor Must P&Cs unless otherwise indicated in the guideline for audit methodology, if available.
- g) Date, time, and duration of the off-site and on-site stages of each CB audit shall be recorded by the CB auditor and signed or specifically confirmed by email by the producer.
- h) The on-site stage shall be conducted after the off-site stage and consists of an on-site CB audit of the remaining content of the checklist, the production process, the registered sites/PHUs, and the verification of the information already reviewed off-site. The on-site stage shall include, at least, the inspection of good agricultural practices and food safety-related requirements to determine compliance.
- i) If non-conformances are found during the entire CB farm audit process (off-site and on-site stages together), the countdown to the deadline for closing them begins with the on-site closing meeting, when the audit result is signed or specifically confirmed by email by the producer.
- j) This system does not reduce the overall CB audit duration (see requirements regarding CB audit duration in scope-specific rules) but allows more efficient use of time on-site. The duration of the on-site stage shall never be shorter than two hours.

### **7.2.2 CB farm audit duration**

- a) The audit report shall include a recording of the CB farm audit duration (start and end times for each day).

- b) A sufficient CB farm audit duration shall allow the CB farm auditor to have an opening meeting with farm management (e.g., reconfirming the scope); audit all applicable P&Cs; audit the production process of all products included in the audit scope; visit all production, storage, processing, and other critical locations (e.g., water sources); audit the machinery used; interview personnel; evaluate records; complete the checklist with sufficient comments; and present the results to the producer during the closing meeting immediately after the CB farm audit has finished.
- c) Additional requirements and guidance on the minimum CB farm audit duration are described in the respective scope-specific rules.

### 7.3 Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with QMS

#### 7.3.1 Announced CB QMS audits

- a) The announced CB QMS audit shall follow the three-year cycle described in [section 7.1](#).
- b) The CB QMS audit shall involve a sampling of the components (e.g., producer group members, production sites, PHUs, documents, records) to audit compliance with the relevant standard and enable certification. All documentation, sites, personnel, and operations that are declared by the producer group/multisite producer to be relevant to the setting up and administration of the QMS as described in “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS” shall be evaluated.
- c) The aim of the CB QMS audit is to assess whether the implemented QMS ensures that all the components of the system comply with the certification requirements, as defined by the applicable scope(s).
- d) The CB QMS audit is divided into:
  - (i) Audit of the QMS (including central PHUs, where applicable)
  - (ii) Audit of a sample of registered producer group members/production/handling sites (see “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS”)
- e) The CB shall send the audit plan to the QMS representative prior to the CB QMS audit.
- f) The CB QMS audit shall be conducted at the central office/administrative center of the producer group/multisite producer and at the central PHUs.
- g) The CB QMS audit shall take at least six to eight hours, depending on the size of the producer group/multisite producer, and shall include:
  - (i) Opening meeting with management
  - (ii) Review of all relevant documentation
  - (iii) Evaluation of records
  - (iv) Evaluation of internal QMS auditors’ and internal farm auditors’ qualifications
  - (v) Review of internal QMS audits and internal farm audits
  - (vi) Review of traceability and mass balance requirements
  - (vii) Interviews with relevant staff
  - (viii) Closing meeting, including explanation of non-conformances identified at QMS level
- h) As part of the CB QMS audit, the results of the external and internal audits shall be compared to assess whether the applicant’s internal controls are appropriate.

- i) The closing meeting of the complete CB QMS audit shall take place only after the QMS, the PHUs, and the minimum sample of members/sites have been audited. The complete QMS audit (including audit of the central PHUs and the sample of members/sites) shall be concluded in a maximum of one month. The final CB audit report shall include all findings and the final results for the entire producer group/multisite producer and shall be presented during this closing meeting. A representative of the QMS shall sign the report or specifically confirm its content by email. The 28 days for closing the non-conformances found shall be counted from this date on.
- j) The closing meeting date is the audit report date and shall be recorded in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems as the CB audit date. The CB QMS auditor shall be present at the closing meeting.

### **7.3.2 CB QMS audit off-site and on-site stages**

- a) The CB may divide the announced CB QMS audit into two stages: the off-site stage and the on-site stage. Both stages shall be performed by the same CB QMS auditor.
- b) See [section 7.6](#) for guidance on using ICT for a CB audit's off-site stage (Option 1 or Option 2) (based on IAF MD4:2018).
- c) The off-site stage shall be conducted not more than four weeks (28 days) before the on-site stage. It shall consist of a desk review of documentation sent by the QMS to the CB before the on-site stage. The CB shall schedule a date as deadline for the QMS to submit the documents to be audited off-site. That date shall trigger the period of four weeks to conduct the on-site stage.
- d) Documentation that may be audited off-site by the CB includes, for example, internal QMS audit and internal farm audit reports, the internal register of approved members/sites, risk assessments, procedures, residue monitoring system documentation (frequency, parameters, sampling program), residue analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used, list of plant protection products used, proof of laboratory accreditation, certificates, and internal reports of subcontracted activities. The documentation may be supported by interviews and a remote CB audit of the facilities.
- e) The off-site stage shall be recorded in the QMS checklist through sufficient comments regarding the evidence reviewed.
- f) Date, time, and duration of the off-site and on-site stages of each CB QMS audit shall be recorded by the CB QMS auditor and signed or specifically confirmed by email by the producer.
- g) The on-site stage is conducted after the off-site stage and consists of an on-site audit of the remaining content of the QMS checklist, plus the verification of the information reviewed off-site and the way the QMS works on-site (e.g., internal audits, traceability, segregation and mass balance, central PHUs).
- h) If non-conformances are found during the entire CB audit process (off-site and on-site stages together), the countdown to the deadline for closing them begins with the on-site final closing meeting, when the audit result is signed or specifically confirmed by email by the producer.
- i) This system does not reduce the overall CB audit duration but allows more efficient use of time on-site. The duration of the on-site stage shall never be shorter than three hours.

### 7.3.3 CB audit of members/sites and PHUs

#### 7.3.3.1 Risk classification

This section applies only to IFA v6 GFS. See [section 14.1](#) for further information.

#### 7.3.3.2 Annual certification/recertification audits

- a) For information on members/sites sampling and/or selection, see section 6, Table 2, “Overview of audits in IFA v6 Smart” in “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS.”
- b) The final selection and communication to the QMS representatives of which members/sites to audit shall be carried out by the CB during the CB QMS audit (on-site stage) using criteria based on the producer group/multisite producer structure and defined in a sampling procedure that is risk-based.
- c) In general, the final selection and communication to the QMS of which members/sites to audit shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days) per member/site.
- d) CBs may, based on justifiable criteria, increase the total sampled number of registered members/sites. The producer group/multisite producer has the right to appeal such a decision. Justifiable reasons for an increase could be any of the following:
  - (i) Failure to comply with significant QMS and/or product handling requirements affecting the members/sites compliance
  - (ii) Customer complaints, e.g., detection of pesticide residue above the legal limit
  - (iii) Significant inconsistencies between the internal audit reports and the CB audit findings
  - (iv) The possible need to determine whether findings at the farm level are structural or not
  - (v) Number of products
  - (vi) Types of activities on-site
- e) Producers shall be classified by production type within the respective scope. These may include but are not limited to the following examples:
  - (i) For plants: covered crop, open field production, or perennial plants
  - (ii) For aquaculture: freshwater activities or sea sites

Example 1a: If a producer group (64 in total) is being audited for the GLOBALG.A.P. plants scope and all production takes place in the open field, the sample size is the square root of the total number of producers (8).

Example 1b: If in a producer group of 64 members, 16 produce fish in freshwater and 48 produce fish in sea sites, the square root of the number of producer group members with each production type is audited. The square root of 48 (7) and the square root of 16 (4) mean that a total of 7 + 4 = 11 producers are audited.

Example 2: A producer group has a total of 96 members registered for IFA certification under the plants scope. Of the 96 members,

- 43 produce apples;
- 10 produce apples and tomatoes in greenhouses;
- 5 produce apples and tomatoes in greenhouses and tomatoes in the open field
- The rest of the producers (38 producers) produce carrots in the open field.

That is,

- 58 producers produce perennial crops (apples);
- 15 producers produce covered crops (tomatoes in greenhouses)
- 43 producers produce open field crops (tomatoes and carrots)

The sample shall include:

$\sqrt{58} = 8$  producers producing apples

$\sqrt{15} = 4$  producers producing tomatoes in greenhouse

$\sqrt{43} = 7$  producers producing crops in open field

During the audit, if the CB selects a producer growing apples and tomatoes in greenhouses and carrots and/or tomatoes in the open field, the CB auditor is covering the three different production types at the same time.

- f) The minimum sample size is the square root of the number of registered producers per scope and production type. The square root shall be rounded up to the next whole number if there are any decimals. During the CB audit of each of the selected members/sites, all the registered products shall be audited.

Example 1: An applicant has 4 registered production sites, and the CB, after the CB QMS audit, sets the square root as the sample. Therefore, 2 sites ( $\sqrt{4}$ ) shall be audited at this initial CB audit.

Example 2: A producer group has a total of 64 members of which 48 seek certification for the aquaculture scope and 16 seek certification for the plants scope. The minimum sample size including each scope is  $\sqrt{48} + \sqrt{16} = 7 + 4 = 11$  producers to be audited externally by the CB.

- g) The audited scope of the members/sites selected in the sample shall be complete. Audits shall cover:
- All scopes for which the members/sites are registered
  - All types of production (see e))
  - All products registered for certification that the members/sites produce

CB audits carried out on members/sites in which more than one production type or scope is counted counts as one CB audit for each scope or production type.

Example 1: multiple production types:

A producer group has 53 tomato producers. 28 grow in greenhouses only, 17 grow in the open field only, 8 grow both in greenhouses and the open air.

The minimum size of sample would be:

- Open field:  $17+8=25 \Rightarrow \sqrt{25} = 5$  (minimum number of producers)
- Covered crops:  $28+8=36 \Rightarrow \sqrt{36} = 6$  (minimum number of producers)

However, the minimum total number of producers to audit is 8 ( $\sqrt{53}$ ).

- h) The selection shall take into consideration risk factors, new producers, and random selection. Factors for inclusion in the initial or subsequent sampling may include higher risk of operation, special status of the producer group member, number of products, previous CB audit results, multisite producer members, records of complaints, variations in site size, variations in shift patterns, modifications since the last certification audit, environmental issues or variability, differences in language or cultural practices at sites, and geographic distribution.

Producers that move from one producer group to another shall have a higher possibility of being included in the sample of producer group members chosen by the CB.

- i) If a producer group member operates multisites with a QMS, it shall be merged with the central QMS of the producer group, as there shall be only one QMS for the producer

group. In these cases, the producer group member (legal entity) with multisites shall be taken into account for calculating the sample size and not the number of sites. The CB shall audit the square root of the number of that member's sites during the CB audit if that producer group member is chosen as part of the sample. However, during internal farm audits all the sites of a producer group member shall be audited.

Example: In a producer group with 25 members, one producer group member is classified as a member with multisites (four sites). The CB shall audit 5 members (square root of 25). If the producer group member with multisites is chosen as one of the 5 members, two (square root of four) of their sites shall be audited so that a total of six sites for the producer group are audited.

### **7.3.3.3 CB surveillance audit during certificate validity**

- a) Certification/Recertification audits and CB surveillance audits shall be carried out in two separate visits that shall be a minimum of 30 days apart from each other.
- b) CB surveillance audits shall be performed on a minimum of half of the square root of the actual number of certified members/sites.
- c) In all cases, the final selection and communication to the QMS of which members/sites to audit shall normally not exceed 48 hours (two working days) per member/site.

### **7.3.4 CB audit of PHUs (producer group/multisite producers)**

- a) The CB shall audit central PHUs (i.e., where more than one member/site use the same PHU), using the combined QMS and product handling checklist made available by GLOBALG.A.P.
- b) In the plants scope, at least the square root of the number of central PHUs shall be audited annually while in operation.
- c) In the aquaculture scope, sampling of PHUs is not allowed.
- d) Where product handling does not take place centrally but on the production sites of each producer group member, this factor shall be taken into account when determining the sample of producer group members to be audited. In this case, the CB shall use the farm audit checklist, including the applicable product handling requirements, for each audited producer group member.
- e) In the internal audits, every PHU shall be audited.

## **7.4 Unannounced CB audits**

- a) During subsequent CB audits, a minimum of 10% of all certificate holders of the CB shall be audited unannounced. The calculation of the 10% shall be carried out for each scope and for each standard covered by these GR (IFA v6 Smart, IFA v6 GFS, HPSS, and PHA).
- b) The selection of the 10% shall not only take into account total numbers but shall also be based on the possible risk and factors such as geography, legislation (where several jurisdictions are covered by the CB), crop type, compliance history, etc.
- c) The 10% shall be calculated over a 12-month period. The number of unannounced CB audits per 12-month period shall reflect 10% of the certificates issued without QMS included and with QMS included, respectively.
- d) The 10% shall be distributed among the countries where the CB has certificate holders and shall be representative of the countries.

- e) There shall be a minimum of one unannounced CB audit per year, per scope, and per option (with QMS and without QMS); i.e., if the CB has ≤10 certified Option 1 producers without QMS, at least one producer shall be audited unannounced. If the CB has ≤10 Option 2 and/or Option 1 with QMS certificate holders, at least one of these shall also be audited unannounced annually.
- f) CBs with only one Option 2/Option 1 with QMS certificate holder shall perform an unannounced CB QMS audit at least every two years.
- g) The notification of the unannounced CB audit shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days). In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the certificate holder to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the certificate holder will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced CB audit. There shall be objective evidence of the justification available (e.g., a medical document).

If no evidence of a justifiable reason is available, the producer shall accept the unannounced CB audit or be suspended. The producer shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted, regardless of whether the rejection is justified or not. The producer will receive another 48-hour notification for a new unannounced CB audit. If that audit cannot take place, a suspension of all products (i.e., certificate suspension) will be issued. The suspension will be lifted when the unannounced CB audit has been conducted.

- h) During registration, the certificate holder may indicate a maximum of 15 days where they are unavailable for an unannounced CB audit.

## 7.5 CB audits for benchmarked schemes/checklists

- a) **Benchmarking:** The scheme applying for benchmarking is assessed for equivalence by comparing content and performance criteria with GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations and P&Cs. The checklist owner applying for benchmarking is assessed for equivalence by comparing content and performance criteria with GLOBALG.A.P. P&Cs. Refer to the benchmarking regulations for more information.
- b) **Scheme rules:** For benchmarked checklists, the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations apply. For benchmarked schemes, see the rules of the corresponding scheme.
- c) **Benchmark validation:** The producer will be the certificate holder once certified. For validating certification, all legal entities shall be registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- d) **GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs:** All certifications carried out to a benchmarked scheme or checklist shall be performed by CBs approved either by GLOBALG.A.P. or by the corresponding scheme/checklist owner according to the GLOBALG.A.P. benchmarking regulations.
- e) **Frequency:** The benchmarked scheme shall ensure verification of producers according to the rules for individual producers without a QMS and for individual producers or producer groups with a QMS.

## 7.6 Using ICT for a CB audit's off-site stage (Option 1 or Option 2) (based on IAF MD4:2018)

ICT refers to the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing, and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, emails, and others.



### 7.6.1 Security and confidentiality

In accordance with information security and data protection measures and regulations, before the CB audit, the use of ICT for auditing purposes shall be mutually agreed upon between the producer and the CB performing the audit. Video and/or audio recording, screenshots, and storage of evidence shall also be mutually agreed upon. The CB shall keep records of the agreement. If no evidence of agreement is available, ICT shall not be used for the off-site stage.

### 7.6.2 Planning and scheduling

- a) The feasibility of the CB audit shall be determined to provide confidence that the CB audit objectives can be achieved. This shall take into consideration factors such as:
  - (i) Sufficient and appropriate information for planning and conducting the CB audit
  - (ii) Adequate cooperation from the producer
  - (iii) Adequate time and resources for conducting the CB audit
- b) The CB shall define eligibility criteria for determining when it is appropriate to perform a CB audit using ICT. Examples of criteria that can make producers eligible for a CB audit using ICT:
  - (i) An acceptable period for performing the off-site stage
  - (ii) The producer's ability to designate one or more representatives who are capable of communicating in the same language as the CB auditor and of using the agreed platform
  - (iii) The CB's capability and aptitude to conduct the off-site stage in the chosen medium/forum
  - (iv) The availability of a list of activities, areas, information, and personnel to be involved in the off-site stage
- c) Before the off-site stage takes place, the CB shall:
  - (i) Determine the platform (e.g., virtual meeting app, wearable technology, telephone/video call, messaging app, drones, other platforms) for hosting the CB audit. This platform shall be agreed upon between the CB and the producer.
  - (ii) Explain to the producer which documents, activities, facilities are expected to be audited via video streaming (real time) and which will be evaluated based on records/recorded information. If applicable, the CB shall additionally inform the producer which people need to be interviewed.
  - (iii) Test the ICT platform compatibility between the CB and the producer prior to the CB audit. A trial meeting using the same media platform agreed upon shall be conducted to ensure the scheduled CB audit can be performed as planned.
  - (iv) Encourage and consider the use of webcams, cameras, etc. if physical evaluation of an event is desired or necessary.

If the use of ICT is impossible due to technical restraints (e.g., no phone or internet connection on the farm), the off-site stage is limited to document or record review.

### 7.6.3 Off-site stage using ICT

- a) The off-site stage shall be conducted in quiet environments whenever possible to avoid interference and background noise (e.g., through speakerphones).
- b) Both parties shall make their best effort to confirm what was heard, stated, and read throughout the CB audit.

- c) The off-site stage shall be conducted in the same way as the on-site stage as per the GR (e.g., opening meeting, clarification of findings, non-conformances).
- d) The start time, the end time, and the participants of the off-site stage shall be recorded. Evidence of opening and closing meetings shall be kept even if there were multiple sessions. Electronic acknowledgement of receipt is equivalent to “signature,” as required in [section 8.1](#) d).
- e) The fact that the CB audit was conducted off-site, as well as the software used and any technical problems encountered during the CB audit, shall be noted in the CB audit report.
- f) If it is not possible to maintain a satisfactory connection or satisfactory conditions during the scheduled time of the off-site stage, the CB auditor may terminate the CB audit before the scheduled time. This shall be recorded in the CB audit report.
- g) The CB audit may be continued later only if the CB and the producer both agree to this. The continuation of the off-site stage shall follow the planning as described above. This shall be confirmed during the opening meeting.
- h) The CB auditor shall be aware of the risks and opportunities of the ICT and the impact these risks and opportunities may have on the credibility and objectivity of the information gathered. It is the responsibility of the CB to train the CB auditor accordingly.
- i) The following means (tools) of verification may be used:
  - (i) Interview with the individual producer or producer group representative. Worker interviews may be conducted by phone or video call.
  - (ii) Video call in which the individual producer or producer group representative shows records.
  - (iii) Video call in which the individual producer or producer group representative streams video of the site/facility to the CB auditor. However, all the observed evidence shall be recorded in the checklist. Video streaming of the site/facility may be done by the individual producer or producer group representative or by an assigned person the CB chooses, who need not necessarily be an auditor.
  - (iv) Sending pictures/videos instantly during the interviews. The files shall include information on the time and geo-reference for the location, or this information shall be available by other means.
- j) The CB audit report shall contain details about the different means (tools) used during the CB audit in order to demonstrate the proper implementation of this procedure.
- k) The CB shall inform the producer when, how, why, and of what to make recordings or take pictures or video footage. The CB shall also indicate which of these will be saved as evidence, why, and for how long they will be stored. The producer shall agree and, if applicable, give consent and send/submit/transmit the evidence to the CB within the agreed timeframe.

## **7.7 GLOBALG.A.P. Full Remote – not applicable for IFA v6 GFS, HPSS, and PHA**

GLOBALG.A.P. Full Remote is an emergency procedure in case of official travel restrictions to specific countries or regions, due to pandemic, war, natural disaster, etc. To implement this solution, the CB shall use the procedure outlined in “GLOBALG.A.P. Full Remote.”

## 8 CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### 8.1 General

- a) In the case of an Option 1 multisite producer without QMS, all production sites where products registered for certification are produced shall be audited before the certificate may be issued. In this case, even if the CB may internally use one checklist per site, the result shall be combined into a single checklist including all registered sites and summarizing the result for the whole legal entity (producer).
- b) In the case of an Option 1 multisite producer with QMS or in the case of a producer group, one checklist shall be filled in for the QMS and per sampled member/site/PHU. In this case, the result is not summarized but reported separately for each member/site, PHU, and the QMS. The result (including date and duration) for each member/site needs to be confirmed by the member/site/PHU responsible (by signing the checklist or the list of findings, including date and duration).
- c) In either case, on completion of the full CB audit process, a full written CB report shall be produced which summarizes the audit activity undertaken, provides objective evidence and information on how the producer complies with the requirements of the standard, and, where applicable, lists any non-compliances and/or non-conformances identified.
- d) The individual producer or producer group representative shall sign or confirm the CB audit outcome (including at least date and duration of the CB audit (start and end time), name of the CB auditor, scope of the CB audit, audited sites, producer group members, facilities, the result in % of compliance for the different levels of P&Cs and list of findings) during the closing meeting. A documented or electronic confirmation by the producer is accepted as equivalent to the producer's signature. In case of a digital signature, it shall be a genuine and valid one (i.e., .JPG images are not considered valid signatures).
- e) Compliance is indicated with a "Yes" (for compliant), "No" (for not compliant), and "N/A" (for not applicable). P&Cs that are indicated as "No N/A" shall not be answered as "not applicable." In exceptions in which the P&Cs are not applicable, the answer shall be given as "Yes" with a clear justification.
- f) Comments shall be recorded according to the guideline for audit methodology, when available, to enable the audit trail to be reviewed after the event. The comments shall include details of evidence checked during the CB audit. If there is no guideline for audit methodology published for a given scope or standard, it is obligatory to provide comments for all the complied, non-compliant, and not applicable Major Musts and QMS P&Cs, as well as for all non-compliant and not applicable Minor Must P&Cs audited in all CB audits. This is applicable for CB audits and internal audits. In case of self-assessments (Option 1 without QMS) it is obligatory to provide comments for all the non-compliant, and not applicable Major Musts and Minor Musts only. Comments and evidence, such as which document(s) were sampled, which workers were interviewed, etc., shall be site- and product-specific and included in the checklist to ensure that all the P&Cs have been properly audited for all applicable sites and products.
- g) The CB audit report shall contain the following:
  - (i) All data fields marked as required in the Audit Online Hub (previous inspection notes)
  - (ii) Scope of the CB audit: company, site, PHU, and product information according to the GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements
  - (iii) Calculation of the total applicable Major Must, Minor Must, and Recommendation P&Cs and the % of compliance achieved for each level

- (iv) List of non-compliances, non-conformances, and follow-up actions agreed with the producer (includes the relevant P&Cs, the finding details based on objective evidence, the deadline for corrective action, a description of the corrective action agreed with the producer, reference to objective evidence of implementation of the corrective action, the evaluation results of the corrective action (open/closed), and the relevant dates of these actions)
  - (v) Conclusion of whether the producer is compliant
  - (vi) Reviewer(s) name (can also be recorded in another document defined in the CB procedures or in the CB certification management software)
  - (vii) Stage of the CB audit report, i.e., preliminary or final (the CB may further define different CB audit report stages)
- h) Where available, the CB shall use the audit report template issued by the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
  - i) The CB audit report shall form the basis by which a decision can be made on the awarding of a certificate.
  - j) If the certification is to be issued for Option 2 producer groups or Option 1 multisite producers with QMS, the person who makes the certification decision or at least one member of the CB decision-making committee shall comply with CB QMS auditor qualifications as set out in [section 13](#) for the scope the certificate is being issued for.
  - k) If the certification decision is for Option 1 single site or multisite producers without a QMS, the person who makes the certification decision or at least one member of the CB decision-making committee shall comply with CB QMS auditor qualifications as set out in [section 13](#) or CB farm auditor qualifications as set out in [section 12](#) for the scope the certificate is being issued for and additionally with CB QMS auditor technical skills and qualifications as set out in [section 13.3.1 a](#)).
  - l) The date of the certification decision may be recorded in other places/the system of the CB, not necessarily in the CB audit report, but shall be recorded in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
  - m) Copies of the CB audit report, the objective evidence of implementation of the corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall be provided to the regulatory authorities when requested, as per applicable national legislation. They shall also be provided by default to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and on request to the AB. Any additional release shall only be provided if the producer allows access by written authorization.
  - n) The CB reports (e.g., CB audit report, corrective action report) and the completed audit checklist distributed externally shall be write-protected or otherwise controlled to prevent unauthorized modification or tampering prior to distribution.
  - o) The fully completed audit checklist shall include all applicable P&Cs, requested comments, findings, and the objective evidence of implementation of the corrections and/or corrective action.
  - p) Where the country of destination (as registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems) includes the USA and/or Canada, the CB shall provide the final CB audit report including the completed audit checklist to the producer, at the latest by the time of the certification decision.

- q) Additionally, if any producer requests it, the CB shall provide the full CB audit report including the completed audit checklist, within five working days after certification decision. It is not obligatory for the CB to send out a report before it went through internal technical review. If the automatically generated CB audit report (including the checklist) is available from the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, this report shall be used.
- r) When the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat requires it, the CB audit report and the completed audit checklist shall be uploaded/transferred into the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- s) The CB shall have processes in place to address situations where translations of the reports are requested.

## 8.2 Producer non-conformance and sanctions

See also the sanctions section in “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for individual producers” and “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS.”

- a) All corrections and corrective actions shall be assessed; with clarification provided to show whether the action(s) taken and evidence provided are sufficient to close the non-conformance.
- b) Evidence of the resolution of non-conformances may be provided in the form of documentary evidence and/or photographic evidence as appropriate. Evidence shall be filed and shall be made available to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat on request.
- c) There may be occasions where demonstration of the resolution of a non-conformance may only be confirmed by a further on-site visit or by remote assessment using ICT. Where this is required, a charge may apply.
- d) Verification of the corrective action plan and the implementation of the corrective actions shall generally be carried out by the same CB auditor that conducted the audit, or else by another CB auditor qualified for the respective scope and/or standard.
- e) All non-conformances to the QMS requirements shall be resolved before a certificate can be issued.
- f) Satisfactory corrective actions shall be completed to achieve the approval level on member/site level before a certificate can be issued to the producer group/multisite producer.
- g) Lifting of a sanction: A sanction does not end with the certificate validity expiry but stays valid with the legal entity until the non-conformance is closed.

## 8.3 Certificate requirements

- a) After a positive certification decision, the CB shall issue a certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- b) The certificate may only be issued based on the information available at that time in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems for that unique GLOBALG.A.P. identification number.
- c) A list of all the producers, production sites, and PHUs to which the certificate relates shall be issued in an annex referred to in the certificate. The CB shall keep this list up-to-date.

CBs may issue communications other than the certificate related to the producer status (registered, audited, etc.) as long as it is clear that these are not certificates and each contains the sentence “The actual GLOBALG.A.P. status of this producer is always displayed at [www.globalgap.org/search](http://www.globalgap.org/search).”

## 8.4 Certificate validity extension

- a) The certificate validity may be extended beyond the usual 12 months for a maximum period of 4 months but only if there is a valid reason, which shall be recorded.
- b) The CB shall always have a signed, complete application form and a signed certification contract for the following certification before an extension is granted.

Note: If the CB or the producer wants to extend a certificate's validity, the CB shall have a written confirmation by the producer for the extension and clearly communicate that this action means the CB cannot be changed for the upcoming certificate.

- c) Once the extension begins, the full GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fee for the next certificate shall be paid by the producer to the CB that issued the currently valid certificate.
- d) The producer shall be reaudited during that extension period.
- e) The producer cannot change CBs for the certificate subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted.
- f) If the certificate has been expired for longer than 12 months, the CB shall apply the rules for initial CB audit.

## 9 TRANSFER BETWEEN CBS

### 9.1 General

- a) This section explains how to proceed when producers registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems change from their original GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB (hereinafter referred to as the "outgoing CB") to another GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB (hereinafter referred to as the "accepting CB"). The objective is to ensure that the integrity of GLOBALG.A.P. certificates issued by one CB is maintained and to guarantee that a producer's history within GLOBALG.A.P. is addressed in the review process when entering into contract with a GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB.
- b) These are the minimum requirements for the transfer of producers registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems between GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs. CBs may implement procedures or actions that are more stringent than those contained herein provided that a producer's freedom to choose a CB is not unduly or unfairly constrained.
- c) Only producers registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems may change CBs. All producers shall first resolve any outstanding sanction(s) before being able to transfer to a new CB. If a sanctioned producer wants to change CBs and the certificate has already expired, as an exception, the outgoing CB can lift the non-conformance of an expired certificate without having received evidence of corrective actions. In such a case, however, the outgoing CB shall ensure that the accepting CB is fully aware of the cause of the non-conformance.
- d) During registration of each new producer, the CB shall request information regarding previous GLOBALG.A.P. identification numbers (as required in the GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements). The accepting CB shall keep the existing GLOBALG.A.P. identification number of the transferred producer. Double registration is not allowed (i.e., one individual producer or producer group can have only one GLOBALG.A.P. identification number, even if that individual producer or producer group is affiliated with more than one CB). If the producer declares the information regarding its previous GLOBALG.A.P. identification number during registration and double registration happens anyway, the CB shall pay a fine of €200 per individual producer and €700 per producer group affected. When the double registration happens because the applicant has misinformed the CB (i.e., it is not the CB's fault), the fine applies, but it is not calculated in the CB KPI.

- e) The accepting CB shall close the registration process, including entering into a sublicense and certification agreement with the producer before accepting the transfer. The transfer of producers between CBs can take place when a producer's certificate has expired and also if there is no binding service contract between the producer and the outgoing CB.
- f) The producer shall apply to another CB (accepting CB) for the next certificate.
- g) The outgoing CB may shorten the validity of the issued certificate to facilitate transfer but always in agreement with the producer and in coordination with the accepting CB in order to avoid gaps in certification.
- h) If the signing of the GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement and the CB audit date are after the outgoing CB's certificate expiry date, there will be a period when the producer does not have a valid certificate.
- i) If, however, the signing of the GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement and perhaps also the CB audit date are before the outgoing CB's certificate expiry date, the certification decision can only take effect as soon as the previous certificate expires.
- j) The outgoing CB remains responsible until its certificate expires. The producer may sign a GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement with the accepting CB while under contract with the outgoing CB. The GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement is binding for the accepting CB only once the outgoing CB has released the producer's unique GLOBALG.A.P. identification number in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- k) If, during the validity of the certificate issued by the outgoing CB, the accepting CB detects non-conformances that are not closed after 28 days, the accepting CB shall inform the outgoing CB about the non-conformances detected so that it can take appropriate follow-up actions.
- l) In the case of a transfer, the registration of products in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems may not be finalized before the CB audit, and the certification decision may not be taken within 28 days of the CB audit/closure of non-conformances.

## **9.2 Transfer during certificate validity extension**

- a) If there was a validity extension, the producer shall not change CBs for 12 months after the original certificate validity date.
- b) If the CB audit by the accepting CB was performed during the certificate validity extension period (extension by outgoing CB) and the accepting CB did not ask for termination from the outgoing CB before the accepting CB audit, then the producer shall not change CBs and must stay with the outgoing CB for the upcoming 12 months after original certificate validity date.
- c) Exception to b) is granted only if the outgoing CB explicitly asks for termination of the extension and authorizes The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to transfer the unique GLOBALG.A.P. identification number to the accepting CB. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will process only those transfer requests coming from the outgoing CB that extended the certificate validity. It is entirely the decision of the outgoing CB to release a client under a valid contract.
- d) If transfer is granted, the certificate validity issued by the accepting CB shall be 12 months minus the extension period given by the outgoing CB. The accepting CB shall ask the outgoing CB or the producer for the previous certificate in order to know the original validity date.

## 10 CB SANCTIONS

### 10.1 General rules

- a) FoodPLUS GmbH has established an Integrity Surveillance Committee (ISC), which decides, on a case-by-case basis, how to apply the CB sanctions outlined in “GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog.”
- b) The ISC consists of:
  - (i) Three permanent and two substitute members
  - (ii) Representatives of the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat who participate in the ISC meetings
  - (iii) A representative of the ABs who may participate as an independent observer
  - (iv) A public sector observer who may participate but without voting rights
  - (v) A representative of the concerned benchmarked scheme/checklist owner invited by the ISC
- c) The ISC may take any of the following actions:
  - (i) Issue sanctions as defined in [section 11.3](#) of this document
  - (ii) Request additional/extra CIPRO assessments of CBs
  - (iii) Decide that the sanctioned CB must pay the cost of the assessment or reassessment(s) (The rate of any assessment and the necessary travel time is €1000 per day, including travel costs. If an assessment is planned to exceed three days, the ISC shall approve it.)
  - (iv) Issue fines
  - (v) Require the CB to reimburse the costs directly linked to the investigation and sanctioning process of a particular case (burden of proof for the exact costs lies with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat)
  - (vi) Advise the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to cancel the contract with the concerned CB
  - (vii) Request that particular CB auditors who have not performed according to the GLOBALG.A.P. GR receive internal training or repeat the IHT or CB farm auditor online test in the presence of a GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat representative, with the additional test fee and other expenses covered by the CB
  - (viii) Request that particular CB auditors attend GLOBALG.A.P. approved training with participation, test fees, and other expenses covered by the CB
  - (ix) Directly suspend or cancel a CB auditor based on the outcome of one or more CIPRO assessments (i.e., forbid the person to carry out any CB audit in the GLOBALG.A.P. system) (This sanction is independent from the CB and applies to the CB auditor.)
- d) By default, sanctions apply to the CB as a whole, including all approved standards, scopes, and add-ons. The ISC may limit the sanctions (e.g., to scope level, to a geographical area). If the sanction is imposed to a scope, it shall be extended to all add-ons that depend on this scope for their validity.
- e) Sanctioning steps 1 to 5 (see [section 11.3](#)) are not necessarily consecutive (i.e., a CB may receive a Red Card after receiving a first warning due to incomplete entries in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and jump to step 4 immediately due to the CIPRO assessment result).



- f) Sanctions are communicated to the concerned AB and, where applicable, to the benchmarked scheme/checklist owner.
- g) In the case of a CB suspension by the AB or a CB having lost its accreditation due to other circumstances, the CB is not allowed to issue new certificates. The ISC's decision shall take into consideration the reason for the suspension to determine whether existing certificates issued by the CB are still valid and shall consider issuing a Red Card.
- h) The benchmarked scheme/checklist owner may ask the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to carry out additional CIPRO assessments beyond the ones already initiated. FoodPLUS GmbH may charge a separate fee for those additional assessments.
- i) In the case of non-conformances that are detected not during CIPRO assessments (see section 11, [Certification Integrity Program](#)) but during CIPRO assessment planning and preparation, CB administration processes, customer support questions, CB approval, complaint management, etc., the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will issue sanctions according to the predefined CB sanction catalog in "GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog" in order to address the non-conformances directly and immediately.
- j) Appeals against a sanction imposed by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat or by the ISC shall be received within five working days of the receipt of sanction notification. The ISC or the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat evaluates the appeals. The second appeal against a reconfirmed sanction by the ISC follows the arbitration procedure as described in the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement and in the benchmarked scheme/checklist owner agreement.

## 10.2 Types of non-conformance

Two types of non-conformances may lead to sanctioning of CBs.

### 10.2.1 Contractual non-conformances

Contractual non-conformances occur when CBs infringe contracts signed with GLOBALG.A.P. These situations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Misleading or false communication on GLOBALG.A.P. certification and/or logo use
- b) Refusal to sign the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement and any amendments after a period set by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
- c) Neglecting to pay any of the GLOBALG.A.P. fees
- d) Failure to provide proof of accreditation within the established periods during CB approval
- e) Confirmed fraud
- f) Loss of accreditation (based on AB decision)

### 10.2.2 Non-conformances to the GLOBALG.A.P. GR and standards

Non-conformances to the GLOBALG.A.P. GR or standards occur when CBs infringe the GR or do not follow the requirements of the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. standards. Examples of such non-conformances include but are not limited to:

- a) Not participating in annual compulsory CB trainings
- b) Not following the online training requirements
- c) Incomplete or late upload of certification data
- d) Unreliable registration and audit data
- e) No response to GLOBALG.A.P. official communications and/or to complaints

- f) Confirmed fraud
- g) Not applying approved national interpretation guidelines (NIGs) unless justified and communicated to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
- h) Conflict of interest (e.g., consultancy and certification)
- i) Delaying or not applying producer sanctions
- j) Inadequate internal training
- k) Not complying with the scope of the CB audits
- l) Not following CB operational requirements and deadlines, such as not responding to corrective actions or delaying issuance of certificates

## **11 CERTIFICATION INTEGRITY PROGRAM**

The GLOBALG.A.P. Integrity Program involves a range of activities that are all interconnected. These include the explanation of the system and harmonization of the relevant standard criteria through different kinds of CB trainings, the administration of CB approval, monitoring of CB performance through CIPRO assessments, maintaining the integrity of the GLOBALG.A.P. brand, ensuring the completeness and accuracy of GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems information, investigating complaints (including those related to residues in certified products), and customer support.

CIPRO is risk based and consists of different kinds of assessments:

- a) Office assessments to check CB certification performance (remote or on-site)
- b) Producer assessments to check CB certification performance (remote or on-site), possibly including taking product or other samples (e.g., water) for analysis
- c) Remote checklist review (for checklists uploaded to the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems)
- d) CB witness audits to check CB audit performance
- e) On-site investigation of complaints

### **11.1 Evaluation and classification of assessment results**

- a) Each assessment is documented in a CIPRO assessment report. A representative of each assessed site (individual producer, producer group, or CB office) shall sign the assessment report. In the case of producer assessments, a CB representative, if present, also signs the report.
- b) The CB is expected to follow up on the findings of the CIPRO assessment and ensure that the producer complies with the certification requirements.
- c) Each CIPRO assessment report is sent to the CB, AB, and, where applicable benchmarked scheme/checklist owner. ABs are encouraged to use it as an input for their next assessment. CBs and benchmarked scheme/checklist owner shall use these reports as management feedback for their continuous improvement processes.
- d) If there is evidence from one or more classified CIPRO assessment reports and the CB fails to demonstrate improvement from previous assessments or shows very low performance, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may propose the case for ISC review. The CB will be informed about their proposed performance classification and shall be given the opportunity to respond in a written statement within 14 days of notification. The relevant AB and, where applicable, the benchmarked scheme/checklist owner shall be notified by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.

- e) ISC decision-making is based on all the following:
- (i) The individual assessment reports presented by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat taking into consideration all previous assessments
  - (ii) The proposed performance classification by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
  - (iii) The CB's written statement (feedback)
- f) The assessment reports submitted to the ISC are anonymous and shall not disclose the name of the CB(s) involved.
- g) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may request a summary of follow-up measures but shall not necessarily require a corrective action plan in each case.

## 11.2 CIPRO assessment report classification

The following classification is used to score the CB performance regarding several different aspects of the certification process (e.g., registration process, CB audit thoroughness both at QMS and the farm level, CB audit timing and duration, technical review of files and certification decision), which results in both an overall score of the individual reports and the CB overall classification proposed by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to ISC:

### **Classification #1**

#### **(i) Definition**

Unacceptable performance which puts the overall competency of the CB in question: Serious infringements of the GLOBALG.A.P. or a benchmarked scheme's rules are observed.

These include, but are not limited to, objective evidence for:

- Deliberate and/or repeated ignorance or negligence of the GLOBALG.A.P. or benchmarked scheme's regulations
- Misuse of the GLOBALG.A.P. or benchmarked scheme's/checklists' license
- One or more serious technical failures in the CB audit process
- Verified fraud (e.g., use of fraudulent data in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and/or in the CB audit report(s))

#### **(ii) Procedure**

- a) Further CIPRO assessment(s) may be planned to investigate whether the infringement was an isolated incident or a general way of working, but one single assessment may also result in classification #1.
- b) The ISC is immediately notified about the CB, which shall implement corrections/corrective actions on the certificate holder and CB levels immediately.
- c) The CB reports its immediate corrective actions to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and, where applicable, to the benchmarked scheme/checklist owner.

### **Classification #2**

#### **(i) Definition**

Poor performance. The CB needs immediate major improvement. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Suspected deliberate mismanagement

- Actual (i.e., not only potential, but existent) food safety risks not identified during the CB audit
- Suspected use of fraudulent data in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and in the CB audit reports but objective evidence of fraud not found
- A large number of minor technical failures in the CB audit process

**(ii) Procedure**

- a) The CB shall immediately verify corrections/corrective actions on the certificate holder level.
- b) New CIPRO assessments (reassessments) shall be scheduled to verify the effectiveness of the corrective actions within a maximum of 12 months.
- c) The ISC is notified of the CB.

**Classification #3**

**(i) Definition**

Improvement is needed.

**(ii) Procedure**

- a) New CIPRO assessments (reassessments) shall be scheduled to verify the effectiveness of the corrective actions within a maximum of 18 months.
- b) If no improvement is observed in subsequent assessments, the ISC shall be notified of the CB.

**Classification #4**

Good performance. No systematic and serious non-conformances have been found. A few incidences have been detected that do not affect the integrity of the certification process. No specific reassessments are scheduled, but the CB remains a part of the random surveillance program and may receive further CIPRO assessments.

**Classification #5**

Excellent performance. No incidences detected. The CB has shown a high level of implementation of the GLOBALG.A.P. requirements. Low priority is given to schedule subsequent assessments, but the CB remains a part of the random surveillance program and may receive further CIPRO assessments.

For further details regarding the score used to classify the CB performance, please refer to the document on CB key performance indicator specifications in its current version.

**11.3 Sanction steps for CBs**

- a) The sanctions as set out in the table below apply to all CBs in violation of the requirements of the GLOBALG.A.P. normative documents and where a non-conformance has been observed.
- b) The penalty shall depend on the severity of the non-conformance and the recurrence of non-conformance.
- c) The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat, the respective AB, and the benchmarked scheme/checklist owner shall cooperate closely with the ISC.

Table 1 Sanctioning steps for CB non-conformances

	<b>Sanctioning steps</b>	<b>Decision maker</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	First Warning	<b>GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and/or the ISC</b> (Information to AB)
<b>Step 2</b>	Second Warning	<b>GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and/or the ISC</b> (Information to AB)
<b>Step 3</b>	Yellow Card	<b>ISC</b> (Information to AB and published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website)
<b>Step 4</b>	Red Card	<b>ISC</b> (Information to AB and published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website; CB not allowed to (re)issue new certificates until further notice)
<b>Step 5</b>	Contract Cancellation	<b>Proposed by the ISC</b> (Information to AB and published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, cancellation of the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement)

Note: Sanctioning steps 1 to 5 are not necessarily consecutive.

### 11.3.1 Step 1 – First Warning

- a) Step 1 is decided by the ISC or by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. A First Warning may be followed by a Second Warning without separate approval by the ISC.
- b) The First Warning may be issued:
  - (i) Where non-conformances with the general GLOBALG.A.P. regulations are detected, including brand/license misuse
  - (ii) Where the CB does not react to or does not report on written requests by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
  - (iii) Where the number of incomplete or wrong GLOBALG.A.P. IT system entries and/or issued certificates exceeds the threshold defined in “GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog”
- c) The CB shall pay partially or fully for the number of CIPRO reassessment days proposed by the ISC.

### 11.3.2 Step 2 – Second Warning

- a) Step 2 is decided by the ISC or by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.
- b) The Second Warning may be issued:
  - (i) Where the First Warning has not been closed after the indicated deadline

- (ii) Where the CB does not react to or does not report on repeated written requests by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat
- (iii) Where the number of incomplete or wrong GLOBALG.A.P. IT system entries and/or issued certificates exceeds the threshold defined in “GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog.” The CB shall pay partially or fully for the number of CIPRO reassessment days proposed by the ISC.

### **11.3.3 Step 3 – Yellow Card**

- a) Step 3 is evaluated and decided by the ISC and implemented by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. The Yellow Card is published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, and the GLOBALG.A.P. Community Members are informed.
- b) A Yellow Card may be lifted by the ISC once the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat has verified the effectiveness of the improvement in one or more CIPRO (re)assessments and found it to be satisfactory.
- c) The CB shall pay partially or fully for the number of CIPRO reassessment days proposed by the ISC.
- d) The Yellow Card may limit the approval of the CB for any new scope extension and/or new version and the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may request additional evidence of compliance.
- e) A Yellow Card may be issued:
  - (i) For the period when the CB implements improvement measures due to CIPRO assessment results (The timeframe for improvement is stipulated by the ISC but shall not exceed 12 months. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat schedules a follow-up CIPRO assessment to evaluate improvement.)
  - (ii) Where improvements observed in reassessments are not sufficient
  - (iii) Where no reaction follows written requests by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat after step 2 (Second Warning)
  - (iv) Where after step 2 (Second Warning) the number of incomplete or wrong GLOBALG.A.P. IT system entries and/or issued certificates exceeds the threshold defined in “GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog”

### **11.3.4 Step 4 – Red Card**

- a) Step 4 is evaluated and decided by the ISC and implemented by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. The Red Card is published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, and the GLOBALG.A.P. Community Members are informed.
- b) Temporary full or partial prohibition of the use of the GLOBALG.A.P. license is imposed (i.e., the CB is not allowed to issue new or reissue old certificates until further notice).
- c) The ISC may lift this sanction only if confidence in the reliability of the CB’s operation is reinstated.
- d) The CB pays for the (re)assessments.
- e) A Red Card may be issued (inexhaustive list):
  - (i) Where CB performance does not show sufficient improvement during further repeated reassessments
  - (ii) Where a Yellow Card has not been closed after the indicated deadline

- (iii) Where the AB has suspended the CB's accreditation
  - (iv) Where after step 3 (Yellow Card) the number of incomplete or wrong GLOBALG.A.P. IT system entries and/or issued certificates exceeds the threshold defined in "GLOBALG.A.P. certification body sanction catalog"
- f) The CB being issued the Red Card shall inform (by means of a written letter) all its clients of their right to require the CB to annul each client's GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement within five business days of the loss of GLOBALG.A.P. approval. Following a producer's request, the CB shall allow and facilitate the producer's transfer to another CB in order to avoid gaps in certification. If the CB fails to do so, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat shall inform the producers using the contact details registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and allow producers to transfer to another CB.

### **11.3.5 Step 5 – Contract Cancellation**

- a) Step 5 is evaluated and proposed by the ISC and decided and implemented by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. Contract Cancellation is published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, and the GLOBALG.A.P. Community Members are informed.
- b) Cancellation of the GLOBALG.A.P. license and certification agreement shall be imposed for at least two years.
- c) The benchmarked scheme owner is responsible for enforcing this sanction on the CBs operating a GLOBALG.A.P. benchmarked scheme.
- d) A CB that has lost its GLOBALG.A.P. approval shall inform (by means of a written letter) all its clients about their right to require the CB to annul each client's GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement within five business days of the loss of GLOBALG.A.P. approval. Following a producer's request, the CB shall allow and facilitate the producer's transfer to another CB in order to avoid gaps in certification. If the CB fails to do so, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat shall inform the producers using the contact details registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and allow producers to transfer to another CB.
- e) Contract Cancellation may follow in the following cases (inexhaustive list):
  - (i) Verified fraud
  - (ii) Where a Red Card sanction could not be lifted after the agreed deadline
  - (iii) Bankruptcy
  - (iv) Loss of accreditation

## **12 GLOBALG.A.P. CB FARM AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONS 1 AND 3)**

### **12.1 Scope of activity**

CB farm auditors may conduct an audit to a scope (plants or aquaculture) at the farm level once the CB has verified evidence (as described below) of their qualifications and experience for each scope.

### **12.2 Formal qualifications and work experience**

- a) At least a post-high school (postsecondary education) diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) in a discipline related to the scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture)

AND

A minimum of two years' experience in the respective scope gained after finishing post-high school studies, and a total of three years' experience in the agricultural industry/business

OR

- b) A post-high school (postsecondary education) diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) in a food-related discipline

AND

A minimum of four years' industry experience either in a practical capacity on a farm/site or in a technical production management role in the relevant scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture)

## 12.3 Technical skills and qualifications

### 12.3.1 CB farm auditor training

One-day practical farm auditing training setting out basic principles of inspection. This may be internal training provided by the CB.

### 12.3.2 Training in food safety and good agricultural practices, and work experience

- a) Training in hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius. Formal training may be done internally by the CB. Minimum training duration shall be eight hours. Duration and content shall be indicated on the evidence available for this requirement (e.g., training certificate, evidence of training included in formal qualifications).
- b) Food hygiene training either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training. Formal training may be done internally by the CB. Successful completion of food hygiene training with a minimum duration of eight hours. Duration and content shall be indicated on the evidence available for this requirement (e.g., training certificate, evidence of training included in formal qualifications). Food hygiene training shall cover site management, water, fertilizer, equipment, facilities, product handling, and site and personal hygiene, and it shall also include practical case studies. The trainings in points a) and b) can be completed together (minimum duration 16 hours).
- c) GLOBALG.A.P. online trainings, where available; successful completion of all applicable online tests and the respective updates within three months of release in the CB farm auditor's language
- d) **For plants scope:** plant protection, soil management, fertilizer, and integrated pest management (IPM) training, either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training.
- e) **For aquaculture scope:** basic veterinary medicine training, including animal health and welfare issues
- f) **For aquaculture scope:** basic experience in food processing (for auditing the P&Cs on "Slaughter activities" and "Postharvest – mass balance and traceability") and GRASP assessor training
- g) The required experience shall involve work in the respective scope. Experience gained simultaneously for more than one scope is acceptable.



- h) To carry out CB farm audits for an additional scope, proof of formal training in production practices and scope-specific working experience (i.e., 1 year's working experience or 10 days' CB witness audits) are required.
- i) Formal training mentioned in points a), b), d), e) and f) can be part of the formal qualifications (degree/diploma) or can be separate trainings that was completed by the CB farm auditor. The CB farm auditor shall present proof of qualification. If the qualification is part of the degree/diploma, it shall be indicated in the syllabus of the course. If it was acquired separately, there shall be a separate certificate that shows that a course that covered these issues was completed (including an exam).

### 12.3.3 Communication skills

- a) All CB farm auditors shall have “working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language. This shall include the locally used specialist terminology in the respective working language or the use of a translator.
- b) Exceptions to this rule shall be discussed with and confirmed in writing by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat before the CB farm audit.

### 12.3.4 Initial training before sign-off by the CB

- a) The CB shall put a training program in place customized to the applicant CB farm auditor.
- b) The applicant CB farm auditor shall take part as an observer in a minimum of one CB farm audit of an Option 1 individual producer or one CB farm audit of an Option 2 producer group member in the relevant scope performed by an already qualified CB auditor.

If the CB takes on (hires) a CB farm auditor who is already approved for the currently valid version of the relevant standard/scope/add-on, the rule requiring observation of “a minimum of one CB farm audit of an Option 1 individual producer or one CB farm audit of an Option 2 producer group member in the relevant scope” does not apply.

- c) The CB shall witness the applicant CB farm auditor during a minimum of one CB farm audit of either an Option 2 producer group member or an Option 1 individual producer for each scope.
- d) For the CB's first CB farm auditor the CB's internal procedures shall apply.
- e) As a minimum requirement, the CB shall verify competence in the following topics:
  - Technical knowledge in a given scope
  - Ability to identify food safety risks/food hazards
  - Ability to evaluate the HACCP system and identify/challenge critical control points
  - Up-to-date knowledge of plant protection products, fertilizer application, and IPM principles (for plants scope)
  - Up-to-date knowledge of basic veterinary medicine, including health and welfare requirements (for aquaculture scope)
  - Ability to carry out traceability checks and mass balance analyses
  - Wherever the P&Cs refer to local legislation, knowledge of the relevant requirements
  - Sufficient communication and behavioral skills to conduct a CB farm audit
  - “Working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language
  - Use of ICT, as per the relevant clauses of IAF MD4, in the case of off-site stages and/or remote CB farm audits

### 12.3.5 Maintenance of competency

- a) The CB shall have in place a procedure to ensure that every CB farm auditor conducts at least five CB farm audits annually, at a number of different producers, to any GLOBALG.A.P. standard, benchmarked scheme/checklist of the same scope, to maintain scheme knowledge and to stay registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- b) CB farm witness audits shall also be acceptable for maintaining competency.
- c) Exceptions to this rule (e.g., if the CB does not have a total of five clients) shall be discussed with and confirmed in writing by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat before the CB farm audit.
- d) The CB shall carry out a CB farm witness audit for each of its GLOBALG.A.P. CB farm auditors at least once every four years to verify competence.
- e) The CB farm auditor shall complete the annual GLOBALG.A.P. calibration exercises as part of self-paced training (once the exercises have been made available).
- f) Where the CB farm witness audit is done remotely using ICT, the relevant clauses of IAF MD4 shall apply.
- g) These requirements do not apply to those scheme managers who do less than five CB farm audits per year.
- h) If it is not possible to maintain competency from one year to the next, [section 12.3.4](#) shall apply.

### 12.3.6 Rotation of the CB farm auditor

- a) The CB shall have procedures in place to ensure that the same CB farm auditor does not audit a producer (Option 1) for more than four consecutive years (regardless of whether the CB farm audit is announced or unannounced).
 

Example: CB farm auditor #1 audits a producer in years 1, 2, 3, and 4; in year 5 another CB farm auditor (CB farm auditor #2) shall do the annual CB farm audit. In years 6, 7, 8, and 9 CB farm auditor #1 can audit the producer for four consecutive years again.
- b) Under Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with QMS, the CB QMS auditor in the CB audit team shall rotate (no more than four consecutive years auditing the same QMS). However, the CB farm auditor(s) in the CB audit team may remain the same.

## 12.4 Key tasks

### 12.4.1 GLOBALG.A.P. CB farm audits

- a) Conducting CB farm audits (auditing a producer, a production site of a multisite company, or a member of a producer group) to audit compliance with the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. standard. This may include witness audits of the internal farm auditors of Option 2 producer groups or Option 1 multisite producers with QMS.
- b) Producing timely and accurate reports on such CB farm audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 and GLOBALG.A.P. timelines and system requirements.

### 12.4.2 Maintenance

- a) Maintaining up-to-date files of all quality policies, procedures, work instructions, and documentation issued by the CB
- b) Keeping abreast of developments, issues, and legislative changes pertaining to the scope in which CB farm audits are carried out

- c) Carrying out any other tasks the CB may assign outside the scope of GLOBALG.A.P., as long as these activities do not infringe ISO/IEC 17065 principles or any stipulation set down in the GLOBALG.A.P. GR

### **12.4.3 Independence, confidentiality, and code of conduct**

- a) CB farm auditors are not permitted to carry out any activities that may affect their independence or impartiality and specifically are not permitted to accept bribes. CB farm auditors shall not audit producers for whom they have carried out consultancy activities in the last two years. Training is not considered to be consultancy provided that, where training relates to management systems or auditing, it is confined to the providing of generic information that is freely available in the public domain (i.e., the trainer shall not provide company-specific solutions).
- b) CB farm auditors shall strictly observe the producer's and the CB's procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of information and records.
- c) CBs shall ensure that CB farm auditors adhere to the CB code of conduct, which includes professional behavior during their audits. In case the CB farm auditor commits a crime or has an improper behavior according to the code of conduct, the CB shall inform the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. After ISC evaluation, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may block this auditor in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.

## **13 GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS (OPTION 1 MULTISITE PRODUCERS WITH QMS, OPTION 2, AND OPTION 4)**

### **13.1 Scope of activity**

CB QMS auditors may audit QMSs of all scopes once the CB has verified evidence (as described below) of their qualifications and experience for at least one scope. CB farm auditors, however, require scope-specific qualifications.

### **13.2 Formal qualifications and work experience**

- a) A post-high school (postsecondary education) diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) in a discipline related to the scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture)

AND

A minimum of two years' experience in the respective scope gained after finishing the respective post-high school studies and a total of three years' experience in the agricultural industry/business

OR

- b) A post-high school (postsecondary education) diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) in a food-related discipline

AND

A minimum of four years' industry experience either in a practical capacity on a farm/site or in a technical production management role in the relevant scope of certification (plants and/or aquaculture)

### 13.3 Technical skills and qualifications

#### 13.3.1 Lead auditor training and auditing experience

- a) Successful completion of lead auditor training based on ISO/IEC 19011 principles that shall have a minimum duration of 37 hours and shall be externally recognized by the industry. The certificate shall specify the training content and duration. Successful completion shall be indicated on the certificate.
- b) The lead auditor training shall cover applicable standards on quality auditing, auditing techniques, the focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication), and reporting. It shall also include a practical case study. Practical auditing experience of at least 10 days in management systems (e.g., ISO/IEC 9000, ISO/IEC 14000, ISO/IEC 22000, OHSAS 18000, ISO/IEC 45001, BRCGS Food, IFS Food, previous GLOBALG.A.P. Option 2 or Option 4 standards, PHA, producer group audits of organic producers), not including witnessing or observing of audits, but including being witnessed as CB auditor in training

#### 13.3.2 Training in food safety and good agricultural practices, and work experience

- a) Training in HACCP either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius. Formal training may be done internally by the CB. Minimum training duration shall be eight hours. Duration and content shall be indicated on the evidence provided for this requirement (e.g., training certificate, evidence of training included in formal qualifications).
- b) Food hygiene training, either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training. Formal training may be done internally by the CB. Successful completion of food hygiene training with a minimum duration of eight hours. Duration and content shall be indicated on the evidence provided for this requirement (e.g., training certificate, evidence of training included in formal qualifications). Food hygiene training shall cover site management, water, fertilizer, equipment, facilities, product handling, and site and personal hygiene, and it shall also include practical case studies. The trainings in points a) and b) can be completed together (minimum duration 16 hours).
- c) GLOBALG.A.P. online trainings, where available; successful completion of all applicable online tests and the respective updates within three months of release in the CB QMS auditor's language
- d) **For plants scope:** plant protection, soil management, fertilizer, and IPM training, either as part of formal qualifications or through the successful completion of formal training
- e) **For aquaculture scope:** basic veterinary medicine training, including animal health and welfare issues
- f) **For aquaculture scope:** basic experience in food processing (for auditing the P&Cs on "Slaughter activities" and "Postharvest – mass balance and traceability") and GRASP assessor training
- g) For CB farm audits, the experience required shall involve work in the respective scope. Experience gained simultaneously for more than one scope is acceptable.
- h) To carry out CB farm audits for an additional scope, proof of formal training in production practices and scope-specific work experience (i.e., 1 year's work experience or 10 days' CB witness audits) are required.
- i) Formal training mentioned in points a), b), d), e) and f) can be part of the formal qualifications (degree/diploma) or can be separate trainings that were completed by the

CB QMS auditor. The CB QMS auditor shall present proof of qualification. If the qualification is part of the degree/diploma, it shall be indicated in the syllabus of the course. If it was acquired separately, there shall be a separate certificate that shows that a course that covered these issues was completed (including an exam).

### 13.3.3 Communication skills

- a) All CB QMS auditors shall have “working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language. This shall include the locally used specialist terminology in this working language or the use of a translator.
- b) Exceptions to this rule shall be discussed with and confirmed in writing by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat before the CB QMS audit.

### 13.3.4 Initial training before sign-off by the CB

- a) The CB shall put a training program in place customized to the applicant CB QMS auditor.
- b) The applicant CB QMS auditor shall take part as an observer in a minimum of one CB farm audit of an Option 1 individual producer or one CB farm audit of an Option 2 producer group member in the relevant scope by an already qualified CB farm auditor and one CB QMS audit performed by an already qualified CB QMS auditor.

If the CB takes on (hires) a CB QMS auditor who is already approved for the currently valid version of the relevant standard/scope/add-on, the rule requiring observation of “a minimum of one CB farm audit of an Option 2 producer group member or one CB farm audit of an Option 1 individual producer in the relevant scope” does not apply.

- c) The CB shall witness a minimum of one CB farm audit of an Option 2 producer group member or an Option 1 individual producer for each scope and one CB QMS audit by the applicant CB QMS auditor. A CB farm auditor or CB QMS auditor can witness the CB farm audit, but only a CB QMS auditor can witness the CB QMS audit.
- d) For the CB’s first CB QMS auditor the CB’s internal procedure shall apply.
- e) The CB QMS auditor shall attend a GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS auditor training and pass the test for the sign-off and attend or pass the test of updates for each new standard version, if applicable.
- f) As a minimum requirement, the CB shall verify competence in the following topics:
  - Technical knowledge in a given scope
  - Ability to identify food safety risks/food hazards
  - Ability to evaluate the HACCP system and identify/challenge critical control points
  - Up-to-date knowledge of plant protection products, fertilizer applications, and IPM principles (for plants scope)
  - Up-to-date knowledge of basic veterinary medicine, including health and welfare requirements (for aquaculture scope)
  - Ability to carry out traceability checks and mass balance analyses
  - Wherever the P&Cs refer to local legislation, knowledge of the relevant requirements
  - Sufficient communication and behavioral skills to conduct a CB farm/QMS audit
  - “Working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language
  - Use of ICT, as per the relevant clauses of IAF MD4, in the case of off-site stages and/or remote CB audits

### 13.3.5 Maintenance of competency

- a) The CB shall have in place a procedure to ensure that every CB QMS auditor conducts at least five CB audits annually, at a number of different producers, to any GLOBALG.A.P. standard, benchmarked scheme/checklist, to maintain scheme knowledge and to stay registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
- b) Witness audits shall also be acceptable for maintaining competency.
- c) Exceptions to this rule (e.g., if the CB does not have a total of five clients) shall be discussed with and confirmed in writing by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat before the CB QMS audit.
- d) These requirements do not apply to those CB QMS auditors whose main task is to be part of the CB decision-making committee or to the CB scheme managers who do less than five CB QMS audits per year.
- e) The CB shall carry out a GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS witness audit for each of its GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS auditors at least once every four years to verify competence.
- f) The CB QMS auditor shall complete the annual GLOBALG.A.P. calibration exercises as part of self-paced training (once the exercises have been made available).
- g) Where the CB QMS witness audit is done remotely using ICT, the relevant clauses of IAF MD4 shall apply.
- h) If it is not possible to maintain competency from one year to the next, [section 13.3.4](#) shall apply.

### 13.3.6 Rotation of the CB QMS auditor

- a) The CB shall have procedures in place to ensure that the same CB QMS auditor does not audit a producer (Option 1) for more than four consecutive years (regardless of whether the CB audit is announced or unannounced).
- b) Under Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with QMS, the CB QMS auditor in the CB audit team shall rotate (no more than four consecutive years auditing the same QMS). However, the CB farm auditor(s) in the CB audit team may remain the same.

Example: CB QMS auditor #1 audits a producer group's QMS in years 1, 2, 3, and 4; in year 5 another CB QMS auditor (CB QMS auditor #2) shall do the annual CB QMS audit. In years 6, 7, 8, and 9 CB QMS auditor #1 can audit the producer group's QMS for four consecutive years again.

## 13.4 Key tasks

### 13.4.1 GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS audits

- a) Conducting CB QMS audits (auditing the QMS of an Option 2 producer group or of an Option 1 multisite producer where a QMS is implemented) to audit compliance with a GLOBALG.A.P. standard
- b) Producing timely and accurate reports on such CB QMS audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 requirements and GLOBALG.A.P. timelines and system requirements

Note: A CB QMS auditor qualified in the plants scope can audit the QMS of a producer group seeking certification for the aquaculture scope. However, this CB QMS auditor cannot conduct any CB farm audit of the aquaculture producer group members.

#### **13.4.2 GLOBALG.A.P. CB farm audits**

- a) Conducting CB farm audits (auditing a producer group member (Option 2) or a producer or production site (Option 1)) to audit compliance with the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. standard. This may include witness audits of the internal farm auditors of Option 2 producer groups or Option 1 multisite producers with QMS.
- b) Producing timely and accurate reports on such CB farm audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 and GLOBALG.A.P. timelines and system requirements

#### **13.4.3 Maintenance**

- a) Maintaining up-to-date files of all quality policies, procedures, work instructions, and documentation issued by the CB
- b) Keeping abreast of developments, issues, and legislative changes pertaining to the scope in which CB audits are carried out
- c) Carrying out any other tasks the CB may assign outside the scope of GLOBALG.A.P., as long as these activities do not infringe ISO/IEC 17065 principles or any stipulation set down in the GLOBALG.A.P. GR

#### **13.4.4 Independence, confidentiality, and code of conduct**

- a) CB QMS auditors are not permitted to take final certification decisions regarding CB audits they have carried out themselves.
- b) CB QMS auditors are not permitted to carry out any activities that may affect their independence or impartiality and specifically are not permitted to accept bribes. CB QMS auditors shall not audit producers for whom they have carried out consultancy activities in the last two years. Training is not considered to be consultancy provided that, where training relates to management systems or auditing, it is confined to the providing of generic information that is freely available in the public domain (i.e., the trainer shall not provide company-specific solutions).
- c) CB QMS auditors shall strictly observe the producer's and the CB's procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of information and records.
- d) CBs shall ensure that CB farm auditors adhere to the CB code of conduct, which includes professional behavior during their audits. In case the CB farm auditor commits a crime or has an improper behavior according to the code of conduct, the CB shall inform the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. After ISC evaluation, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may block this auditor in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.

### **14 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR IFA V6 GFS**

In IFA v6 GFS, these additional requirements apply:

#### **14.1 Additions**

The following requirements shall be *added* to the sections indicated.

### **3 LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT**

- e) CBs shall comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements in keeping with relevant clauses of the International Accreditation Forum Mandatory Document 1 (IAF MD1).

### **7.3.3.1 Risk classification**

Members/Sites/PHUs deemed high-risk are not eligible for sampling.

In order to classify a producer group member, site, or PHU as high-risk, the CB shall examine a combination of product and process risk factors. If a high-risk product is combined with a high-risk process, the member/site (farm or PHU) shall be classified as high-risk. Therefore, a producer group member, site, or PHU that grows high-risk products but has no high-risk processes is not considered as high-risk.

*High-risk products* include: Fresh herbs, leafy greens, berries, cantaloupe melons. This list may be updated and shall be checked (see the GLOBALG.A.P. product list).

*High-risk processes* include:

- Postharvest use of water/ice/steam
- Preharvest and/or harvest activities where water touches the edible part of the product
- Preharvest use of raw organic manure applied less than 60 days before harvest

Example: A producer group consists of 10 producer group members producing lettuce with 2 central PHUs. In the farms there is no use of raw organic manure and there are drip irrigation emitters below a plastic mulch. In the PHUs the lettuce is rinsed before packing. In this case, the producer group member farms are not considered high-risk, but the PHUs are. Therefore, both PHUs will have to be audited on-site every year while in operation.

### **7.3.3.2 Annual certification/recertification audits**

- j) At least 25% of the square root sample of the actual number of members/sites shall be randomly selected.

## **12 GLOBALG.A.P. CB FARM AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS (OPTIONS 1 AND 3)**

### **12.3.4 Initial training before sign-off by the CB**

- f) The CB shall have a program for the assessment of auditing skills. This shall include at least that CB farm auditors are assessed on their performance in three CB farm audits in accordance with the CB's written program and as a prerequisite to meeting applicable requirements of IFA v6 GFS. The auditing skills assessment shall include at least one CB farm witness audit (as described in [section 12.3.4 c\)](#)), and the rest may consist either of further CB farm witness audits on-site or of document review. The sign-off process can be concluded only after a successful auditing skills assessment consisting of a minimum of three CB farm audits. After the initial successful CB farm witness audit but before the final sign-off, the conducted CB farm audits can be registered for the CB farm auditor in training, and the producer can be certified.

### **12.3.5 Maintenance of competency**

- i) The CB shall have in place a procedure to ensure that annually every auditor conducts at least five on-site audits, at a number of different producers. In the case of a CB auditor approved for GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standards, the audits required for maintenance of competency shall be against any of the GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standards and at least one annual on-site audit against the respective GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standard. If this requirement cannot be met, the CB auditors shall carry out five on-site audits against any of the GFSI-recognised Certification Programmes (see list [here](#)) and at least one annual on-site audit against the respective GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standard. For example, a CB auditor may conduct four audits against any of the GFSI-recognised Certification Programmes and only one audit against IFA v6 GFS to maintain competency for IFA v6 GFS.



## 13 GLOBALG.A.P. CB QMS AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS (OPTION 1 MULTISITE PRODUCERS WITH QMS, OPTION 2, AND OPTION 4)

### 13.3.4 Initial training before sign-off by the CB

- g) The CB shall have a program for the assessment of auditing skills. This shall include at least that CB QMS auditors are assessed on their performance in three CB QMS audits in accordance with the CB's written program and as a prerequisite to meeting applicable requirements of IFA v6 GFS. The auditing skills assessment shall include at least one CB QMS witness audit (as described in [section 13.3.4 c\)](#)), and the rest may consist either of further CB QMS witness audits on-site or of document review. The sign-off process can be concluded only after a successful auditing skills assessment consisting of a minimum of three CB QMS audits. After the initial successful CB QMS witness audit but before the final sign-off, the conducted CB QMS audits can be registered for the CB QMS auditor in training, and the producer can be certified.

### 13.3.5 Maintenance of competency

- i) The CB shall have in place a procedure to ensure that annually every auditor conducts at least five on-site audits, at a number of different producers. In the case of a CB auditor approved for GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standards, the audits required for maintenance of competency shall be against any of the GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standards and at least one annual on-site audit against the respective GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standard. If this requirement cannot be met, the CB auditors shall carry out five on-site audits against any of the GFSI-recognised Certification Programmes (see list [here](#)) and at least one annual on-site audit against the respective GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standard. For example, a CB auditor may conduct four audits against any of the GFSI-recognised Certification Programmes and only one audit against IFA v6 GFS to maintain competency for IFA v6 GFS.

## **14.2 Replacements**

The following requirements shall be *replaced* in the sections indicated.

## 6 PRODUCER REGISTRATION

### 6.1 General

6.1 e) shall be replaced by:

- e) Only the legal certificate holder (i.e., the legal entity indicated on the certificate) may market products with reference to a GLOBALG.A.P. certificate. Producer group members are not legal certificate holders. Thus, they shall not market any products under their name with reference to the producer group certificate. All products that are sold without reference to the certificate shall be recorded in the producer group mass balance system. Exception may apply following "GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for flexible distribution."

### 7.3.3.2 Annual certification/recertification audits

7.3.3.2 a) shall be replaced by:

- a) For information on member/site sampling and/or selection, see Table 2, "Overview of audits in IFA v6 GFS" in "GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS," section 9.2.

7.3.3.2 c) shall be replaced by:

- c) In general, the final selection and communication to the QMS of which members/sites to audit shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days) per member/site. However, for at least 20% of members/sites to be audited, the final selection of which member/site to audit shall not be communicated to the QMS before the CB farm audits.

7.3.3.2 h) shall be replaced by:

- h) The selection shall aim to cover all members/sites of the producer group/multisite producer over a period of 10 years. In addition, the selection shall take into consideration risk factors, new producers, and random selection. In general, unless there is a particular reason, the subsequent CB farm audit shall not include members/sites already sampled during previous CB audits.

Factors for inclusion in the initial or subsequent sampling may include higher risk of operation, special status of the producer group member, number of products, previous audit results, multisite membership, records of complaints, variations in site size, variations in shift patterns, modifications since last certification/recertification audit, environmental issues or variability, differences in language or cultural practices at sites, and geographic distribution.

Producers that move from one producer group to another shall have a higher likelihood of being included in the sample of producer group members chosen by the CB.

### **7.3.3.3 CB surveillance audit during certificate validity**

7.3.3.3 a) shall be replaced by:

- a) Certification/Recertification audits and CB farm surveillance audits shall be carried out in two separate visits that shall be a minimum of 30 days apart from each other. If there is no sampling (members/sites classified as high-risk), the CB may decide to perform all CB farm audits in one or in two visits. In the case of producer groups/multisite producers with members/sites classified as high-risk and others classified as non-high-risk, there is no need to perform CB farm surveillance audits of the high-risk members/sites, as 100% of them shall be audited during the certification/recertification audit. There shall be CB farm surveillance audits for the members/sites not classified as high-risk, as not all of them are audited during the annual certification/recertification audit.

Example: producer group with 25 members not classified as high-risk and 16 members classified as high-risk.

Annual certification audit sample:  $\sqrt{25}$  (producers not classified as high-risk) + 16 (producers classified as high-risk) = 5+16 = 21.

CB farm surveillance audit (during the validity of the certificate):  $\frac{1}{2} (\sqrt{25}) = 2.5$ , rounded up to 3 producers not classified as high-risk.

7.3.3.3 c) shall be replaced by:

- c) The final selection and communication to the QMS of which members/sites to audit shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days) per member/site. However, for at least 20% of members/sites to be audited, the final selection of which members/sites to audit shall not be communicated to the QMS before the CB farm audits.

### **7.3.4 CB audit of PHUs (producer group/multisite producer)**

7.3.4 b) shall be replaced by:

- b) In the plants scope, at least the square root of the number of central PHUs shall be audited annually while in operation. However, for all PHUs classified as high-risk, sampling is not allowed, i.e., all PHUs shall be audited annually while in operation.

## 7.4 Unannounced CB audits

7.4 g) shall be replaced by:

- g) There is no notification to the producer before the CB audit takes place.

In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the producer to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the producer will receive one more chance to be audited unannounced. There shall be objective evidence of the justification available (e.g., medical document). If no evidence of a justifiable reason is available, the producer shall accept the unannounced CB audit or be suspended. The producer shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted, regardless of whether the rejection is justified or not.

The producer will receive another unannounced CB audit. If that audit cannot take place, a suspension of all products will be issued. The suspension will be lifted when the unannounced CB audit has been conducted.

## 8 CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### 8.1 General

8.1 n) shall be replaced by:

- n) Copies of the CB audit report, the objective evidence of implementation of the corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall be provided to the regulatory authorities when requested, as per applicable national legislation. It shall also be provided by default to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and on request to the AB and to GFSI. Any additional release shall only be provided if the producer allows access by written authorization.

8.1 p) shall be replaced by:

- p) CBs shall provide the final CB audit report including the completed audit checklist to producers registered for any GFSI-recognized GLOBALG.A.P. standard, at the latest by the time of the certification decision.

### 8.4 Certificate validity extension

8.4 a) shall be replaced by:

- a) The certificate validity may be extended beyond the usual 12 months for a maximum period of 4 months but only if there is a valid reason, which shall be recorded. The following are the only reasons that are considered valid:
- (i) The CB wants to schedule the on-site CB audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process because that part has not been seen in the previous CB audit, because it is considered to be a high-risk process in terms of product safety, or because it involves a newly added product or process.
  - (ii) The CB needs to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
  - (iii) The CB was not able to conduct the on-site CB audit or the producer was not able to receive the CB audit due to circumstances beyond their control (*force majeure*) (e.g., natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic, unavailability of the producer for medical reasons).

## VERSION/EDITION UPDATE REGISTER

New document	Replaced document	Date of publication	Description of modifications
240902_GG_GR_Rules_for_CBs_v6_0_Aug24_en	220929_GG_GR_Rules_for_CBs_v6.0_Sep22_en	2 September 2024	Additional requirements for IFA v6 GFS: 14.1 Additions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12.3.5 Maintenance of competency requirements changed for GFSI recognition</li> <li>• 13.3.5 Maintenance of competency requirements changed for GFSI recognition</li> </ul> 14.2 Replacements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8.1 p) Rule added for GFSI recognition</li> </ul>

If you want to receive more information on the modifications in this document, please contact the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat at [standard\\_support@globalgap.org](mailto:standard_support@globalgap.org).

If the changes do not introduce new requirements to the standard, the version will remain “5.0” and an edition update shall be indicated with “5.0-x”. If the changes do affect compliance with the standard, the version name will change to “5.x”. A new version, e.g., v6.0, v7.0, etc., will always affect the accreditation of the standard.

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