

# Check List

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## EPS: Evaluation and Planning to Strengthen National Control Systems for Organic Production



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# Foreword

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The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) provides technical cooperation, innovation and specialized knowledge to foster competitive and sustainable agricultural development in the Americas, and to improve the lives of rural dwellers in its member countries. One means for the Institute to accomplish this objective is through the creation of global public goods that allow Member States to improve their competencies, be more competitive and produce experiences that can be replicated in other countries.

Through the Innovation for Productivity and Competitiveness Program (IPCP), IICA seeks to support Member Countries in developing knowledge-based agriculture through the widespread design and implementation of innovative solutions, resulting in increased productivity, competitiveness, inclusiveness and environmental sustainability.

By way of the IPCP, IICA has developed a series of tools for technical cooperation to allow countries to improve their capabilities and institutional structures in a variety of areas, such as technological innovation, biotechnology and biosecurity, organic agriculture, research and/or extension and intellectual property.

With respect to organic agriculture, the IPCP has developed an instrument for "Evaluation and Planning to Strengthen National Control Systems for Organic Production", in collaboration with the Inter-American Commission on Organic Agriculture (ICOA)<sup>1</sup>, and in consultation with IICA's Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Program.

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1. The ICOA is a regional institution involved in the control and development of organic agriculture in the Americas. It was established in September of 2008 by the Ministers of Agriculture of the countries in the region, who designated IICA as its Technical Secretariat.



This tool will enable stakeholders in the countries' organic agriculture movements to assess the functioning of national control systems (NCSs) for organic production and, with the assistance of IICA, to collaborate on the development of action plans to strengthen institutions and agencies involved in organic production control at a national level, thereby providing consumers in national and international markets with greater quality assurance for these types of products.

We are confident that this innovative tool will significantly enhance efforts to strengthen the NCSs and, thus foster the overall development of organic production in the Americas.

Arturo Barrera  
Manager  
Program of Innovation for  
Productivity and Competiveness (PIPC)

# Introduction

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Markets for organic products are increasingly demanding and diverse. Long distances and limited contact between producers and consumers - even on a national level - have made it imperative that national mechanisms for organic production control be implemented to guarantee consumers that these products are organic. These regulatory and control mechanisms should be sound and trustworthy for trade partners and should fall within the purview of a government body, which ultimately will be the one tasked with providing this support and guarantee to consumers of organic products from national and international markets.

Cognizant of the strategic importance of strengthening national control systems (NCSs) for organic production, and in keeping with the mandate of the Ministers of Agriculture to contribute to the consolidation of said systems, the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Organic Agriculture (ICOA), the Innovation for Productivity and Competitiveness Program (IPCP) and the competent authorities for the control of organic production, with the support of IICA's Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Program, developed a tool to assist countries in achieving this objective.

In the first phase, the tool for "Evaluation and Planning to Strengthen National Control Systems for Organic Production" will allow the condition of the NCSs to be assessed, in terms of legislation, compliance with regulations, resource availability, compliance with international standards, food safety and market access, inter alia. In the second phase, on the basis of the results obtained, the tool will enable the development of action plans to strengthen the NCS, which will be implemented by official agencies and various stakeholders within these systems.



The application of the tool will provide countries with a work agenda to consolidate their NCS. This agenda will be devised with the participation of members of these systems, assigning responsibilities to different stakeholders.

The creation of this tool constitutes an important step towards strengthening NCSs. However, for large-scale development of organic activity to occur, these actions must be bolstered by mutual recognition agreements between countries regarding regulations, as well as by the formulation of policies and the establishment of support institutions, inter alia, in order to facilitate national and international trade in organic products.

# How to Complete the Instrument

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The "Evaluation and Planning to Strengthen National Control Systems for Organic Production" tool comprises three basic elements: essential components, core competencies and stages of development.

The essential components are structural areas that determine if the NCS is functioning properly. For the purposes of this tool, the following four areas have been identified: i) Operational framework of the National Control System (NCS), ii) Control and Oversight Capacity of the Competent Authority, iii) Operational Capacity of the Competent Authority and iv) Market Control and Trade Facilitation.

Each essential component is subdivided into core competencies or into a set of variables that constitute and determine the activity of the component evaluated. The number of core competencies varies from one component to the other, depending on the number of variables needed to determine the functioning of the essential component. Each one of the critical competencies will include a definition of aspects to be evaluated, to facilitate better understanding by users.

Similarly, core competencies include a series of stages of development, which can be used to depict possible scenarios in the NCS, in relation to the competency that is being evaluated. These stages are ranked from a basic stage of development to one of optimal development, which is reflected in the tables corresponding to each of the stages. Users should assess each one of the stages and select the option that most closely resembles their NCS.

In addition to the description of the stages of development, a space is provided at the end of each core competency for users to elaborate on their answers or include clarifications, if they so desire.

The following hypothetical example illustrates the stages of development in the core competency - "sanctions" -, which is included in the second essential component of this tool; and also demonstrates the correct manner in which to complete the instrument.



# EXAMPLE OF A CORE COMPETENCY

## Sanctions

Group of legally defined measures, applicable to operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters in the event of non-compliance with regulations.

### Stage of development:

- ○ 1. Regulations do not provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters.
- X** ○ 2. Regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, but these sanctions are not defined.
- ○ 3. Regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, which are defined, but the competent authority does not have the operational mechanisms to apply these sanctions.
- ● 4. Regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, which are defined, and the competent authority possesses the operational mechanisms to apply these sanctions.

### Comments:

*Although the national regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance, no amounts or categories were determined for these sanctions, making it impossible for competent authorities to apply the appropriate corrective measures*

# Essential Components

I. Operational framework of the National Control System (NCS)

II. Control and oversight capacity of the Competent Authority

III. Operational capacity of the Competent Authority

IV. Market control and trade facilitation





# OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL CONTROL SYSTEM (NCS)

Legal, institutional, organizational and operational framework of the NCS within which the competent authority for organic production operates.



## Core competencies:

1. Legal framework supporting the functioning of the competent authority
2. Government instruments for fostering organic production.
3. Processes for developing regulations
4. Scope of regulations governing organic production
5. Updating regulations
6. Technical autonomy of the competent authority



## 1. Legal framework supporting the functioning of the competent authority

Legal backing<sup>1</sup> for the department, area, office or unit responsible for control of organic production, affiliated with the official government organization with official jurisdiction over this area.

### Stage of development:

- 1. The NCS does not have a competent authority responsible for the control of organic production.
- 2. The NCS has a competent authority responsible for the control of organic production, but it does not have sufficient legal backing to perform its duties
- 3. The NCS has a competent authority responsible for the control of organic production and it has the legal backing to perform its duties.

Comments:

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1. Legal backing for the competent authority may be established by law, decree, resolution or other legal instrument defining the designation, functions and powers of the entity.

## 2. Government instruments for fostering organic production

Strategies, policies, plans, programs and/or ad hoc Commissions established by the Government to support the large-scale development of organic agriculture, and that facilitate and enhance the performance of NCSs.

### Stage of development:

- 1. There are no government instruments to foster organic activity.
- 2. There are government instruments to foster organic activity, but they are not implemented.
- 3. There are government instruments to foster organic activity, which are implemented; and which often facilitate and enhance the performance of the NCSs.
- 4. There are government instruments that foster organic activity, which are implemented and fully facilitate and complement the performance of the NCS.

Comments:

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### 3. Processes for developing regulations

Procedures to develop technical and legal frameworks for organic production, which satisfy the basic requirements of good practices for developing this type of regulation and which take into account the national reality and international models.

#### Stage of development:

-  1. Proposed regulations are not in tune with the local reality, do not adhere to good regulatory practices<sup>1</sup>, and do not take into account international models.
-  2. Proposed regulations are in tune with the local reality, have been developed according to good regulatory practices, but are not based on international models.
-  3. Proposed regulations are in tune with the national reality, and take into account international models, but do not adhere to good regulatory practices.
-  4. Proposed regulations take into account the national reality, adhere to good regulatory practices and take into account international models.

Comments:

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1. Good regulatory practices address issues such as stakeholder participation, transparency, and outcome-focused orientation, adherence to international guidelines, accountability, representativeness, non-discrimination, proportionality and consistency (conformity). Moreover, they should involve public consultation, and follow WTO notification requirements, inter alia.

## 4. Scope of regulations governing organic production

Issues addressed in regulations on organic production in relation to its position in the production chain, its application in the agricultural and livestock sectors, and its scope in food and non-food areas<sup>1</sup>.

### Stage of development:

- 1. There are no regulations governing organic production.
- 2. Regulations on organic production only provide for primary vegetable ( ) or animal ( ) organic production in the food industry.
- 3. Regulations on organic production provide for primary vegetable and animal organic production in the food industry.
- 4. Regulations on organic production provide for production, processing, transportation and marketing of vegetable ( ) or animal ( ) organic products in the food industry.
- 5. Regulations on organic production provide for production, processing, transportation, and marketing of organic vegetable and animal products in the food industry.
- 6. Regulations on organic production provide for production, processing, transportation and marketing of food and non-food organic products.

Comments:

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1. Non-food organic products: textiles, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, fibre, wood and leather, inter alia.

## 5. Updating regulations

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to duly propose modifications to existing regulations, on the basis of analysis of the national and international contexts.

### Stage of development:

- 1. Regulations for organic production have not been reviewed or updated.
- 2. Regulations for organic production are reviewed from time to time, but the changes proposed by the competent authority are not in keeping with the national reality or international context.
- 3. Regulations on organic production are reviewed from time to time, and the changes proposed by the competent authority are usually in keeping with the national reality and international context.
- 4. Regulations on organic production are regularly reviewed. However, the proposed changes are not in keeping with the national reality or international context.
- 5. Regulations on organic production are regularly reviewed and the competent authority proposes modifications to adapt them to the national reality and international context.

Comments:

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## 6. Technical autonomy of the competent authority

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to carry out its duties independently and without external interference that could affect its decisions and/or recommendations.

### Stage of development:

- 1. Decisions and/or recommendations of the competent authority are not usually based exclusively on technical and regulatory criteria.
- 2. Decisions and/or recommendations of the competent authority take into account technical and regulatory criteria, but are often modified by hierarchical and/or political criteria.
- 3. Decisions and/ or recommendations of the competent authority are based on technical and regulatory criteria, but may be subject to review and modification on the basis of hierarchical and/or political criteria.
- 4. Decisions and/or recommendations of the competent authority are based exclusively on technical and regulatory criteria and are not modified to adhere to hierarchical and/ or political considerations.

Comments:


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## CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT CAPACITY OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

A photograph of a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, crouching in a field of green leafy plants. She is looking down at the plants, with her right hand reaching towards them. The background is a dense field of similar plants under a bright sky.

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to apply and consistently demonstrate compliance with regulations, based on legal and scientific parameters.

### Core competencies:

1. Endorsement of certification bodies
2. Participation in evaluating and authorizing the use of tradable inputs
3. Monitoring residue and contaminants
4. Traceability
5. Audit and Supervision
6. Generating Information
7. Sanctions
8. Complaint mechanisms

## 1. Endorsement of certification bodies

Existence within the NCS of a unit with responsibility for endorsing certification bodies for organic production, which has the operational capacity to guarantee that they satisfy the minimum requirements<sup>1</sup> established.

### Stage of development:

- 1. The NCS has no unit responsible for the endorsement of certification bodies for organic production.
- 2. The NCS has a unit responsible for the endorsement of certification bodies for organic production, but this unit has no legal backing or sufficient operational capacity to perform its duties.
- 3. The NCS has a unit responsible for the endorsement of certification bodies for organic production, which has legal backing and the requisite operational capacity. However, the certification bodies do not satisfy the necessary minimum requirements for their endorsement and proper functioning.
- 4. The NCS has a unit responsible for the endorsement of certification bodies for organic production which has legal backing; and the certification bodies satisfy the necessary minimum requirements for their endorsement and proper functioning.

Comments:

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1. The minimum requirements for endorsing certification bodies include: the presence of a local head office, the requisite accreditation and registration documents, funding to finance the activities being undertaken, sufficient resources to operate data bases, sufficient and adequately trained human resources, a structure that allows for objective and transparent execution of procedures, capacity to contract services, a dedicated staff member for technical and quality control issues, an adequate team of qualified and independent inspectors, a plan for the inspection and monitoring of contaminants, files kept on the operators and an annual report of activities, inter alia.

## 2. Participation in evaluating and authorizing the use of tradable inputs.

Legal powers of the competent authority for organic production to participate in processes to evaluate and authorize tradable inputs for use in organic production.

### Stage of development:

- 1. The competent authority has no legal powers to evaluate tradable inputs and to authorize their use in organic production, and does not participate in these processes.
- 2. The competent authority has no legal powers to evaluate tradable inputs and to authorize their use in organic production, but participates in these processes.
- 3. The competent authority has the legal power to evaluate tradable inputs and to authorize their use in organic production, which it delegates to other agencies. However, it does not have at its disposal a list of tradable inputs.
- 4. The competent authority has the legal power to evaluate tradable inputs and to authorize their use in organic production, which it delegates to other agencies. It also has at its disposal a list of these inputs.
- 5. The competent authority has the legal power to evaluate tradable inputs and to authorize their use in organic production. It participates in these processes and has at its disposal a list of these inputs.

Comments:

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### 3. Monitoring residue and contaminants

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to continuously monitor compliance with regulations regarding residue and contaminants, in order to detect possible anomalies.

#### Stage of development:

- 1. The competent authority does not have a plan to monitor compliance with regulations regarding residue and contaminants, whether directly or by way of the certification bodies.
- 2. The competent authority only monitors compliance with regulations regarding residue and contaminants in response to complaints and claims, and in these cases accepts the evidence provided by operators.
- 3. The competent authority requires certification bodies to devise a plan to monitor the extent to which operators comply with regulations regarding residue and contaminants.
- 4. The competent authority not only requires certification bodies to devise a plan to monitor the extent to which operators comply with regulations regarding residue and contaminants, but also has its own monitoring plan based on risk analysis.

Comments:

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## 4. Traceability

The capacity of the competent authority for organic production to track a product's audit trail or movement, based on documentary evidence or information from NCS records.

### Stage of development:

-  1. The competent authority does not mandate the implementation of a traceability system.
-  2. The competent authority does not mandate the implementation of a traceability system, but this is implemented by other official bodies in regulating the control of certain products.
-  3. The competent authority mandates the implementation of a traceability system, but only monitors how it functions in response to complaints or claims.
-  4. The competent authority mandates the implementation of a traceability system and oversees the organic products traceability system as a means of evaluating its efficiency.

Comments:

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## 5. Audit and Supervision

The capacity of the competent authority for organic production to implement a systematic, autonomous, and documented process to demonstrate effective functioning of the certification body and the operators that are part of the national control system, based on an objective evaluation of the evidence obtained.

### Stage of Development:

- \_\_\_  1. The competent authority does not audit the certification bodies.
- \_\_\_  2. The competent authority delegates to other entities the capacity to audit certification bodies.
- \_\_\_  3. The competent authority audits certification bodies, without supervising operators.
- \_\_\_  4. The competent authority audits certification bodies and supervises operators to ensure they are functioning effectively as part of NCS operations, but only in response to complaints or claims.
- \_\_\_  5. The competent authority audits certification bodies and supervises operators to ensure they are functioning effectively as part of NCS operations, but without the benefit of a risk analysis plan.
- \_\_\_  6. The competent authority audits certification bodies and supervises operators to ensure they are functioning effectively as part of NCS operations, using a risk analysis plan.

Comments:

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## 6. Generating Information

The capacity of the competent authority for organic production to demonstrate its efficiency with regard to control and oversight auditing of the NCS, based on documented information.

### Stage of Development:

-  1. The competent authority, although charged with the control and oversight of the NCS, lacks even the minimum<sup>1</sup> information needed to verify its efficiency.
-  2. The competent authority, charged with the control and oversight of the NCS, possesses some information on this system, but it is insufficient to verify its efficiency.
-  3. In addition to possessing the minimum information required, the competent authority, charged with the control and oversight of the NCS, also has additional<sup>2</sup> information on this System, allowing for the verification of its efficiency. However, this information is not available to users.
-  4. In addition to possessing the minimum information required, the competent authority, charged with the control and oversight of the NCS, also has additional information pertaining to it, allowing for the verification of its efficiency. This information is available to users via an information system.

Comments:

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1. Updated list of producers and certification bodies.

2. Production and trade statistics, summary audit reports, control records pertaining to certification bodies and records of sanctions applied, inter alia.

## 7. Sanctions

Group of legally defined measures applicable to operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters in the event of non-compliance with the regulations.

### Stage of development:

- 1. Regulations do not provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters.
- 2. Regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, but these sanctions are not defined.
- 3. Regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, which are defined, but the competent authority does not have the operational mechanisms to apply these sanctions.
- 4. The regulations provide for sanctions for non-compliance by operators, certification bodies, importers and exporters, which are defined, and the competent authority has the operational mechanisms to apply these sanctions.

Comments:

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## 8. Compliant Mechanisms

Procedures to be followed in the event of irregularities and/or fraud in the production, transformation and marketing of organic products.

### Stage of development:

- 1. There are no complaint mechanisms in place in the event of any irregularities and/or fraud in the production, transformation and marketing of organic products.
- 2. There are complaint mechanisms in place in the event of any irregularities and/or fraud in the production, transformation and marketing of organic products, but these mechanisms fall under the purview of different government institutions and the competent authority merely directs the complainant to the relevant institution.
- 3. There are complaint mechanisms in place in the event of any irregularities and/or fraud in the production, transformation and marketing of organic products, but these mechanisms fall under the purview of different government institutions and the competent authority plays a marginal role.
- 4. There are complaint mechanisms in place in the event of any irregularities and/or fraud in the production, transformation and marketing of organic products, and the competent authority is the entity through which complaints are channeled and addressed.

Comments:

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# OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Available resources and conditions under which the competent authority for organic production operates to properly perform its duties and improve its services on an ongoing basis.






## Core competencies:

1. Human resources
2. Job security
3. Availability of resources
4. Participation in national and international events
5. Communication between stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority
6. Participation in joint public-private sector programs
7. Institutional quality control management system

# 1. Human Resources

Availability of trained human capital within the competent authority for organic production, with exclusive areas of focus and the capacity to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field.

## Stage of development:

-  1. The competent authority lacks sufficient human capital and existing staff members are not adequately trained to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field, and must perform them in addition to other institutional duties.
-  2. The competent authority lacks sufficient human capital, and existing staff members must perform their core duties in addition to other institutional duties. They are, however, adequately trained to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field.
-  3. The competent authority has sufficient human capital, with exclusive areas of focus; however staff members need further training to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field.
-  4. The competent authority has sufficient human capital, with exclusive areas of focus, and they are adequately trained to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field.
-  5. The competent authority has sufficient human capital, with exclusive areas of focus. They are adequately trained, and participate in an ongoing capacity building program, to enable them to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities in office and in the field.

Comments:

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## 2. Job Security

Extent to which personnel employed to the competent authority for organic production have assured tenure and continuity of employment.

### Stage of Development:

- \_\_\_  1. Personnel employed to the competent authority are hired on a temporary basis.
- \_\_\_  2. Personnel employed to the competent authority have temporary contracts, but contract periods are extensive and contracts are usually renewed.
- \_\_\_  3. Personnel employed to the competent authority have permanent status, but are continuously being seconded to other entities.
- \_\_\_  4. Personnel employed to the competent authority have indefinite contracts and generally remain at the same entity.

Comments:

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### 3. Availability of Resources<sup>1</sup>

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to access resources to facilitate the timely and efficient performance of its duties.

#### Stage of Development:

- 1. The competent authority lacks the necessary resources to efficiently perform its duties.
- 2. The competent authority has limited resources that are insufficient for it to efficiently perform its duties.
- 3. The competent authority has the basic resources necessary to efficiently perform its duties.
- 4. The competent authority has all the resources necessary to efficiently perform its duties.

Comments:

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1. Material, economic, technological, computer and infrastructural resources

## 4. Participation in National and International Events

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to participate in national and international events related to its duties.

### Stage of Development:

- 1. The competent authority does not participate in national or international events falling within its jurisdiction.
- 2. The competent authority participates in national events within its jurisdiction, but not in international events.
- 3. The competent authority participates in national events, but participating in international events within its jurisdiction poses a challenge.
- 4. The competent authority participates in any national and international events within its jurisdiction that it considers relevant.

Comments:

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## 5. Communication between stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority

Capacity of stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority to communicate regularly through various mechanisms that facilitate the activities of members of the NCS and its functioning.

### Stage of Development:

- 1. Stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority have no communication mechanisms<sup>1</sup>.
- 2. Stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority have communication mechanisms, but fail to use them.
- 3. Stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority have communication mechanisms, which they use from time to time and which facilitate members' activities and functioning of the system.
- 4. Stakeholders in organic activity and the competent authority have efficient communication mechanisms that they use regularly and that facilitate members' activities and functioning of the system.

Comments:

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1. These communication mechanisms may include telephone networks, websites, email, information networks and face-to-face meetings, inter alia.



## 6. Participation in joint public-private sector programs

Capacity of public and private sector agencies involved in organic production control to coordinate the conceptualization and implementation of joint programs and activities and to participate in same within the context of their duties.

### Stage of development:

- 1. Public and private sector agencies involved in organic production control have no joint programs.
- 2. Public and private sector agencies involved in organic production control have established joint programs; but these are outdated or lack sufficient resources for their execution.
- 3. Public and private sector agencies involved in organic production control have established joint programs which have been updated. There are sufficient resources for their execution but these programs have only been partially implemented.
- 4. Public and private sector agencies involved in organic production control have established and updated joint programs. There are sufficient resources to execute these programs and they have been fully implemented.

Comments:

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## 7. Institutional quality control management system

Participation of competent authorities in an institutional quality control management system and implementation status of this system.

### Stage of development:

- 1. The competent authority is not a part of any institutional quality control management system.
- 2. The competent authority is part of an institutional quality control management system, but the system is not in operation.
- 3. The competent authority is part of an institutional quality control management system, which is only partially operational.
- 4. The competent authority is part of an auditable and fully operational institutional quality control management system.

Comments:

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# MARKET CONTROL AND TRADE FACILITATION



Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to facilitate trade and guarantee that the products being marketed, imported and exported are indeed organic.

## Core competencies:

1. Point of sale control of organic products
2. Importing organic products
3. Exporting organic products.

## 1. Point of sale control of organic products

Capacity of the competent authority for organic production to assure domestic consumers that products marketed as "organic" are indeed organic.

### Stage of development:

- 1. Products that are being marketed as "organic" at points of sale are subject to no control by the competent authority.
- 2. Products that are being marketed as "organic" at points of sale are subject to minimal levels of control by the competent authority, in conjunction with other national control agencies.
- 3. The competent authority adheres to a control plan at points of sale to establish the legitimacy of products being marketed as "organic". This is done in conjunction with other national control agencies.
- 4. The competent authority has devised its own control plan to establish the legitimacy of products marketed as organic at points of sale and interfaces with other national control agencies to execute this plan.

Comments:

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## 2. Importing organic products

Capacity of the competent authority to give assurances that products imported as "organic" are indeed organic.

### Stage of development:

- 1. The importation of organic products is not subject to controls.
- 2. By law, the importation of organic products should be subject to controls, but the competent authority exercises no such controls.
- 3. By law, the importation of organic products should be subject to controls and the competent authority exercises controls, but only in response to complaints and claims.
- 4. By law, the importation of organic products should be subject to controls and should be exercised pursuant to a manual of procedures; and it is the competent authority that exercises these controls in all cases.

Comments:

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### 3. Exporting organic products

Capacity of the competent authority to guarantee compliance with certification standards for organic products being exported under this classification.

#### Stage of development:

-  1. Most of the products for export are approved by certification bodies that have been endorsed and accredited by the importing countries, thereby complying with the standards of the destination country, but the competent authority of the exporting country is not involved in this process.
-  2. Most of the products for export are approved by certification bodies that have been endorsed and accredited by the importing countries, thereby complying with the standards of the destination country, but the competent authority of the exporting country is involved to a very limited extent in this process.
-  3. Most of the products for export are approved by certification bodies that have been endorsed and accredited in the exporting country and/or internationally, and comply with both national standards and those of the destination country. Additionally, the competent authority of the exporting country is involved in this process.
-  4. Most of the products for export are approved by certification bodies that have been endorsed and accredited in the exporting country and/or internationally, and comply with both national standards and those of the destination country (based on the principle of equivalence). Additionally, the competent authority of the exporting country is involved in this process, by way of a mutual recognition agreement.

Comments:

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# Glossary

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**Risk analysis:** A scientific process that identifies, characterizes, and determines risk and evaluates risk exposure.

**Audit:** A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence of the performance of an organization and evaluating that performance objectively, so as to determine compliance with established requirements.

**Competent Authority:** Department, area, office or unit responsible for organic production control, in connection with the official government authority with jurisdiction in the area.

**Good regulatory practices for organic production control:** Procedures that should be followed when establishing regulations in order to satisfy the following basic requirements: stakeholder participation, transparency, an outcome-focused orientation, adherence to international guidelines, accountability, representativeness, non-discrimination, proportionality and conformity (consistency). Moreover, they should involve impact analysis, public consultation, and should follow World Trade Organization (WTO) notification requirements.

**Certification:** A process by which competent government agencies or officially accredited organizations guarantee, in writing or by some equally valid means, that the products or their control systems are in compliance with established requirements, as set out in applicable regulations.

**Certification body:** Agency charged with verifying that products that are sold or labeled as "organic" have been produced, manufactured, prepared, handled and marketed in accordance with applicable regulations.



**Oversight:** Control process by an official or officially recognized organization, allowing it to determine if production activities and their outcomes are in compliance with the desired objectives.

**Endorsement:** Procedure with which the competent authority formally authorizes the capacity of an organization or control authority to provide inspection and certification services on its behalf.

**Tradable inputs for organic production:** Natural or processed substances that may be used during the organic production process and approved by the relevant competent authority for sale on the market.

**NCS members:** Group of stakeholders that comprise the NCS, and includes the competent authority, official agencies associated with this activity, certification bodies, operators and consumers of organic products.

**Monitoring:** Supervision process over a group of products and/or processes, that includes sample-taking and analysis of said products and/or processes to detect possible non-compliance with regulations.

**Regulations:** Technical and regulatory documents containing standards that the appropriate competent authority has declared to be compulsory and that are applied to the activity of NCS members.

**Operator:** Any natural or legal person that produces, processes, transforms or markets inputs or organic products.

**Traceability:** Capacity of an entity to track a product's movement through various stages of its production, distribution and marketing.

**Quality control management system:** Set of coordinated activities that take place based on a series of elements within an organization (resources, procedures, documents, organizational structure and strategies) to guarantee the provision of high quality products or services to consumers or users.

**National Control System (NCS) for Organic Production:** Group of elements (regulations, oversight, information, members and resources, inter alia) through which a country inspires confidence in consumers with regard to the quality of the certified organic products that it offers on the market.

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