AFRICAN CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

CACO ACAP 1-2

Second Edition 2022

Conformity assessment— Part 2: Special requirements for the certification schemes and standards design

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ACAP 1-2:2022

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Foreword

The African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) is an African Intergovernmental organization made of Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU). One of the fundamental mandates of ARSO is the establishment of a conformity assessment system to promote the quality of African goods and services as a means of facilitating intra-African trade as well as accessing global markets.

The ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) is supported by a coherent set of documents which are developed under the auspices of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO CACO) which comprises experts from Member States. Member States participate in the committee on a voluntary basis and the documents developed follow the principles and procedures for the development of African Standards outlined in the African Standards Harmonization Model (ASHAM) with the exception of the stages and voting thresholds. Being conformity assessment instruments, ACAP documents are subject to dynamic adaptations which must timeously respond to changes in the conformity assessment fields.

ACAP documents will be revised on a flexible basis to fit in with changes in global conformity assessment systems.

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Introduction

This document describes additional certification rules for any party seeking certification within the framework of the African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP).

These specific requirements shall be used in combination with requirements in ACAP 1-1: that define the certification rules that apply for all ARSO Certification Schemes.

The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions which are mandatory for the different certification schemes.

Conformity assessment— Part 2: Special requirements for the design and implementation of ACAP certification schemes

1 Scope

This document specifies special requirements for the design and implementation of ACAP certification schemes. It gives

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ACAP 1-1:, *Regulations — Part 1: General requirements for the certification systems*

ACAP 1-3, *Regulations — Part 3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies*

ACAP 1-4, *Regulations — Part 4: Requirements for approval of testing and calibration laboratories*

ACAP 2, *Sustainable agriculture — Assessment and certification*

ACAP 3, *Sustainable capture fisheries — Assessment and certification*

ACAP 4, *Cosmetology and wellness certification framework*

ACAP 5-1, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 1: General requirements*

ACAP 5-2, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 2: Good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-3, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 3: Good agricultural practices (GAP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-4, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 4: Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

ACAP 5-5, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5: Minimum requirements for registration of traditional medicines*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this document the terms and definitions in ISO/IEC 17000 apply.

4 The ACAP Certification schemes

The general structure of ACAP Certification Schemes as described in ACAP 1-1, is summarized in Figure 1 and their details are given in Annex A to Annex L.

The principles of impartiality, confidentiality and requirements for publicly available documents shall apply to all types of schemes under ACAP.

African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP): Certification Schemes

Scheme name	*Subject area*	*Scheme scope/Sub-scheme*	*Sample standards applicable*
ACAP Certification Scheme A: Primary production (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)	Agricultural Crops	ACAP Certification Scheme A1: Single Farmers	ARS 461 ARS 886 ARS 1100 ARS 1101 ARS 1102 ARS 1103 ARS 1104 ARS 1105 ARS 1106 ARS 1107 ARS 1108 ARS 1109 ARS 1401 ARS 1403 ARS 1419
	Livestock and dairy		
	Aquaculture		
	Apiculture		
	Agricultural crops	ACAP Certification Scheme A2: Groups of Farmers	
	Livestock and dairy		
	Aquaculture		
	Apiculture		
ACAP Certification Scheme B: Food processing	Processing and handling/ packing of food and fresh produce		ARSO approved certification standards for food handling and processing
ACAP Certification Scheme C: Chain of custody	Traceability of ARSO certified products in the food supply chain		ARSO approved certification standard for chain of custody
ACAP Certification Scheme D: Sustainability and eco-labelling	ACAP Certification Scheme D1: Single legal entity		ARS/AES 1 ARS/AES 3 ARS/AES 5 ARS/AES 6
	ACAP Certification Scheme D2: Groups or multisite operation		
ACAP Certification Scheme E: African Traditional Medicine	Scheme E1: Good agricultural practices for medicinal plants		ARS 952, *Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*
	Scheme E2: Sustainable wild harvesting of medicinal plants		
	Scheme E3: Good manufacturing practices for herbal medicines		ARS 951, *GMP for herbal medicines*
ACAP Scheme F: Sustainable capture fisheries	Sustainable wild catch of fish and other sea water/ fresh water species	ARS/AES 2, *Fisheries — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*	
ACAP Certification Scheme G: Good financial grant practice	Four-tier certification system for grantees of various capabilities		ARS 1651, *Good financial grant practice — Requirements*
ACAP Certification Scheme H: Cosmetology and wellness	(1) Scheme H1: Barbering; (2) Scheme H2: Haircare; (3) Scheme H3: Skin care; (4) Scheme H4: Nail care; (5) Scheme H5: Massage therapy; (6) Scheme H6: Reflexology; (7) Scheme H7: Aromatherapy; (8) Scheme H8: Spa therapies; (9) Scheme H9: Hair removal techniques; (10) Scheme H10: Body art and body piercing		ACAP 4, Cosmetology and wellness certification framework

ACAP Certification Scheme J: Sustainable mining	Sustainable mining certification is based on a set of African standards which specify objectives and leading performance requirements for economically, environmentally and socially responsible practices	*Mining — Sustainability and Ecolabelling — Requirements* ARS 1340, *Natural stone for building — Sustainability assessment and certification* ARS 1343, *Sustainable sand mining — Requirements*
ACAP Certification Scheme K: Made in Africa	Made in Africa certification is based on a set of African standards which specify objectives and leading performance requirements for products or services made in Africa to benefit from preferential trade arrangements	*Made in Africa – Criteria for qualification and guidance for Implementation- ARS MiA :2021*
ACAP Certification Scheme L: Ecological Organic Agriculture	Ecological Organic Agriculture certification is based on a set of African standards which apply to any party seeking certification of the requirements for ecological organic agriculture products that includes Live stock, Aquaculture, Agro-processing, Agro Forestry and forestry products, Leather and leather products , Textile products	*ARSO Ecological Organic Agriculture standards*

Figure 1 — African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) Certification Schemes

5 Requirements

5.1 General requirements

Where applicable, production processes and management systems that have influence on the quality, health, safety and legality of the certified products are also included.

5.2 Scope

A clear Specification and description of the object of the conformity assessment (ex: products name, variety, status of final product, etc.) shall be included in the Standard

5.3 Objectives

A description of the objectives of the standard, including elements to explain the added value given to the product by achieving compliance to the Standard's requirements

5.4 Specific requirements

(a) Specific requirements relating to the characteristics of the object of conformity assessment shall be stated.

(b) Specific requirements shall be written in such a way that they are clear, direct and precise and result in accurate and uniform interpretation, so that parties making use of the document are able to derive from the contents of the document a common understanding of its meaning and intent.

(c) Objects of conformity assessment shall focus only on the criteria or performance characteristics of the object.

(d) Test methods for determining that the criteria or characteristics have been met shall be clearly specified and identified for their original source and review. Possible benchmarked methods shall also be indicated, where available. They should be expressed in such a way that any interested party may carry out the testing.

(e) It shall be left to the users (e.g. Manufacturers/Producers, CBs, Testing Laboratories) to decide what activity will be utilized to comply with the specific requirements.

(f) Specific requirements shall be written in terms of results or outcomes, together with metric Units to be used, limiting values and tolerances, where applicable, and the methods of determination, such as test methods or inspection, in order to verify the specific characteristics.

(g) Specific requirements shall be written in such a way that they facilitate the development of technology. In general, this is accomplished by:

- specifying requirements in terms of performance, rather than design or descriptive characteristics;

- specifying requirements related to the object, and not to the production process for the object.

5.5 References for specified requirements

(a) If a set of specified requirements incorporates requirements stated in another normative document, (legislation, code of practices, sector guidelines, etc.), the incorporation shall be by

specific reference and clearly indicate the referenced version, usually by the date (year) of publication.

(b) If the version of the referenced document is not specified, the conventional understanding is that the latest version of the document applies, including all amendments and revisions. The use of the term “latest issue” in conjunction with an undated reference shall be avoided.

(c) If the referenced document is not dated, it is possible that the format and content of the referenced requirements could change over time. The consequences of changes to the referenced requirements should be considered.

5.6 Conformance criteria

(a) Each requirement expressed in the ACAP certification scheme shall be auditable and criteria for the evaluation of conformance shall be clearly identified.

(b) Specified requirements may contain more than one category, type, class or grade where applicable

(c) if necessary, where multiple types, classes, grades, etc. are permitted, the document shall specify how these are to be identified to the user.

(d) All measurement values shall be expressed in SI units (International System of Units).

(e) Specified requirements shall be stated unambiguously using wording that is objective, logical, valid and specific.

5.7 Ambiguous use of terms

(a) terms such as “adequate”, “adversely affected”, “sufficiently strong” and “extreme conditions” are subjective and should be avoided;

(b) qualitative nouns and adjectives that could be taken as absolute, e.g. “waterproof”, “unbreakable”, “flat”, and “safe”, should not be used unless defined by specific limits or indicators;

(c) qualitative nouns and adjectives that describe a measurable property, e.g. “high”, “strong”, “transparent” and “accurate”, should not be used unless defined by specific limits or indicators;

(d) the term “unless otherwise specified” should not be used, except when the “other specifications” is clearly identified in the requirements.

5.8 Sampling

5.8.1Specified test methods and related sampling requirements may be selected for use in conformity assessment activities.

5.8.2 The methodology to be applied for sampling and testing is specified among the requirements of the different Certification Schemes. As a minimum the following criteria shall be included:

(a) sample size

(b) time / date and location of sampling

(c) sampling criteria

(d) Traceability of samples

(e) Transportation, handling and storage of samples.

(f) Sampling report

(g) Parameters to be tested by the laboratory.

(h) Test Methods

5.8.3 Criteria for test methods

Criteria for test methods is to gain consistent and reproducible results, sampling methods should be based, whenever possible, on statistical methods, provided in International Standards.

(a) As far as practicable, testing methods should describe clearly how the test is to be performed:

(i) the choice and preparation of samples

(ii) the testing equipment to be used

(iii) the data to be recorded,

(iv) the acceptance criteria,

(v) the limits to be used for accepting or rejecting the result,

(vi) (where relevant) what is acceptable in terms of uncertainty of measurement, accuracy, reproducibility and repeatability.

(b) Test methods shall focus on the specified requirements of the object of conformity assessment and should avoid stating requirements not directly related to the object's performance.

(c) Test methods shall be selected bearing in mind their effectiveness, economic and practical application.

(d) Non-destructive test methods should be chosen whenever they provide the same level of confidence as destructive test methods.

(e) The ACAP standard shall specify the sequence of tests when the sequence can influence the results

(f) Where possible, alternative test methods or test equipment shall be included in the normative document. The equivalence or any advantage or disadvantage when compared with the primary test method should be explained.

(g) If equivalent tests are provided, it shall be specified which one will be used in case of dispute.

5.9 Subcontractors and outsourcing

When introducing requirements of the object of conformity assessment that is new for ACAP testing system, it is good practice to investigate whether Subcontractors and Processes in Outsourcing are involved

All ACAP standards shall consider the possible involvement of sub-contractors and outsourcing in their processes.

Specific Requirements for management and control of sub-contractors and outsourced processes must be included in the ACAP Standard to control that the related testing methods are feasible, in terms of availability of equipment to recognized labs, cost/benefit ratio and accuracy of the results.

Annex A
(Normative)

Scheme A: Primary production (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

A.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information are required for Certification Schemes A1 and A2

A.1.1 Details of certified production

A.1.1.1 Crops

(a) Name of crops (species)

(b) Area of production (ha)

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(e) On-farm postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

(f) Transportation and storage conditions
(g) Year of production
(h) Any other regulatory requirements

A.1.1.2 Livestock and related products

(a) Name of product (i.e. species and breed)

(b) Kind of production (for example milk, meat, eggs, etc.)

(c) Number of individual species

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (i.e. tons, litres. pieces…etc.)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

(g) Production date
(h) Transportation and storage conditions

A.1.1.3 Aquaculture

(a) Name of species

(b) Kind of production (ex: ova, seedlings, grown fish)

(c) Estimated number of individuals

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons, in case of grown fish)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

A.1.1.4 Apiculture

(a) Name of species

(b) Kind of production

(c) Estimated number of individuals

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (kg)

(f) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

A.1.1.5 Additional information for groups of farmers

(a) Name of crops/species grown by each farmer of the group, according to scope (A.1.1.1 to A.1.1.4)

(b) Area/ number of individuals

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

A.2 ACAP Certification Scheme A scopes of certification

A.2.1 Products

Products included in the Scheme A come from primary production and, according to the nature of the farming activity can have different origin:

(a) Vegetable crops productions (ex: fruit, vegetables, herbs, roots, plants for medical use, flowers, etc.)

(b) Livestock production coming from different animal species (ex: meat, milk, wool, eggs)

(c) Aquaculture production coming from different aquaculture species (ex: fish for consumption, brood stock for reproduction, ova and seedlings for reproduction, ova for consumption, etc.)

(d) Apiculture products (ex: honey, wax, royal jelly, etc.). The Nature and number of products certifiable in the ACAP system depend of the availability of specific standards for certification, designed and approved by ACAP. The certification scope may have different focus for different products, according to the scope and focus of the Standard of reference.

A.2.2 Processes

A.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP certification scheme A requires that all the life/production cycle of the products (vegetal or animal) is carried out on-farm following the certification rules.

(b) Exceptions can be clarified in the specific Standards for certification, also according to the phase of certification (initial, surveillance or re-certification) and to the duration of life/ production cycle of the plant of animal.

(c) All production processes carried out during the cycle of certification shall be carried out in agreement with the ACAP applicable certification rules, for the selected Standard.

A.2.2.2 Harvesting Process

(a) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of animal products is carried out by the same Producer, the harvesting process shall be included in the scope of certification

(b) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of animal products is carried out under the responsibility of the buyer of the product (the producer does not own the product), the harvesting process shall be excluded from the scope of certification

(c) In case of exclusion of harvest, in order to be able to use the ARSO Mark along the supply chain, the buyer of the product shall be ARSO ACAP Certified according to one of the ACAP certification schemes applicable for the product.

Example: the buyer is a food manufacturer that buys apples to make apple juice. In this case he/she shall be certified according to the ACAP Certification Scheme B.

A.2.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same producer. (ex: storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing, bleeding, degutting, slicing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature.

(b) Food processing is not considered a post-harvest activity and it is covered under Certification Scheme B.

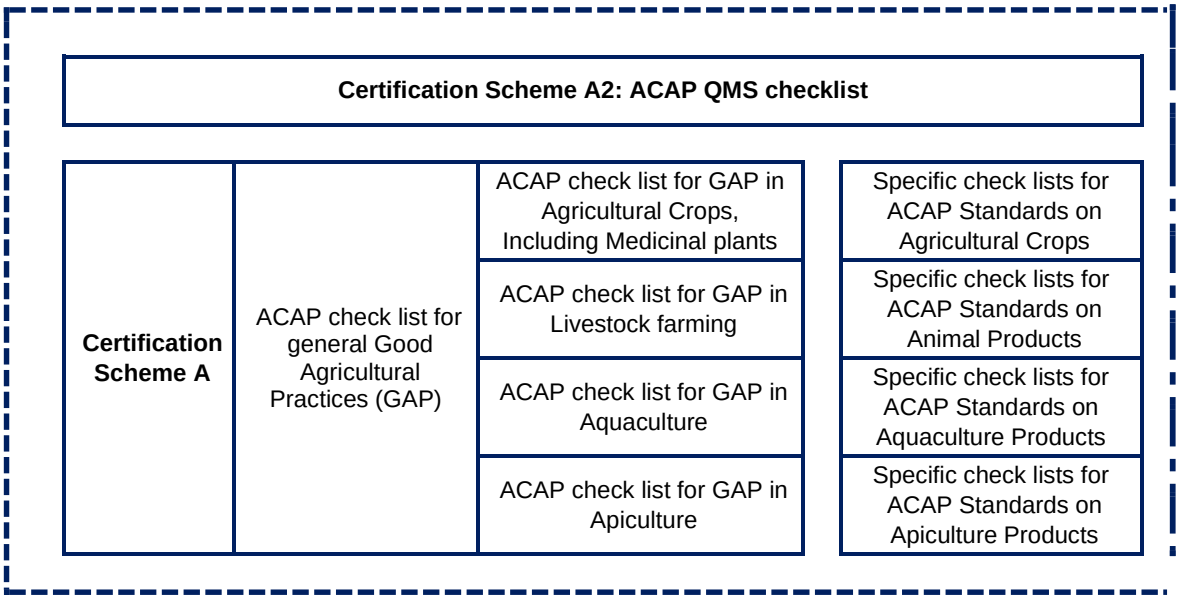
(c) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(d) Produce handling shall always be included as long as the product belongs to the producer during handling (by the producer or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

A.2.2.4 Sub-contractors and Process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes is under the responsibility of the certified producers. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ACAP Standards

(c) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.



A.3 ACAP Certification Scheme A specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme A") are specific for certification scheme A and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standards, technical normative documents to be certified within Scheme A

(b) ACAP check list for general Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

(c) ACAP check lists for GAP, specific for each sub-scope of scheme A (Crops, Livestock, Aquaculture, Apiculture)

(d) ACAP check lists that extrapolate the requirements in the ACAP Standards

(e) ACAP QMS check list for group or farmers in scheme A2

A.4 Quality management system for Scheme A2

The QMS designed for the ARSO ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of the ACAP certification.

The requirements, as well as the criteria for conformance for the QMS are described in the ACAP QMS checklist for group or farmers

A.5 Evaluation Process

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification schemes A1 and A2.

A.5.1 Self- evaluation and Internal Audit and verification

A.5.1.1 Self- evaluation

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme A1.

During self- evaluation, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of the evaluator.

A.5.1.2 Internal audit and verification.

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme A2.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-verification of the QMS and verification of the activity on farm, according to the specific African Standard.

(a) **Internal Auditor.** The internal auditor is qualified for both verification of QMS of a group of Producers and for the technical verification of the farm on-site.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Post-High school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices.

(b) **Internal verifier:** Can carry out only the internal technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production. Can work in team with the internal Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(i) High school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices.

(v) 1 verification as observer and 1 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

A.5.2 Independent external verification

A.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme A, the certification Body must be approved for the scope A1 or for single Producers certification or the all scope A for single and groups of producers. Approved CBs are listed on the ARSO website

A.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical verification of conformance for the ACAP Certification Scheme A, the Laboratory shall be approved for the specific tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Approved Laboratories, with the detail of the approved tests and methods are listed on the ARSO website.

A.5.2.3 Qualification of evaluators

Also for external verifications, two different kind of evaluators are identified:

A.5.2.3.1 Verifier for scope A

(a) **Task**

(i) Can only carry out the technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(ii) Can work in team with the Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) Post high school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 16hrs duration.

(vi) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

A.5.2.3.2 Auditor for scope A

(a) **Task**

(i) To carry out Audits of the QMS and on-farm post-harvest activity (ex: packing of crops, slaughtering of first processing of animals and fish, handling of Apiculture products)

(ii) To carry out the technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(iii) In an audit team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(vi) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vii) For QMS audits, the technical competence on production can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(viii) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as auditor on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

A.5.2.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed by 2 phases:

A.5.2.4.1 Documental review

This phase is applicable only for Certification scheme A2 and regards the desk audits of the QMS documentation

A.5.2.4.2 Initial audits

It represents the audits carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site. In case of scheme A2, this audits shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

A.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance Audits

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audits in one certification cycle.

A.5.2.6 Re-certification Audits

The re-certification audit is carried out before expiry of the certificate. It shall be done with ample time to carry out any post audit activities such as closure of NCs and making the certification decision before expiry of the certificate

A.5.2.7 Verification timing: Initial certification audits

The verification shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental audits:

(a) **Crops**

Cultivation cycle is completed and harvest is in place on the day of the audit.

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must be harvesting on the day of the audits.

Harvest can be evaluated on at least one crop representative of the following groups: fruit perennials, open field vegetables, green-house vegetables, multiple harvest crops.

If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be taking place on the day of the audit.

(b) **Livestock and fish**

Life/ production cycle is completed.

The final steps of production are completed (ex: slaughtering, milking, eggs picking, etc.)

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of the verification

Complete cycle can be evaluated on at least one specie representative of a similar group of species.

(c) **Apiculture**

Life/ production cycle is completed.

The final steps of production are completed and shall be evaluated

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of the verification

A.5.2.8 Sampling of farmers and production sites

In case of certification scheme A2, group of producers, a sample of the producers registered in the producers group will be verified. The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

A.5.2.8.1 Initial audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products included in the scope of certification and the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) All the products must be present on-site and at least half of the products must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of the verification.

(d) In case of small groups of producers, at least one sample for each product in the scope of certification must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Producer can be sampled for more than one product

A.5.2.8.2 Surveillance Audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for surveillance verification

(b) At least one of the products included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest or at end of cycle. If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) The products not in harvest or not present at the moment of the surveillance audit must be verified for compliance by evaluating evidences and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Producer can be sampled for more than one product.

A.5.2.8.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB Audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for first certification and re-certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products present on the day of the audits and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the products present on-site must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of the audits.

(d) In case of small groups of producers, at least one sample for each product on-site must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Producer can be sampled for more than one product.

A.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Producer, among the ARSO directory of recognized laboratories, according to criteria such as kind of testing required, location, etc.

A.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm compliance, are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated of the ARSO Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-farm, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, according to specific Standards requirements.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

(e) Some additional criteria shall be considered, where appropriate:

(i) Chemicals known to be used on the products during the production period (ex: pesticides, antibiotics. Medicine). Records of the treatment shall be kept (ex: spray records; veterinary logs, etc.)

(ii) Chemicals not directly used on the products but with a potential of cross contamination with the product (ex: spray drift, heavy metals from heavy traffic, pollution coming from industry,

(iii) Industrial or different neighbouring farming that may have an influence on the safety of products

A.7 Verification results and evaluation of conformance

The classification of findings raised during the verification and related management is explained in ACAP 1-1

With regard to scheme A, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation of conformance:

A.7.1 Major Non-Conformity

(a) For Initial (First certification) verification, all major NCs shall be closed with effective corrective actions before the certification decision can be made

(b) For Surveillance verifications, all major NCs shall be closed within 3 months of the last day of the audit.

For recertification verifications, all Major NCs shall be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

A.7.2 Minor Non-conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification.

It is allowed for the 20% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

The remaining 80% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time frame for the relevant certification scheme

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications

It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time frame for the relevant certification scheme

Annex B
(Normative

Scheme B: Processing and handling / packing of food and fresh produce

B.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information are required for Certification Scheme B.

B.1.1 Detail of certified production:

B.1.1.1 Production Site

(a) Name of production site

(b) Address of production site

(c) Area of production (m^2)

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(e) Number of employees

(f) Detailed description of products

(g) Detailed description of production processes

B.2 ACAP Certification Scheme B scopes of certification

B.2.1 Products

(a) Selected and packed fresh fruit and vegetables

(b) Selected and packed fresh animal products

(c) Processed food from different origin and composition.

In order to meet the requirements of the ACAP supply chain, the ACAP products in Scheme B shall be made with raw materials certified according to an ACAP certification scheme, with exception of scheme C, chain of custody, that is focused only on assuring the traceability of the certified products along the supply chain.

If it is not possible to use all raw materials coming from ACAP certification, at least one of the main ingredients shall be certified. The certified ingredients shall be clearly identified and indicated in the label of the product, in the list of the ingredients and claims shall be made about the Percentage of ACAP certified ingredient present in the product.

The use of the ACAP mark shall be authorized on case-by-case bases upon decision of the ARSO Secretariat.

B.2.2 Processes

B.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP certification scheme A requires that all the production cycle of the products is carried out on-site following the ACAP certification rules.

(b) In case of processes or part of processes are carried out by external sub-contractors, the Producer shall carry out a supplier on-site evaluation, using the ACAP certification scheme B check list for the requirements that are applicable to the processes subcontracted.

(c) In case the sub-contractor is already certified for ACAP scheme B, the evaluation is not required but copy of a valid certificate shall be available.

(d) In case of doubts, the CB has the right to carry out verification at the sub-contractor site, upon previous agreement and planning of the activity.

B.2.2.2 Sub-contractors and Process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes is under the responsibility of the certified producers. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ARS/AES Standards

(d) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.

B.3 ACAP Certification Scheme B specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme B") are specific for certification scheme B and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

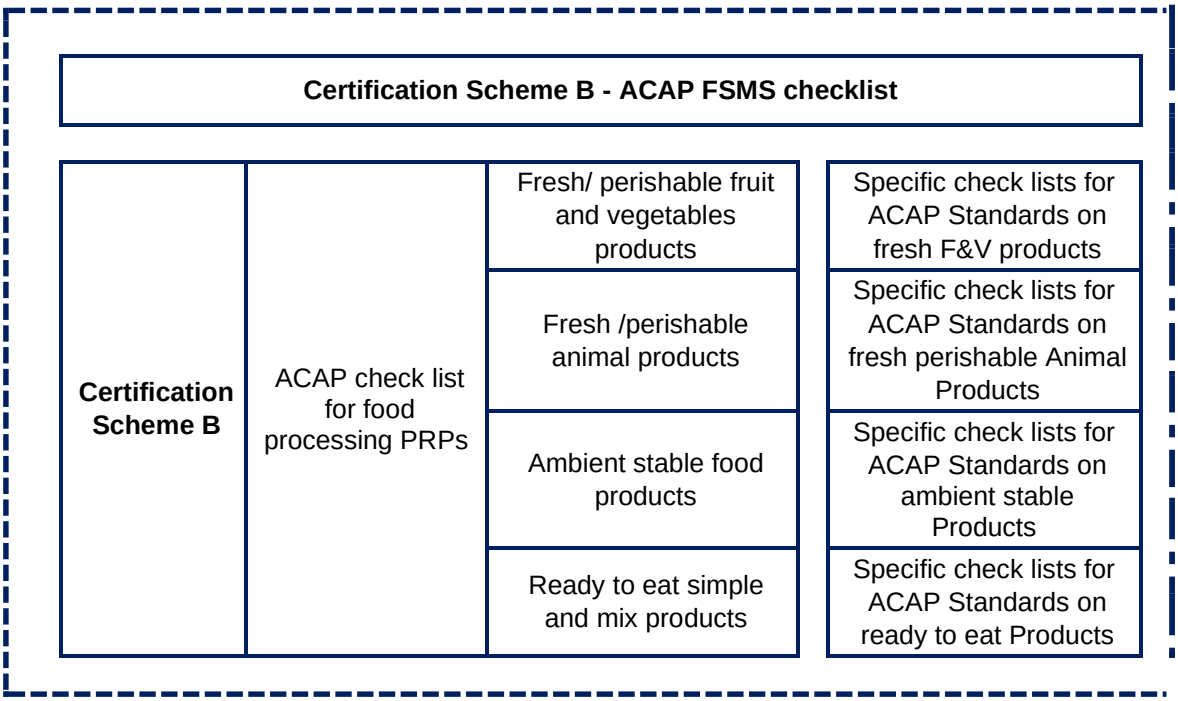
The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standards, technical normative documents to be certified within Scheme B

(b) ACAP check list for Food Safety Management System

(c) ACAP check lists for PRPs

(d) ACAP check lists elaborating the requirements in the African Standards included in Scheme B



B.4 Food safety management system for Scheme B

The FSMS designed for the ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of management of food safety.

The requirements, as well as the criteria for conformance, for the FSMS are described in the ACAP FSMS checklist for food processing.

B.5 Evaluation Process

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme B.

B.5.1 Self-evaluation and Internal Audit and verification

B.5.1.1 Internal audit and verification.

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme B

Internal Auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both verification of FSMS and for the technical verification of the food production on-site.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Post-high school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in food industry production. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified course in HACCP, food hygiene and good manufacturing practices.

B.5.2 Independent external verification

B.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme B, the certification body shall be approved for the Scope B. Approved CBs are listed on the ARSO website

B.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical verification of conformance for the ACAP Certification Scheme B, the Laboratory shall be approved for the specific tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Approved Laboratories, with the detail of the approved tests and methods are listed on the ARSO website.

B.5.2.3 Qualification of evaluators

Also for external verifications, two different kind of evaluators are identified:

Auditor for scope B

(a) **Task**: Can carry out Audits of the FSMS and technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be conformed to for qualification of the verifier:

(i) Post-high school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the Food Industry: demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in FSMS management. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(vi) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vii) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as auditor on a complete audit, witnessed by a qualified Auditor

B.5.2.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed of 2 phases namely:

(a) Documental review

This phase regards the desk verification of the FSMS documentation

(b) Initial Verification

It represents the verification carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site. This verification shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

B.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance Verification

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance verifications in one certification cycle.

B.5.2.6 Re-certification Verification

The re-certification verification is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

B.5.2.7 Verification timing: Initial certification verification

The verification shall be planned when the production process is in place at the moment of the verification and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental verification.

B.5.2.8 Sampling of sites

In case of a food factory with a multisite operation, each site will receive a complete verification and no sampling of sites is allowed.

B.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Producer among the ARSO recognized laboratory in accordance with the criteria, such as, kind of testing required, location, etc.

B.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm conformance, are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated of the ARSO Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-site, during verification or from the point of sales, according to rules of the different ACAP Standards.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

(e) Some additional criteria shall be considered, where appropriate:

- Additional legal parameters mandatory for the product in the country of production or export and not included in the ACAP standard.

B.7 Verification Results and evaluation of Conformance

The classification of findings rose during the verification and related management is explained in ACAP 1-1.

With regard to scheme B, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation ofconformance.

B.7.1 Major Non-Conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

B.7.2 Minor Non-conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: All the Minor NC rose during Initial audit to be closed within the given time, before release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex C
(Normative)

Scheme C: Traceability of AGAP certified products in the food supply chain

C.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information are required for Certification Scheme C

C.1.1 Detail of certified production

C.1.1.1 Production site

(a) Name of production site

(b) Address of production site

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Detailed description of ACAP products object of traceability

(e) Description of smallest traceable unit

C.2 ACAP Certification Scheme C scopes of certification

This ACAP certification scheme is applicable in all the steps in the supply chain where product is handled, stored, transported, packed, labelled that cannot be included in primary production, produce handling and food manufacturing but where a loss of identity or loss of traceability of the certified product is possible.

In order to meet the requirements of the ACAP supply chain, the materials certified according to an ACAP certification scheme shall be clearly identified and segregate and must be traceable from raw material to final products, including intermediate products and re-work. The scope is to assure the identification and traceability of the certified products along the supply chain.

If it is not possible to use all raw materials coming from ACAP certification, at least one of the main ingredients shall be identified for traceability.

The ingredients shall be clearly identified and indicated on the label of the certified product.

C.2.1 Processes

C.2.1.1 Traceability and segregation

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP certification scheme C requires that all the production cycle of the products is carried out and documented in a way that all ACAP certified products are traceable from incoming of raw materials to final products.

(b) The ACAP certified materials and products must be clearly identified and segregated from not certified products. Visual identification and documented traceability is guaranteed during all production cycle.

(c) In case of processes or part of processes are carried out by external sub-contractors, the subcontractor must be ACAP scheme C chain of custody, certified for the same product.

C.3 ACAP Certification Scheme C specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme C") are specific for certification scheme C and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process. The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Chain of Custody Standard, technical normative document to be certified within Scheme C.

(b) ACAP check lists that extrapolate the requirements in the ACAP scheme C Chain of Custody Standard

C.4 Food hygiene practices

The Chain of custody standard includes requirements on food hygiene good practices, to be verified together with the traceability system.

C.5 Assessment process

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification Scheme C.

C.5.1 Self-assessment and Internal Audit and verification

C.5.1.1 Internal audit and verification

It is required for ACAP Certification Scheme C

Internal Auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both verification of PRPs and for the verification of traceability system.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Documented qualified Course in HACCP, food hygiene and good manufacturing practices.

(ii) Demonstrated competence in GMP related to the specific industry including traceability system. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years.

C.5.2 Independent external verification

C.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme C, the certification body must be approved for the scope C. Approved CBs are listed on the ARSO website

C.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical verification of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme B, the

Laboratory shall be approved for the specific tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Approved Laboratories, with the detail of the approved tests and methods are listed on the ARSO website.

C.5.2.3 Qualification of evaluators

Also for external verifications, two different kind of evaluators are identified:

Auditor for Scope C

(a) **Task:** Can carry out Audits of the traceability system and on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to food hygiene and GMP related to the specific activity of the company.

(b) **Qualification:** The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) Post-High school degree.

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the Agricultural or Food Industry: demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as auditor on a complete audit, witnessed by a qualified Auditor

C.5.2.4 Initial Certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification.

C.5.2.5 Initial Verification

It represents the verification carried out by the CB for certification. It is carried out on-site.

C.5.2.6 Periodical Surveillance Verification

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance verifications in one certification cycle.

C.5.2.7 Re-certification Verification

The re-certification verification is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

C.5.2.8 Verification timing

The verification shall be planned when the production process is in place at the moment of the verification and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental verification.

C.5.2.9 Sampling of sites

In case of a food factory with a multisite operation, each site will receive a complete verification and no sampling of sites is allowed.

C.6 Verification Results and evaluation of Conformance

The classification of findings rose during the verification and related management is explained in ACAP 1-1

With regard to Scheme C, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation of conformance.

C.6.1 Major Non-Conform ity(NC)

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: All Major NCs shall be closed with effective corrective actions before certification is granted

(b) Surveillance and re-certification verifications: All Major NC shall be closed with effective corrective actions before certification is granted

C.6.2 Minor Non-conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: All the Minor NC raised during the Initial audit shall be closed within the given time, before certification is granted

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during these audits to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex D
(Normative)

Scheme D: Sustainability certification programme

The Standard included in Scheme D provide requirements for the sustainable production, processing and trading of products. The standard applies to all production, processing and trading within the operator's sphere of influence.

These standards are flexible enough to be useful for operators of various sizes, processes, systems, products and countries of operation. In adhering to this standard, the operator shall deal only with those elements that are relevant to the operator's activities. If certain specific sustainability aspects are considered not relevant to the process, the operator shall justify how its operations do not contribute to the impact of the aspects concerned.

Local circumstances shall be considered when assessing the environmental, social or economic situation.

D.1 ACAP AES Certification Scheme D-Specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme D") are specific for certification scheme D and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP AES certification process.

African Standards suitable for ACAP AES certification include the following:

ARS/AES 1, *Agriculture — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 2, *Fisheries — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 3, *Forestry — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 4, *Tourism — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 5, *Aquaculture — African Catfish — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 6, *Aquaculture — Tilapia — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS 952, *African Traditional Medicine — Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*

ARS 1100, *Production and handling of food crops — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1101, *Production and handling of maize (corn) grains — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1102, *Production and handling of rice — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1103, *Production and handling of cassava — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1104, *Dairy production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1105, *Poultry production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1106, *Tilapia production aquaculture farms — Good aquacultural practices*

ARS 1107, *Freshwater aquatic animal production farms — Good aquaculture practices*

ARS 1108, *Beef cattle production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1109, *Production and handling of fruits and vegetables — Good agricultural practices*

D.2 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information is required for Certification Schemes D1 and D2.

D.2.1 Detail of certified production

This information gives more detail on the product(s) to be certified. This information must be updated if there are any changes detected during the external inspections.

D.2.1.1 Crops

(a) Name of crops (species)

(b) Area of production (ha)

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(e) On-farm postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

D.2.1.1.1 Additional information for farmers registered in groups of farmers

The same information is required for each farmer included in the group

D.2.1.2 Livestock/ Aquaculture

(a) Name of species and breed

(b) Kind of production (example: livestock: milk, meat, eggs, etc. ex. Aquaculture: adult fish, ova, seedlings, etc.)

(c) Number of individuals (estimated where appropriate)

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

D.2.1.2.1 Additional information for aqua farmers registered in groups of farmers

The same information is required for each aqua farmer included in the group

D.2.1.3 Capture fishery (wild catch)

(a) Name of fishery

(b) Name of target species

(c) Fishery type

(d) Bycatch type

(e) Location and extent of fishery

(f) methods used for the fishery operations

D.2.1.4 Forestry

(a) Name of production/ activity carried out in the forest

(b) extension of the area

(c) Identification of production sites

(d) Additional information as specified in the application form

D.2.1.5 Tourism

(a) Kind of activity/ service

(b) Details of location

(c) Additional information as specified in the application form

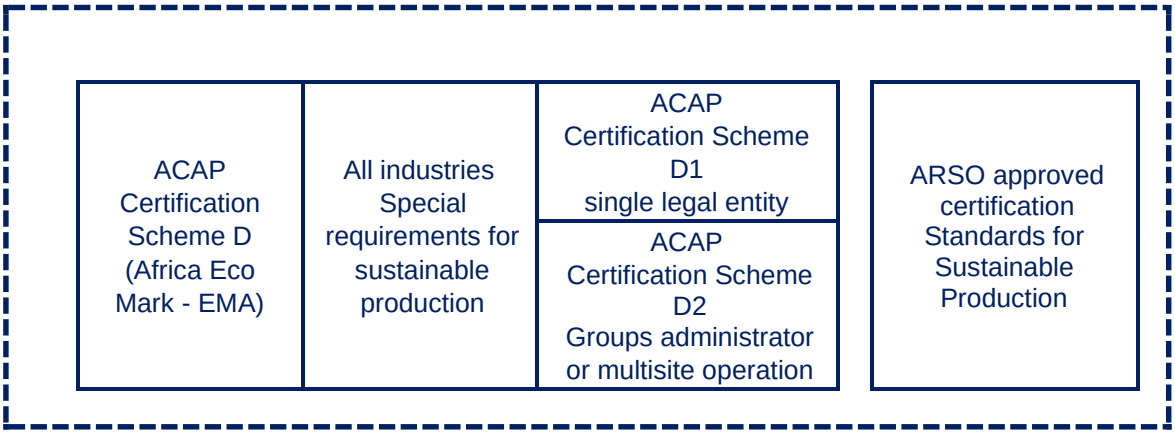
D.2.1.6 Other industries

(a) Name of products/services produces

(b) Production processes

(c) Identification of production sites

D.3 ACAP AEM Certification Scheme D scopes of certification



D.3.1 Products

Products included in the scheme D may come from primary production of other food related activity and, according to the nature of the activity can have different kind pf productions:

(a) Vegetable Crops productions (ex: fruit, vegetables, herbs, roots, plants for medical use, flowers, etc.)

(b) Livestock production coming from different animal species (ex: meat, milk, wool, eggs)

(c) Aquaculture production coming from different aquaculture species (ex: fish for consumption, brood stock for reproduction, ova and seedlings for reproduction, ova for consumption, etc.)

(d) Fishery (wild catch).

(e) Food and food related products and services

(f) Forest products

(g) Tourism

The nature and number of products certifiable in the ACAP AES scheme depend of the availability of specific standards for certification, designed and approved by ARSO CACO. The certification scope may have different focus for different products, according to the scope and focus of the Standard of reference.

D.3.2 Processes

D.3.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP AES certification Scheme D requires that all the life/production cycle of the products is carried out on-site following the certification rules.

(b) Exceptions can be clarified in the specific Standards for certification, also according to the phase of certification (initial, surveillance or re-certification) and to the duration of life/ production cycle of the plant of animal.

(c) All production processes carried out during the cycle of certification shall be carried out in agreement with the ACAP Eco-Mark applicable certification rules, for the selected Standard.

(d) For fishery, the entire fishing cycle shall be carried out according to ACAP 3.

(e) For Food and Food related products and services, all products in the scope of certification must be carried out under the responsibility of the producer.

D.3.2.2 Harvesting process

(a) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of vegetal or animal products (including forestry products) is carried out by the same Producer, the harvesting process shall be included in the scope of certification

(b) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of vegetal and animal products is carried out under the responsibility of the buyer of the product (the producer does not own the product), the harvesting process shall be excluded from the scope of certification

(c) In case of exclusion of harvest, in order to be able to use the ACAP AES along the supply chain, the buyer of the product shall be ACAP Certified according to one of the ACAP AES certification schemes applicable for the product.

Example: the buyer is a food manufacturer that buys apples to make apple juice. In this case, he/she shall be certified according to the ACAP AES Certification Scheme D.

D.3.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same producer. (ex: storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing, bleeding, degutting, slicing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature.

(b) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(c) Produce handling shall always be included as long as the product belongs to the producer during handling (by the producer or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

D.3.2.4 Processes related to tourism services

(a) All activities/ services that are under the legal responsibility of the same legal entity for a specified site or multisite operation

(b) All activities carried out by the same legal entity for the same site or multisite shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(c) All activities/ services carried out on the same site or multisite shall always be included in the scope of certification (by the legal entity or subcontractor), in order to receive a licence for the EMA label.

D.3.2.5 Sub-contractors and process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes/ services is under the responsibility of the certified legal entity. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ARS/AES.

(b) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.

D.4 Conditions for certification

D.4.1 General conditions

(a) Audits are based on an evaluation of conformity with the ARS/AES Standard applicable for the scope.

(b) For the purpose of these rules, two organization types are recognized: single legal entities and group administrators.

(c) Organizations that cultivate or process products/ carry out operations considered illegal by applicable law in the country where they are grown or processed/ operated or by international agreements and conventions shall not be eligible for certification.

(d) Conditions specific for different ARS/AES Standards are specified in each Standard's regulatory documentation.

D.4.2 Single Legal Entity (Operation)

In this model, one certificate is granted to one single Legal Entity (ex: farmer, producer processor, operator).

The whole area and activities within the operation's limits and under the responsibility of the legal entity are covered by the audit scope. This includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Areas destined for agricultural and livestock production, aquaculture, forestry, processing and tourism operation, with focus on products/ services intended to be sold with certification claims.

(b) High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, forests and other natural ecosystems, as well as fallow land.

(c) Areas involving human activity and other infrastructure within its limits that include but are not restricted to administrative infrastructure, collection points, processing and packing units and storage facilities.

(d) Leased areas inside the operation.

(e) Personnel, including all contracted and subcontracted workers, supervisory and administrative staff, and management and owner representatives.

(f) People who live temporarily or permanently on the operation's site.

(g) All documentation relating to social, agronomic and environmental management and considered relevant to determining conformance with the Standard.

(h) Documentation related to trading of the certified and non-certified product handled by the farm.

Infrastructure owned or leased outside the Operation's limits but which is directly related to activities included in the audit scope. This may include, but is not limited to administrative infrastructure, collection points, processing and packing units and storage facilities.

Impacts on the surrounding communities that may be directly affected by the farm's activities.

D.4.3 Group administrators

In this model, one certificate is granted to an organization, called the 'Group Administrator', who acts on behalf of a group of Producers (Farmers, processors, tour operators) and is responsible for their conformance with the applicable ARS/AES Standard. The Group Administrator is responsible for implementing an Internal Management System (IMS), including but not limited to coordinating the commercialization of product, training and technical assistance for staff and group members, as well as internal audits and the corresponding follow-up actions.

Group administrators fit three basic models:

(i) multi-site, where a single legal entity owns or holds more than one discrete farm/ production operation or site with separate production management system, but under one IMS of the group administrator;

(ii) groups that have a democratic structure, such as cooperatives, associations and federations;

(iii) private entities, such as plantations with associated product suppliers, exporters or a consultant's office.

The audit scope of a group administrator includes the following:

(a) Infrastructure owned or administered by the group administrator, related to the production activity in the scope. This includes but is not limited to roads, housing, administration, collection, storage, processing and packing infrastructure, as well as their surroundings.

(b) Group Members subject to the group's audit scope.

(c) All personnel hired or subcontracted by the group administrator.

(d) All documentation relating to the IMS: Documentation related to trading of the certified and noncertified product handled by the group administrator.

D.4.4 Rules for group administrators

(a) The minimum number of member farms of a group administrator is two member farms/ operations.

(b) The group administrator is responsible for trading and commercializing the products covered in the scope of the certificate, unless it decides to delegate the responsibility to third parties.

(c) If a member of the group wishes to sell certified product individually, it shall have a written agreement with the group administrator. Records of each individual transaction, indicating the volume of certified product sold individually by members shall be made available.

(d) The group administrator is responsible for ensuring that all member farms comply with the respective requirements of the relevant ARS/AES Standard.

D.5 Quality management system for Scheme D2

The QMS designed for the ACAP AES certification schemes contain elements specific for the scope of the ACAP AES certification.

(a) The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the QMS are described in the ACAP AES QMS checklist for group administrators.

D.6 Evaluation process

D.6.1 ACAP AES Certification

Organizations wishing to achieve certification or certified organizations that are due a re-certification audit shall apply to an accredited CB.

At initial certification and every three years from then, the organization shall be subject to a certification audit. The CB will issue a certificate to the audited organization once the requirements of this standard are conformed to.

In addition to ACAP 1-1:2017, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification schemes D1 and D2.

D.6.2 Self-assessment and Internal Audit and verification

D.6.2.1 Self-assessment

It is required for ACAP certification schemes D1. It is based on the requirements of the specific standard’s checklists.

During self-evaluation, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of the evaluator.

D.6.2.2 Internal audit and verification.

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme D2.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-verification of the QMS and verification of the activity on site, according to the specific ACAP Standard.

(a) **Internal Auditor:** The internal auditor is qualified for both verification of QMS of a group of Producers and for the technical verification of the farm on-site. The following requirements shall be met for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Post-High school diploma, including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science, or equivalent)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the productions in scope of certification and sustainability according to principles included in ARS/AES Standard implemented by study or practical experience.

(b) **Internal verifier.** Can carry out only the internal on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production. Can work in team with the internal Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(i) High school diploma including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (ex: crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science or equivalent)

(ii) Demonstrated competence in the productions in scope of certification and sustainability according to principles included in ARS/AES Standard implemented by study or practical experience.

(iii) 1 verification as observer and 1 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

D.6.3 Independent external verification

D.6.3.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme D, the certification Body must be approved for the scope D1 for single Producers certification or the all scope D for single and groups of producers. Approved CBs are listed on the ARSO website

D.6.3.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical verification of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme D, the Laboratory shall be approved for the specific tests and methodologies required by the specific standards to be certified. Approved Laboratories, with the detail of the approved tests and methods are listed on the ARSO website.

D.6.3.3 Qualification of evaluators

Also for external verifications, two different kind of evaluators are identified:

D.6.3.3.1 Verifier for Scope D

(a) **Task**

(i) Can carry out only the technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(ii) Can work in team with the Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be met for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science, environmental science or equivalent degree)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated technical competence in the production in scope of the audit. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years working in the Industry

(iv) Demonstrated competence in social and environmental management according to principles included in the different ARS/AES Standards. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural of food hygiene practices, according to scope, of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

D.6.3.3.2 Auditor for scope D

(c) **Task**

(i) Can carry out Audits of the QMS and on-farm post-harvest activity (ex: packing of crops, slaughtering of first processing of animals and fish, food processing)

(ii) Can carry out the technical on-site verification of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(iii) In team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(d) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be met for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food, environment, other.)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated technical competence in the production in scope of the audit. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years working in the Industry

(iv) Demonstrated competence in social and environmental management according to principles included in the different ARS/AES Standards. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) For QMS audits, the technical competence on production can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(vii) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as auditor on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

D.6.3.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed of 2 phases:

D.6.3.4.1 Documental review

This phase is applicable only for Initial Certification for scheme D2 and regards the desk verification of the QMS documentation

D.6.3.4.2 Initial certification audit

(i) It represents the verification carried out by the CB for final certification. In case of Initial Certification Audit for scheme D2, this audit shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

(ii) A certification audit is carried out when the organization applies for certification for the first time, to establish the level of conformity of the organization with all applicable criteria.

(iii) It shall always take place on site, during a period of activity when workers, crop plants and/or cattle are present and processes are in place.

(iv) On the application, the organization may voluntarily request to be audited against the criteria of a higher performance level.

D.6.3.5 Periodical Surveillance Audit

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance verifications in one certification cycle.

(a) The objectives of the surveillance audits are:

(i) To ensure the certified organization complies with all applicable critical criteria;

(ii) To determine whether the organization has implemented the improvement actions for continual improvement criteria.

(b) Surveillance audits can be planned within 6 months from the date of certification audit (4 months before and 2 months after).

(c) According to CB risk assessment and decision, single Operators and group administrators, surveillance audits may be planned or short-noticed at any time. The CB may inform the certified organization about unannounced or short-noticed surveillance audits with no more than two working days in advance, with the exception of group administrators of smallholder members, for which up to five working days in advance apply.

(d) During surveillance audits to group administrators, the sample of member farms will be selected during the opening meeting. In case of groups located in distant areas or different Regions, the selected area or Region can be communicated within 5 working days from the audit.

(e) Organizations considered as ‘high performers’ will be allowed to undertake maximum one desk surveillance audit per 3 years’ cycle, instead of one on-site surveillance audit.

D.6.3.6 Re-certification Verification

The re-certification verification is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification and follows the same rules as Initial certification audit.

D.6.3.7 Verification (Follow Up) audit

Before the final audit report is issued and only in the case of nonconformities an audited organization may demonstrate compliance with open nonconformities up to 30 days after the closing meeting of any audit. In case of Initial Certification Audit, corrective actions can be completed up to 90 days. The CB may charge for additional costs of this process.

The objectives of a verification audit are:

(a) To control whether open nonconformities that prevented a positive certification decision are addressed, closed, and verified for efficacy, to allow the certificate to be issued or maintained

(b) To determine whether the organization has reached the minimum performance level and the certificate may be issued or maintained.

(c) If during a verification audit, an audited organization does not comply, the certificate is not issued or suspended. This audited organization may not be subject to additional verification audits for the next six months and a complete new audit of the same level of the failed audit (surveillance or re-certification) is needed to re-activate the certificate.

(d) Organizations with nonconformities on any of the zero-tolerance criteria are not eligible for a verification audit. The certificate is not issued, suspended or is cancelled. This audited organization may not be subject to additional verification audits for the next twelve months. A new complete Certification process must be started (document review and Initial audit)

(e) A verification audit may take place remotely, when it is possible to evaluate the improvement actions through documents or remote interviews with farm management or group administrator representatives.

D.6.3.8 Special audit

Special audits are carried out in response to a complaint, reported incident, or substantial information regarding the performance of a certified organization relating to one or more critical criteria of a ACAP AEM Standard.

A special audit may be carried out at any time, when the CB determines there is sufficient evidence of a potential nonconformity. The certified organization may be subject to a desk audit only if it is possible to demonstrate conformity through documents.

Special audits are unannounced. However, the certified organization may be given advanced warning (no more than two working days), when doing so can avoid significant logistical obstacles and the issue at hand cannot be influenced by an advanced warning.

The CB bears the cost of investigation audits. However, should the complaint, reported incident, or substantial information be confirmed, the cost of these audits may be charged to the certified organization.

D.6.3.9 Scope expansion audit

The objective of a scope expansion audit is to assess conformance with certification rules for new areas, activities or member farms that a certified organization wishes to add to its scope before a recertification or surveillance audit.

All applicable criteria of the ARS/AES standard relevant for the certification are evaluated for the new areas or for a sample of new member farms (in the case of group administrators), as well as for new crops or cattle species.

D.6.4 Verification timing

D.6.4.1 Timing for initial certification verification

The verification shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental verification. All the products must be present on-site and at least one product representing a “family” of similar products must be in harvest (end of production cycle, process in place.) at the moment of verification.

(a) **Crops**

(i) Cultivation cycle is completed and harvest is in place the day of verification.

(ii) In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must be harvesting on the day of the verification.

(iii) Harvest can be evaluated on at least one crop representative of the following groups: fruit perennials, open field vegetables, green-house vegetables, multiple harvest crops.

(iv) If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be in place the day of verification.

(b) **Livestock and aquaculture**

(i) Life/ production cycle is completed.

(ii) The final steps of production are completed (ex: slaughtering, milking, eggs picking, etc.)

(iii) In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of the verification

(iv) Complete cycle can be evaluated on at least one specie representative of a similar group of species.

(c) **Fishery**

Wild catch and post-harvest activity (if applicable) must be in place the day of audit

(d) **Food production**

At least one production cycle representative of product families and technology must be operating the day of the audit.

D.6.4.2 Timing for Periodical Surveillance Audits

In the case Agriculture scopes, if single farms operators or group administrators are cultivating seasonal crops, at least one surveillance audit shall take place during the harvest season.

For all other scopes, at least one production/service process must be in place the day of the audit

Where needed, more details may be found in the intro of the specific ARS/AES Standards.

D.6.5 Sampling of farmers and/or production sites

In case of certification scheme D2, group of producers, a sample of the producers/ production sites registered in a producers group/ multisite operation will be verified.

The D2 scheme is not applicable to Food Processing. In case of multisite food companies, all production sites must be audited to be included in the certificate.

The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

D.6.5.1 Sampling for Initial Verification:

(a) The square root (SQR) of the total number of farmers/ production sites, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products “families”/ processes included in the scope of certification and the number of samples for each product/ process must be equally balanced.

(c) In case of small groups of producers/ production sites, at least one sample for each product/ process in the scope of certification must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(d) The same producer/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.6.5.2 Sampling for surveillance verification

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers/ production sites multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for surveillance verification

(b) At least one of the products/ processes included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest (end of cycle, process in place). If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) The products/ processes not in harvest or not present at the moment of the surveillance audit must be verified for conformance by evaluating evidences and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Producer/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.6.5.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB Verification:

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers/ production sites, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for re-certification or transfer from a different Certification Body.

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products/ processes present the day of the verification and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the products present on-site must be in harvest (end of cycle, process in place) at the moment of the verification.

(d) In case of small groups of producers/ production sites, at least one sample for each product/ process on-site must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Producer/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.7 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Producer, among the ARSO recognized laboratory list, according to criteria such as kind of testing required, location, etc.

D.7.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm conformance, are specific for the different ARS/AES Standards and are related to product-specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated in the ARS/AES Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-site, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, according to specific Standards requirements.

(d) The list of the parameters and contaminants to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

D.8 Verification results and evaluation of compliance

D.8.1 Continual improvement criteria

ARS/AES Standards contain continual improvement that requires certified legal entities (ex: farmers, processors, tourism operators) to gradually increase their conformance over four performance levels.

The specific binding level requirements (**Tiers**) will not change under any condition, including suspension or cancellation of a certificate, modification of scope or the change of a CB.

D.8.2 The Maturity Model of ACAP AES certification scheme

The Performance Tiers provide a framework for producers (Producers, processors, tourism operators, etc.) to improve their conformance levels in line with the continual improvement principles. These tiers provide opportunities for producers to invest gradually as well as for small-scale producers to engage in the certification process at affordable rates.

D.8.3 Management plan

The management plan, in this respect called the **Producer Sustainability Plan (PSP)** is an organizational tool for determining baseline performance levels, identifying a roadmap for continual improvement, and for achieving and documenting improvements in the environmental, social, and economic performance of the operation. The contents of the management plan:

(a) Organized according to environmental, social, and economic factors.

(b) Describes the operation's land, resources, and current practices, including baseline information on the status of Indicators relevant for the ARS/AES Standard to be applied.

(c) Identifies critical criteria and indicators the producer must monitor to maintain or improve performance.

(d) Records goals for meeting criteria and improving performance.

(e) Documents strategies implemented, results observed, and outcomes achieved.

(f) Identifies any unexpected outcomes or problems, as well as plans for mitigating or improving outcomes for the next cycle.

D.8.4 Classification of findings

Regarding scheme D, the criteria are applied for the final evaluation of conformance are the following:

(a) Critical Non-Conformity. This is a non-conformity raised against a Required Indicator of a Critical Criteria.

(b) The classification of other findings raised during the verification and related management is explained in ACAP 1-1

D.8.5 Critical criteria

Critical criteria cover the highest-priority and highest-risk on environmental, social and labour issues. Single Producers and group administrators are required to conform with all applicable critical criteria at all times as a condition to grant or maintain certification.

Zero-tolerance critical criteria. Failing to comply with any of the Required Indicators related to the following zero-tolerance criteria results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate:

(a) No destruction of High Conservation Value areas

(b) No forced labour

(c) No mistreatment of workers

(d) No sexual harassment

(e) No discrimination

(f) No worst forms of child labour

Critical criteria are identified with "**C**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

D.8.6 Level of performance indicators

There are three categories of Indicators to be addressed and complied to achieve and maintain certification against one or more ARS/AES Standards:

(a) **Required Indicators.** These indicators are critical for conformance and achievement of the certificate and include indicators that are linked to Critical criteria. Conformance to 100% of these indicators is required to complete (or maintain) the certification cycle. Required indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Required Indicators are identified with "**R**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

(i) Non-Conformities raised against a Required indicator linked to a Critical Criteria must be scored as Critical non-conformities and cannot be closed with a Follow Up audit and results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate. It will not be possible to receive a new audit before six months. New audit must be carried out by the same

(ii) Non-Conformities raised against a Required indicator linked to other criteria must be scored as Major non-conformity and must be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for initial certification). Failure to complete effective corrective actions within the given timeframe will results in the denial or the suspension of the certificate until satisfactory corrective actions are completed.

(b) **General Indicators.** These indicators are considered fundamental for compliance and achievement of the certificate. Conformance to minimum 80% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (o maintain) the certification cycle. General indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. General Indicators are identified with "**G**" in the different ARS/AES Standards

Non- conformities raised against a General Indicator may be scored as Major or Minor nonconformity, or Observation, according to categorization given in ARS/AES 1.

(i) Minor Non-Conformities must be closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 80% of compliance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 20% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions assessed during the next following audit. If at the end of the following audit some Minor non-conformities are not closed with corrective actions, these will be added to the new Minor non-conformities raised during the audit.

(ii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement

(c) **Optional Indicators.** These indicators are considered for continual improvement. Conformance to minimum 20% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (o maintain) the certification cycle. Optional indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Optional Indicators are identified with "**O**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

Non- conformities raised against an Optional Indicator may be scored as Minor non-conformity, or Observation, according to categorization given in ARS/AES 1.

(i) Minor Non-Conformities shall be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 20% of conformance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 80% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions must be completed before the next re-certification audit. If at the end of a following audit some Minor non-conformities are not closed with corrective actions, these will be added to the new Minor non-conformities raised during the audit.

(ii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement

Indicator	Compliance to Tier	Critical NC	Major NC	Minor NC	Observation
Required from Critical Criteria	100% the day of audit	Yes No corrective actions allowed Certificate cancelled Time for new audit >6 months	NO	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement
Required from other Criteria	100% with follow up	NO	Yes Corrective actions allowed within 28 days FU audit required	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement

General From all criteria	80% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 80% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 20% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement
Optional From all criteria	20% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 20% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 80% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement

D.8.7 Levels of performance (Tiers)

For the achievement of certification, there are four levels of performance, which are elaborated hereafter.

D.8.7.1 Bronze Tier

Minimum Entry Level: The Producer (Producer, processor, tourism operator, etc.…) commits to engage in the process and develops a Producer Sustainability Plan (PSP) that identifies sustainability goals and strategies for achieving them.

In addition, 100% of Required indicators, at least 80% of General indicators and at least 20% of the Optional indicators required for the Bronze tier, must be complied with.

This certification is valid for a period of up to three years, subject to confirmation through annual surveillance verification. Re-certification at the entry level is possible for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

D.8.7.2 Silver Tier

The Producer (Producer, processor, tourism operators, etc.) demonstrates considerable progress in sustainability performance.

Indicators required for the Silver tier are additional to the one required for bronze tier. 100% of Required indicators, at least 80% of General and at least 20% of the Optional indicators for Silver Tier must be complied with.

Silver tier achievement can be claimed if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

D.8.7.3 Gold Tier

The Producer (Producer, processor, tourism operators, etc.…) demonstrates very substantial sustainability performance.

Indicators required for Gold Tier are additional to the one required for Silver Tier. 100% of Required indicators, and at least 80% of General Indicators for Gold Tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must be complied with.

Gold tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

D.8.7.4 Platinum Tier

The Producer (Producer, processor, tourism operators, etc.) demonstrates an outstanding level of sustainability performance.

Indicators required for Platinum Tier are additional to the one required for Gold Tier.

100% Required indicators and at least 80% of General indicators required for the platinum tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must complied with.

Platinum tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely as long as performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

Tier	Required Indicators	General Indicators	Optional indicators
Bronze	100%	80%	20%
Silver	100%	80%	20%
Gold	100%	80%	20%
Platinum	100%	80%	20%

D.8.8 Additional performance criteria and rules

(a) Possible new non-conformities against new criteria detected during surveillance audits or verification audits will be added to the original balance of Minor non-conformances still open from the previous audit/s.

(b) In the case of group administrators with smallholder members, performance criteria is applied to each single sample.

(c) A maximum of 20% of the audited sample of smallholders may fail on reaching 80% of General Indicators and 20% of Optional Indicators at Follow under the condition that these remaining Minor nonconformities are corrected no more than 12 months after the preceding audit.

D.9 The ACAP AES certificate

D.9.1 Validity of the certificate

The certificate has a 36 months' validity, starting with the date of issue.

The expiry date of the certificate is fixed, but the validity of the certificate may be extended in the following cases, without modification to the original certificate issue date:

(a) Up to a maximum of six months in the event of a force majeure condition.

(b) Up to a maximum of three months, with a justified technical motivation (example: seasonal productions or processes)

D.9.2 Maintaining the certificate

To maintain its certified status, the certified organization shall conform to the certification requirements and successfully go through two surveillance audits and a recertification audit prior to the expiry of the certificate.

The first surveillance audit shall take place within 12 months of the certification decision date and the subsequent surveillance shall be done once annually. The recertification audit shall be done before expiry of the certificate with ample time to undertake the post audit activities (eg clearance of NCs, recertification decision, issuance of new certificate) before expiry of the current one. Where a certificate expires before recertification decision has been made, the Certification Body can allow the organization to go through recertification process if the recertification audit is done within one month after the expiring date of the certificate. In such a case, an extension to the validity of the certificate up to 3 months can be granted. The organization shall attain recertification status within the 3 months, failure of which they shall be required apply as a new client.

A certified organization may be subject to special audits at any time. Special audits shall be audits done to expand scope of certification or short notice audits(done to investigate complaints, respond to changes or follow up on suspended clients)

D.9.3 Modifying the scope of the certificate

(a) The certified organization may request to change the certificate scope at any time to increase or reduce the productive area, or increase or reduce the number or composition of member farms.

(b) Certified organizations requesting to include new crop activities or new livestock species within the scope of a certificate shall be subject to a scope expansion audit.

(c) A certified organization may increase its production area or its number of member farms by up to 10%, or add up to 10% of new member farms, without being subject to a scope extension audit, certification audit or surveillance audit. If the increase in area or number of member farms exceeds 10%, or if the group has more than 10% of new member farms, then the certified organization shall be subject to a scope extension audit.

(d) The certified organization may decide to increase its scope through a certification audit or surveillance audit. If this is the case, additional time is added to the audit, if required.

(e) Modifications to the scope of the certificate will not change the expiry date of the certificate or the organization’s baseline year.

D.10 Compensation for announced minor destruction of natural ecosystems

When destruction of natural ecosystems - but never for High Conservation Value areas - up to 1% of the total certified land area is planned by a certified farm manager or group administrator, it will not be a cause for certificate cancellation provided that the responsible CB was informed beforehand and authorized this minor destruction under the following conditions:

(a) Destruction of natural ecosystems will take place only for the reason of installing new farm infrastructure or repairing previously existing farm infrastructure (roads, irrigation infrastructure, including pumping facilities, channels, ponds, reservoirs, dams, and impoundments), permanently installed machinery, and facilities for washing, processing, or packing) or for smallholder farms for the purpose of planting food crops;

(b) Applicable law is complied with.

D.10.1 Reinstatement of the certificate

To reinstate a certificate that was cancelled, the organization shall submit an application for a new certification.

D.10.2 Compensation for unannounced minor destruction of natural ecosystems

Minor destruction of natural ecosystems - but never for High Conservation Value areas - that have inadvertently been conducted by a certified organization or member farm of a certified group administrator or certified group administrator is permitted only under the following conditions:

(a) The destruction event is the first one during the organization's certification history;

(b) The converted area is located outside of High Conservation Value areas, protected areas, or land that is illegal to convert;

(c) A plan with objectives, quantitative targets and parameters, time-bound management actions, resources and responsible personnel for the required restoration is prepared by an ecological restoration specialist and submitted for approval within three months of the date of destruction, including the following requirements:

  (i) The destruction is mitigated through restoration in the or close to the converted area or by setting-aside for conservation at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas;

  (ii) The converted natural ecosystem area is taken out of agricultural production and designated with the aim to restore the area to its former natural condition;

  (iii) On larger farms, destruction of natural ecosystems of up to 2% of the farm area or 50 hectares (whichever is less) is only permitted if such destruction is compensated by at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas, as specified in a time-bound plan prepared by a qualified professional;

  (iv) Destruction of up to 10% of the farm area or 1 hectare (whichever is less) is permitted without the need for compensation. In the case of smallholder groups, these thresholds apply at the level of each member farm.

D.10.3 Child labour remediation

Farms shall provide evidence of remedial actions for child labourers and his or her family following their removal from farm employment:

(a) Timely access to medical services;

(b) Timely access to psychological and rehabilitative services, as indicated by the child's condition;

(c) Facilitation of the child's entrance and integration into local school until the legally permitted school-leaving age; and

Hiring of the child's immediate or extended family member, if available. If no such family member is available for hiring, the farm management or group administrator pays the child's family a wage support no less than the removed child's wages until the child reaches the legal school-leaving age or age 15, whichever is higher.

Annex E
(Normative)

Scheme E: Sustainable harvesting of wild botanical species for African traditional medicine

This standard covers certification of produce of medicinal plants both from Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Collection Practices (GCP) in the wild. Producers/collectors can achieve certification under any one of the two options described in this document.

The cultivation of medicinal plants is included in the ACAP certification scheme A and both A1 and A2 schemes are applicable.

The purpose of this standard is to ensure an objective assessment and certification of the medicinal plant collected in the wild and promote uniformity in its operation for the collector seeking certification.

(1) ARS 950, *African Traditional Medicine — Terms and terminology*

(2) ARS 951, *African Traditional Medicine — Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

(3) ARS 952, *African Traditional Medicine — Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*

(4) ARS 953, *African Traditional Medicine — Certification schemes for medicinal plant produce*

(5) ARS 954, *Minimum requirements for registration of traditional medicines*

(6) ARS 955, *African Traditional Medicine — Technical guidelines for safety, efficacy and quality of raw materials and herbal medicines*

(7) ARS 956-1, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards —Aloe vera* L. Burm.f.

(8) ARS 956-2, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards — Ambrosia maritima* L.

(9) ARS 956-3, *African Traditional Medicine —- Medicinal plant standards — Urtica dioica* L.

(10) ARS 956-4, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards — Calotropis procera* (Ait) R. Br.

E.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information is required for Certification Scheme E.

E.1.1 Detail of certified production

E.1.1.1 Wild crops

(a) Name of wild species to be collected

(b) Expected quantity collected (tons)

(c) Identification of area for collection (map of area)

(d) Postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) Legal authorization for collection of wild species

E.1.1.2 Additional information for groups of collectors

(a) Name of wild species collected by each collector

(b) Area of collection of each collector (map of area)

(c) Expected quantity collected by each collector

E.2 ACAP Certification Scheme E scopes of certification

E.2.1 Wild species

Products included in the Scheme E come from wild botanical species and are collected from the wild.

(a) Wild harvest of the identified species in a specified quantity and from a specified area must be carried out according to Legislation and evidence must be provided as a first step of the certification process.

(b) A clear identification of the species and tools for visual identification shall be prepared and evidence of approval by a qualified entity or expert must be available

(c) Evidence of qualification of the collectors must be available, as well as a program for training.

E.2.2 Processes

E.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP certification scheme E requires a different preparation, based on very sensitive sustainability rules based on conservation of wild species and use of correct harvesting techniques variable within different Species.

(b) The preliminary preparation of guidelines and instructions specific for each wild Specie harvested is required in order to avoid inappropriate actions that may lead to damage of the wild biodiversity or damage to the final users (consumers). Guidelines must be approved by a qualified entity or qualified expert.

(c) Demonstration of qualification of the personnel involved in collection and selection of the wild crops is required. A program for continual qualification improvement and update shall be provided.

(d) The production cycle is the growing cycle of the plant in the wild, in the different environmental and climate conditions.

E.2.2.2 Harvesting process

(a) Harvest is the core of the process to be certified. For this reason, it cannot be excluded

(b) If harvest is subcontracted, the subcontractor must follow the same rules of qualification as the collectors of the certified company and will be audited for certification.

E.2.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling.

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same producer. (ex: storage, drying, trimming, washing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature).

(b) Medicinal plants processing is not considered a post-harvest activity and, where applicable, it is covered under Certification Scheme B.

(c) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(d) Produce handling shall always be included if the product belongs to the producer during handling (by the producer or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

E.2.2.4 Sub-contractors and process outsourcing

(a) For ACAP Certification Scheme E, sub-contractors of harvest and produce handling are considered at the same level as part of the Company and must comply with the same Standard Rules.

(b) Sub-contractors for harvesting shall be audited for certification.

(c) Sub-contractors for produce handling shall be audited for certification. Exception is dome if the sub-contractor is already ACAP certified for Scheme E.

(d) Any other sub-contractor will be under the responsibility and control of the certified Producer. On a case-by-case base, the Certification Body has the right to audit any other sub-contractor, within the scope of the Standard's requirements covered by the sub-contractor.

E.3 ACAP Certification Scheme E Specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme E") are specific for certification scheme E and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standard, technical normative document to be certified within Scheme E: Traditional African Medicine Standard.

(b) ACAP check list for assessment for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce

(c) ACAP QMS check list for group or collectors operating for the same legal entity

E.4 Quality management system for Scheme E

The QMS designed for the ARSO ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of the ACAP certification.

(a) The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the QMS are described in the ACAP QMS check list for group of collectors of wild species operating for the same certified legal entity.

E.5 Evaluation process

The specific processes for certification of medicinal plant produce are provided in the following documents:

ACAP 5-1, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 1: General requirements*

ACAP 5-2, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 2: Good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-3, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 3: Good agricultural practices (GAP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-4, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 4: Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification scheme E.

E.5.1 Self-evaluation and Internal Audit and verification

E.5.1.1 Self-evaluation

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme E.

During self-evaluation, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of theevaluator.

E.5.1.2 Internal audit and verification.

It is required when more than one collector of wild crops is involved in the certification scope.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-verification of the QMS and verification of the collection and post-harvest activities, according to the specific ARSO Standard.

E.5.1.2.1 Internal Auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both verification of QMS of multicollector's organization and for the technical verification of collection and post-harvest operation. The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Minimum a High school diploma.

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicine plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP.

E.5.1.2.2 Internal verifier. Can carry out only the internal technical verification of wild plants collection and post-harvest, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for evaluation for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce . Can work in team with the internal Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(i) High school diploma

(ii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicine plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iii) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP.

(iv) 1 verification as observer and 1 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

E.5.2 Independent external verification

E.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ARSO Certification Scheme E, the certification Body must be approved for the scope. Approved CBs are listed in the ARSO website

E.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical verification of conformance for the ARSO Certification Scheme E, the Laboratory shall be approved for the specific tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Approved Laboratories, with the detail of the approved tests and methods are listed on the ARSO website.

E.5.2.3 Qualification of evaluators

Also for external verifications, two different kind of evaluators are identified:

E.5.2.3.1 Verifier for Scope E

(a) **Task**

(a) Can carry out only the technical verification of wild plants collection and post-harvest, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for evaluators for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce.

(b) Can work in team with the internal Auditor for verification of the producers of a group.

(c) Qualification. The following requirements shall be met for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) High school diploma with agricultural, natural science or similar applicable focus, or

(ii) High School diploma and post high school courses with focus agriculture, natural science or similar applicable focus.

(iii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in wild medicinal plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP of minimum 2 days' duration.

(vi) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

E.5.2.3.2 Auditor for scope E

(a) **Task**: Can carry out Audits of the QMS and post-harvest activity.

(b) Can carry out the technical verification of the wild plants collection, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for evaluation for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce.

In team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(c) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school diploma including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (agriculture, natural science, botany, other similar scopes)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicinal plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course on food hygiene and HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(v) The technical competence on wild collection can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(vi) 1 verification as observer and 2 verification as auditor on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

E.5.2.4 Initial Certification

The initial certification in carried in 2 steps, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed by 2 phases:

E.5.2.4.1 Documental review

This phase regards the desk verification of the documentation related to internal operative manuals and guidelines on collection of the wild species in object. It also includes verification of legislation requirements, required authorization for collection, internal QMS procedures and documentation on qualification of involved personnel, including sub-contractors, where applicable.

E.5.2.4.2 Initial verification

It represents the verification carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site during practical collection, this verification shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

E.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance Verification

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance verifications in one certification cycle.

E.5.2.6 Re-certification Verification

The re-certification verification is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

E.5.2.7 Verification timing: Initial certification verification

The verification shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental verification:

Crops

Harvest is in place the day of verification.

In case of groups of collectors operating for the same legal entity, at least 75% of the sampled collectors must be harvesting the day of the verification.

Harvest can be evaluated on at least one wild species representative of the following groups: perennials, herbs, etc.

If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be taking place on the day of verification.

E.5.2.8 Sampling of collectors of wild species

In case of certification scheme E, where a group of collectors is operating under the same certified legal entity, a sample of the collectors registered in the group will be verified. The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

E.5.2.8.1 Initial verification

(a) The Square root of the total number of collectors, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative collection of all the groups of species included in the scope of certification and the number of samples within species must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 30% of the products must be in harvesting period at the moment of the verification.

(d) The same Collector can be sampled for more than one product

E.5.2.8.2 Surveillance verification

(a) The Square root of the total number of collectors multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for surveillance verification

(b) At least one of the Species included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest or at end of cycle. If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each group of species must be equally balanced.

(c) The products not in harvest or not present at the time of the surveillance audit must be verified for conformance by evaluating evidence and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Collector can be sampled for more than one product.

E.5.2.8.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB Verification

(a) The Square root of the total number of Collectors, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and evaluated for re-certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the groups of Species present the day of the verification and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the species in the certification scope must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of the verification.

(d) In case of small groups of collectors, at least one sample for each product on-site must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Producer can be sampled for more than one product.

E.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Producer, among the ARSO qualified laboratory list, according to criteria such as kind of testing required, location, etc.

E.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm conformance , are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated in the ACAP Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out at harvest time, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, on a case-by-case base.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

E.7 Verification results and evaluation of conformance

The classification of findings raised during the verification and related management is explained in ACAP 1-1.

With regard to scheme E, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation of conformance.

E.7.1 Major Non-Conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: All Major NCs shall be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications: All Major NC shall be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

E.7.2 Minor non-conformity

(a) Initial (First certification) verification: It is allowed for the 20% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

The remaining 80% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification verifications: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex
(informative)

ACAP 1-2:2022