



## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

<b>PIP Issue Date</b>	14 May 2019
<b>Project Code</b>	19-AG-17-GE-DLN-A-02
<b>Title</b>	Self-learning e-Course on Organic Inspection and Certification
<b>Reference</b>	Project Notification 19-AG-17-GE-DLN-A dated 27 November 2018
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	17 October 2019–16 October 2020 (12 months)
<b>Implementing Organization(s)</b>	APO Secretariat and National Productivity Organizations (NPOs)
<b>Number of Participants</b>	Minimum 400 participants
<b>Self-registration</b>	<p>Self-registration opens from 10:00 AM Japan Standard Time on 17 October 2019 on the eAPO web portal: <a href="http://eAPO-tokyo.org">http://eAPO-tokyo.org</a></p> <p>Note: Participants can register directly from this portal on the APO website. Those who are already registered can access the course by using the assigned username and password. If you have forgotten your username and password, please refer to the help page on the home page of the portal.</p>

## 1. Objectives

The course aims at enhancing the competitiveness of the agriculture and food sectors in member countries as certification can increase access of organics to consumers and global premium markets. The specific objectives are to:

- a. Enable participants to understand the basic concepts and principles of organic certification and inspection;
- b. Enhance participants' knowledge of salient organic standards and organic certification programs;
- c. Acquaint participants with the process of organic certification and inspection; and
- d. Promote direct linkages among rural farmers and agribusiness entrepreneurs and markets as the organic certification enhances product quality, consumers' trust in the authenticity of organics, farm profitability, and sustainability of food production systems.

## 2. Background

The demand for organic food products is expected to continue growing fast in major global markets like the USA, EU, and expanding Asian urban centers. According to a Zion Market Research report, the global organic food and beverage market was valued at approximately USD125 billion in 2017 and is expected to generate revenue of around USD323 billion by the end of 2024, increasing at a compound annual growth rate of more than 10% between 2017 and 2024. This trend will result in greater opportunities for Asian producers.

The main drivers of the expanding organic market are increasing consumer consciousness of health and fitness and concerns about the impact of input-intensive agriculture on natural resources, the environment, food quality, and overall sustainability of agriculture. Consumers are, however, also increasingly concerned about the authenticity of the organic products they buy. Producers need to employ legitimate organic production processes to enhance consumers' trust in their products. Other players in agrifood value chains also need to guarantee that an organic product is not contaminated with nonorganic material while it moves from farm to fork. This requires establishment of a credible system of organic certification because only items produced, inspected, and certified in accordance with the prescribed standards and regulations can be traded and labeled as organic at premium prices.

Certification can help protect both consumers and genuine organic producers alike from false claims and misleading labeling of products. Organic certification is undertaken based on standards or established regulatory and audit systems for producers, handlers, processors, retailers, wholesalers, and exporters. Today's market demands independent third-party certification for sales transactions, which is required by the regulations of many governments for any kind of an "organic" claim on a product label.

The plethora of available national and regional standards, labels, and certifications has led to a complex, fragmented system of regulations. Duplications and overlaps among systems have created compliance problems and barriers to trade. Harmonizing standards with the internationally accepted standards and regulations, such as the Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards (COROS) and IFOAM–Organics International Standard Requirements, is one means of enhancing the reliability of organic product labeling and certification, removing barriers to international trade, and promoting the global organic industry.

Verification and auditing of organic standards also remain challenges considering the varied competency and experience of inspectors and auditors, as well as the inspection and audit practices in relation to existing standards. Thus, there is a need to develop a critical mass of competent inspectors to facilitate credible organic certification in Asia and the Pacific.

### **3. Scope and Methodology**

The tentative course structure is:

#### **Module 1. Organic Value Proposition**

- 1.1 What does “organic” mean?
- 1.2 What is the organic value proposition?
- 1.3 Where to start
- 1.4 Global trends in the organic industry
- 1.5 Key messages

#### **Module 2. Basic Concepts in Organic Certification and Challenges and Opportunities**

- 2.1 Concepts of organic certification and inspection
- 2.2 Principles of organic certification
- 2.3 Challenges to organic certification
- 2.4 Why is organic certification beneficial?
  - 2.4.1 Growers’ perspectives
  - 2.4.2 Consumers’ perspectives
- 2.5 Key messages

#### **Module 3. Organic Standards, Certification, and Labeling**

- 3.1 Basic concept
- 3.2 Introduction to organic guarantee systems
- 3.3 Organic standards and regulations
- 3.4 The IFOAM toolkit
- 3.5 Basic steps in organic certification
- 3.6 Types of organic certification
  - 3.6.1 Group certification
  - 3.6.2 Participatory guarantee systems
- 3.7 Organic labeling
- 3.8 Key messages

#### **Quiz 1 (for self-assessment based on questions from Modules 1–3)**

#### **Module 4. Considerations before Certification**

- 4.1 Why consider certification?
- 4.2 Three-year transition
  - 4.2.1 New land and getting it certified
  - 4.2.2 Transitioning to organic
- 4.3 Communicating with certifiers
- 4.4 Marketing opportunities with organic certification
- 4.5 Roles of certifiers and consultants: How to choose them
- 4.6 The application
- 4.7 Examples of types of records
- 4.8 Inspection: preparation and what to expect
- 4.9 How to renew organic certification
- 4.10 Split/parallel operations
- 4.11 Accessing certified organic grower resources
- 4.12 Key messages

#### **Quiz 2 (for self-assessment based on questions from Module 4)**

#### **Module 5. Inspection**

- 5.1 What is inspection?
- 5.2 Inspection preparation
- 5.3 Review of the relevant documents and information
- 5.4 Organic inspection checklists for gathering records
- 5.5 Key messages

## **Module 6. Useful Facts about Organic Certification and Organic Certificates**

- 6.1 Four levels of organic products
- 6.2 Products that qualify for organic certification
- 6.3 Top organic certificates worldwide
- 6.4 Key success factors in organic certification
- 6.5 Key messages

**Quiz 3 (for self-assessment based on questions from Modules 5 & 6)**

## **Module 7: Final Written Examination**

### **Methodology**

Self-learning e-modules, additional study materials for participants, intermittent quizzes for self-assessment, assignments, and a final examination to qualify for the APO e-certificate.

### **4. Qualifications of Candidates**

The target participants are government officers, agricultural producers, agribusiness entrepreneurs, agricultural extension workers, academics, and other individuals with particular interest in promoting organic agriculture, producing certified organic food and nonfood products, pursuing a career as an organic inspector/auditor, planning to engage in organic trade, and wishing to deepen their insights on the processes and procedures of organic certification.

### **5. Eligibility for e-Certificate**

A minimum score of 70% on the final examination is required to qualify for the APO e-certificate.

Note: Participants from nonmember countries are welcome to take the course for self-development, although APO e-certificates will not be provided.



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