

## ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN NEPAL

Bhola Kumar Shrestha  
Organic certification Nepal (OCN)

### ABSTRACT

*Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system that is economically viable, ecologically safe and socially acceptable. Worldwide the demand of certified organic product is increasing for its intrinsic quality. Certification is a tool to develop trust between producer and consumer, regulated by various organic standards and regulations for which more than 532 certification bodies are active in the world. Nepal has already developed its own guideline for the promotion of organic agriculture under which National Accreditation Body is formulated for the regulation of certification. Certification can be organized by an individual farmer or group of farmers. Majority of the Nepali farmers are small and marginalized. Their production cannot meet the financial requirement of the certification body thus; group certification is a viable option for certification of small farms. Organic Certification Nepal is a national certification body with its wider network of international Certification agencies from 10 different countries to provide one stop certification service at affordable cost.*

### INTRODUCTION

#### Organic Agriculture

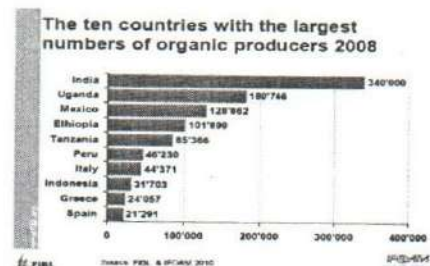
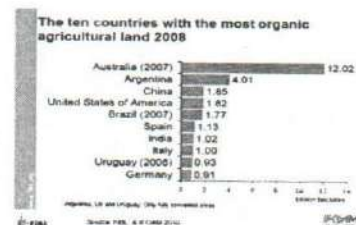
Organic agriculture (OA) is a holistic production management system which is ecologically safe, economically viable and socially acceptable. Soil is of central importance, and the primary goal is to optimize the health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and human being. It emphasizes on the use of management practices as opposed to off farm synthetic materials and largely excludes the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, growth regulator, hormones and antibiotics and Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs). The system can help to promote and enhance healthier agro-ecosystems including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. In reality, organic farming is a consistent system approach based on the perception that tomorrow's ecology is more important than today's economy.

#### World Scenario of Organic Agriculture:

Organic production is increasing rapidly across the world. There are currently more than 37.2 million hectares of farmland under organic management in about 100 countries worldwide. Australia leads in terms of organic area with 12.02 million hectares followed by Argentina (4.01 million hectares) and China with 1.85 million hectares.

India has the highest number (340,000) of farmers involved in organic farming followed by Uganda (180,748) and Mexico with 128,862 growers. Similarly the countries with largest market for organic food can be listed as America, Germany, France and UK but per capita consumption is high in Denmark followed by Switzerland, Austria and Luxembourg. (Kung Wai, 2011).

In reality, organic farming is a consistent system approach based on the perception that tomorrow's ecology is more important than today's economy.





### Organic certification

Organic certification is a process of providing a written assurance by an independent Certification Body (CB) to the product that clearly meets the specified requirements to develop trust between producer and consumer. The organic market is regulated by various organic standards and regulations; a product that shall be marketed as "organic" need to fulfill certain defined criteria that they have been grown, handled and processed in accordance with their organic standards. Specific inputs and behaviors those considered harmful and their extent depends in the local situations and are documented in the standards. Thus the standard of OA also may differ to the countries or even society and local environments. However avoidance of synthetic chemical inputs (e.g. fertilizer, pesticides, antibiotics, food additives etc); use of farmland that has been free from prohibited synthetic chemicals for a number of years (often, three or more); keeping detailed written production and sales records (audit trail); maintaining strict physical separation of organic products from non-certified products; undergoing periodic on-site inspections are basic requirements for certification.

### Need of Organic Certification

Organic certification is highly essential to address the growing demand of organic food. It assures quality, prevents fraud and promotes market. Due to growing and expanded market in the world, the distance between grower and consumer also increased together with food miles. Under these circumstances the consumer needs some means of guarantee that the products they purchase are truly organic. So it is a kind of mechanism to build the trust between producer and consumer.

### Types of Certification

Following are the certification system where producers/traders can choose one of them based on their situation. Basically it is three types.

#### 1) Individual farm certification

This type of certification is applied for big farmer/farm whose production can afford the cost of certification. There will be direct contact between individual and certification body. Certification Body directly undertakes inspection of the farm and completes certification decision process.

#### 2) Group certification

Smallholders group certification system have been developed to assure compliance with organic standards for producers as a group. Group certification is usually applied for small farmer/farm and is based on Internal Control System (ICS).

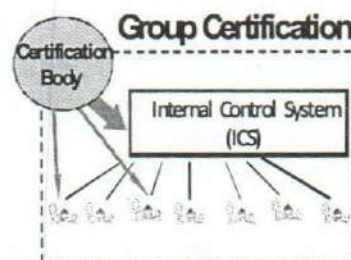
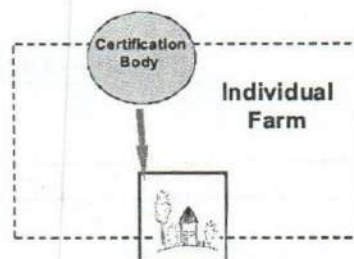
ICS is a documented quality assurance system managed by the group with specified rules and standards. The group accomplishes the internal inspection, documentations and allows an external certification body to delegate the annual inspection (IFOAM 2007).

The group basically controls all members for compliance with organic production rules according to defined procedures. The organic certification body mainly evaluates whether the Internal Control System is working well and efficiently. The evaluation is based on the ICS documentation system, staff qualifications and re-inspection of some farms.

#### 3) Participatory guarantee system

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are quality assurance initiatives that are locally relevant, emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers and operate outside the frame of third party certification meaning that there will be no third party certification body. There will be an understanding and trust between consumer and producer. They can also

### Why Organic Certification?

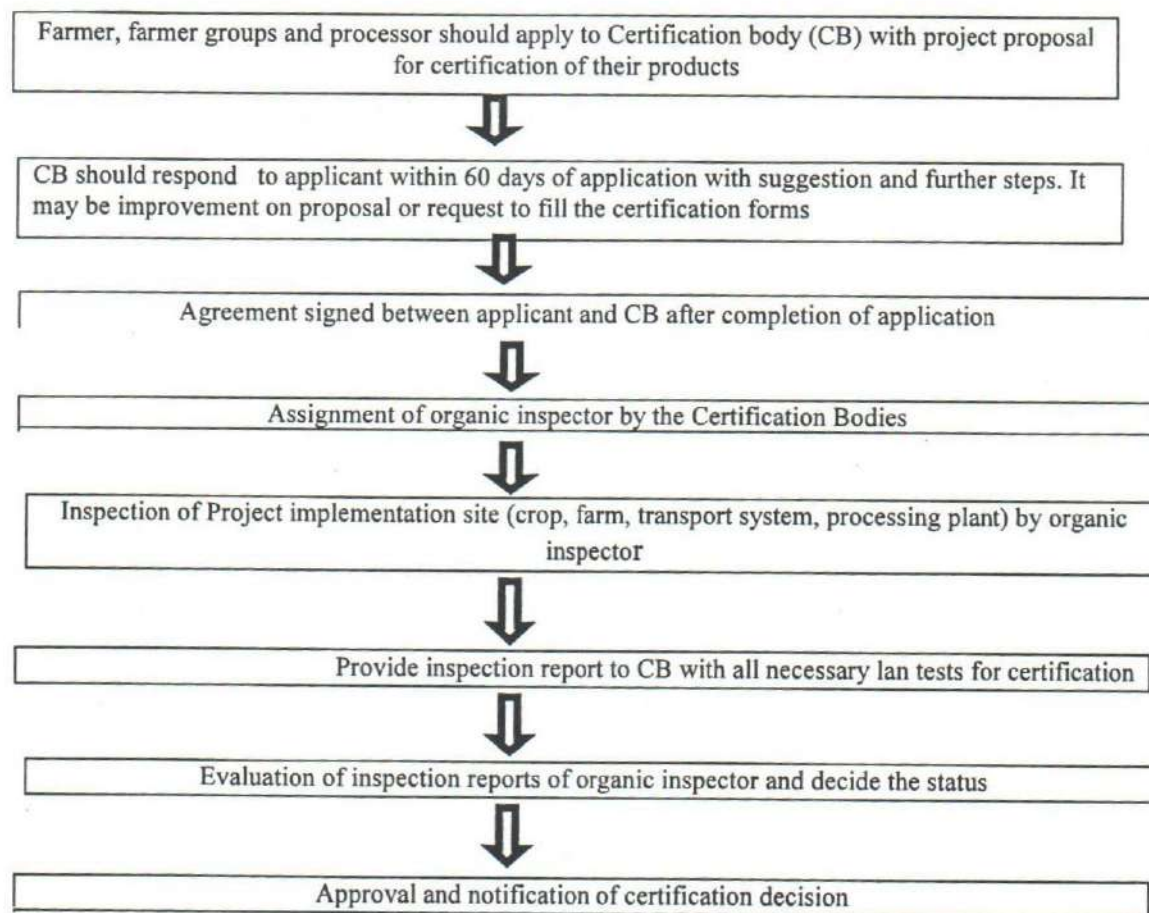


### Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)



complement third party certification with a private label that brings additional guarantee and transparency.

Participatory Guarantee System is also referred to as “participatory certification”.





### Certification Process/Steps

Certification is overseen either by the government or independent certification body for which more than 532 certification bodies working in the world (Grolink 2009). Organic Certification process follows certain procedures which may be different based on the certification agencies and situation of the countries. Nepal has also developed its own regulation "National Technical Standards and Guidelines for Organic Agriculture Production and Processing system 2064 (Amendment 2065)" where coordination committee is formed under the chair of Secretary of MoAC. Based on the guideline Nepal Accreditation Body (NAB) is formed for the regulation of certification process in the country. The guideline has suggested following steps to be followed for certification (MoAC 2007).

### Approval and notification of certification

A Certification Committee or Review Committee reviews the Organic Farm Plan, the inspection report, and all associated documentation. There may be three outcomes to the review process.

1. If all procedures and activities found in compliance with the organic standard, an approval decision is made and a **CERTIFICATE** of organic operation is issued.
2. If there are any minor non-compliance on the procedure and activities, the applicant has the opportunity to correct these non-compliances as a condition of certification.
3. If an applicant has violated standards that cannot be addressed in the short-term or when a correction is not possible, a notification of noncompliance and notification of denial of certification is provided to the applicant.

### Certification mark or logo

Certification body has its own certification mark (Logo) which is an identity of organic certification to that specific standard e.g. JAS logo can be used once it is certified to Japanese Organic Standard, similarly USDA organic is for United States of America and EU for European standard. The product can be sold with organic logo only after certification.

There are few certification bodies operating in Nepal. NASAA from Australia, OneCert from USA, IMO from Switzerland are some of the foreign certification bodies. Organic certification Nepal (OCN) is first organic certification body established in Nepal. It is a founder member of Certification Alliance (Cert All) where certification bodies of ten different countries are hooked together to facilitate affordable one stop certification service to market worldwide.

Following are some organic certified farm and products in Nepal.

### Organic Seals and Logos of some Certification Bodies



**FACILITATING AFFORDABLE ONE STOP CERTIFICATION TO MARKETS WORLDWIDE**

**certification alliance**

Cert All is a collaboration of local and international certification bodies committed to an affordable one stop service for operators requiring domestic and export certification.

- Local available services providers who know the local language and custom facilitate communication between operators and national certification bodies.
- Quality accredited certification bodies provide the export certification.
- One stop service Domestic and export certification facilitated through a joint application and inspection process. One coverage through use of local or clear by inspectors. Fees derived and payable to local carriers.
- Sharing between partner organisations enhances inspection and certification performance and benefits of the organic supply chain.



S.N	Company	Product	Remarks
1.	Kanchanjungha Tea Estate	Tea, Ginger, Large .Cardamom, Lemongrass, Cinnamon	Certified for International market to different international standards
2.	Guranse Tea Estate	Tea	
3.	Sambala Herbal	Essential Oil	
4.	Gulmi Cooperative Union	Coffee	
5.	Natural Resource Industry	Essential Oil	
6.	Male International	Essential Oil	
7.	Coffee Cooperative Union Lalitpur	Coffee	
8.	Highland Coffee Promotion Company	Coffee	
9.	Royal Everest Coffee Mill	Coffee	
10.	Nepal Organic Coffee Products	Coffee	
11.	One World alc	Herbs	
12.	Annapurna Organic	Coffee, Spices	
13.	Himalayan Multipurpose Cooperative, Patmara, Jumla	Apple	Certified to National Standard by OCN
14.	Thakur Jyu Agriculture Multipurpose Cooperative, Mahat, Jumla	Apple	
15.	Agriculture Production and Management Cooperative, Kartikswami, Jumla	Apple	
16.	Chandra Adhikari, Fulbari, Chitwan	Farm Certification	
17.	Surya Adhikari, Begnas, Kaski	Farm Certification	

### CONCLUSION

Organic Agriculture is an important multi beneficial approach towards reducing adverse effect of chemical agriculture in the environment and human health. There is increasing demand of certified organic products in the world markets. Majority of farmers in Nepal are smallholders and are often located in remote areas. The overall income from their agricultural production is usually not sufficient to certify their farms at individual level. Thus group certification is a viable option for certification and marketing of small holder's product.

### REFERENCES

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