

MODULE 6 - CERTIFICATION

While [Module 1](#) briefly touched upon the choice of a certification scheme and [Module 4](#) discussed the costs and benefits of certification, Module 6 discusses [organic, fair-trade and GLOBALGAP certification](#) in greater detail. The Module provides tools to set up an Internal Control System (ICS) and prepare for certification.

Before thinking about adding value to your product by obtaining certification, it is crucial that your organization delivers a quality product, in the right volume, at the right time, and at a competitive price. These aspects were discussed in the first five Modules of this guide. If you have skipped these Modules and gone straight to Module 6, please take some time to check whether you need to implement some improvements in these fields first.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (QMS)

ISO 9001

Quality management addresses product quality and the means to achieve it. [Quality Management Systems \(QMS\)](#) use quality assurance and process control techniques to achieve a better and more consistent product quality.

The International Organization for Standardization's ISO 9000 series describes standards for the development and implementation of a QMS addressing the principles and processes surrounding the design, development and delivery of a general product or service. Organizations can participate in a continuing certification process to ISO 9001:2008, one of the standards in the ISO 9000 series, to demonstrate their compliance with ISO's QMS requirements. A company or organization that has been independently audited and certified to comply with ISO 9001:2008 may publicly state that it is "ISO 9001 certified". Certification to the ISO 9001:2008 standard does not guarantee the quality of end products and services; rather, it certifies that formalized business processes are being applied. However, the benefits of ISO 9001 certification often do not outweigh the amount of money, time and paperwork required for registration, especially when combined with another value-adding certification scheme. ISO 9001:2008 can also be implemented without certification, simply for the quality benefits that can be achieved. Implementing the ISO 9001:2008 principles may help an organization to control or improve the quality of its products and services, reduce the cost of quality failures and become more competitive. Organizations with a functioning QMS will find it easier to comply with requirements regarding documentation and traceability imposed by other certification schemes.

More information regarding the ISO 9000 standards can be found at:

www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/iso_9000_iso_14000/iso_9000_essentials.htm.

The ISO 9001:2008 standard can be downloaded from the website against a fee of CHF 118.

ITC'S ISO 9001 FITNESS CHECKER

To increase the accessibility of the ISO 9001 standard for small and medium enterprises in developing countries, the International Trade Centre (ITC) has developed its "ISO 9001 Fitness Checker", allowing organizations to become familiar with the principles of quality management and assess their readiness to implement an ISO 9001-based QMS. More information on the ISO 9001 Fitness Checker, consisting of a book and CD ROM, can be found at: www.intracen.org/ec/welcome3.htm?http&&&www.intracen.org/ec/isochecker/. An introductory check list can be downloaded from:

www.intracen.org/ec/isochecker/gapanaly.pdf.

To access the complete Fitness Checker, national trade support institutions must sign a joint publication agreement with the ITC before divulging the Fitness Checker in their country (see:

www.intracen.org/ec/welcome3.htm?http&&&www.intracen.org/ec/isochecker/).

Current partners are listed on the following webpage:

www.intracen.org/ec/welcome3.htm?http&&&www.intracen.org/ec/isochecker/.

In Africa, the Ghana Standards Board (www.ghanastandards.org) and the Malawi Bureau of Standards (www.sadc-sqam.org) have developed national adaptations of the Fitness Checker.

QMS FOR COFFEE COOPERATIVES

The organization Fair Access to Quality (FAQ) (<http://faq.smallholders-go4quality.org>) has developed a project aimed at helping smallholder organizations to interpret the ISO 9001 standard with a view to improving their quality management (see: www.smallholders-go4quality.org). The programme supports producer partners in combining different voluntary and obligatory market requirements into

one integrated management system. FAQ's manual for coffee cooperatives, *Coffee Quality Management for Smallholder Producer Groups*, can be downloaded from

www.qms4s.org/downloads/0000009cbe0963102/index.php.

GROUP CERTIFICATION

DEFINITION

The first organic certification schemes were centered around the certification of individual farms. However, it quickly became clear that many smallholders in developing countries were unable to afford the certification fees charged by internationally recognized organic certification bodies. In response to this problem, the concept of organic group certification was developed; this principle was later adopted by other certification schemes.

Group certification is the practice of organizing individual producers into structured groups, whereby part of the control tasks are shifted from an external audit to internal inspections. In order to assume these control tasks, the group must develop an internal control system that ensures that the individual group members are meeting the requirements of the standard. An external certification body checks whether the internal control system functions satisfactorily. The internal management system enables the group members to improve their practices over time.

Group certification requires a minimum number of farmers to participate in the scheme. Certification fees for group certification are generally higher than those for individual certification, and setting up an internal control system comes a price tag. Group certification is therefore cheaper than individual certification only if the costs can be divided over a sufficient number of farmers.

In addition, while the number of farms to be inspected by the external inspection body is determined on the basis of risk assessment, the minimum number of farm inspections hovers around 12; if the group is smaller, all farmers are inspected, which nullifies any cost savings in terms of external inspection as compared to individual certification.

However, it may still be worthwhile to certify small groups if:

- The group is expected to grow in the near future, and wishes to have a tested internal control system in place;
- The farmers are not capable of managing individual certification (e.g. because they are illiterate);
- The farming activities of an exporter or cooperative are to be certified in conjunction with its processing or exporting operations.

COMMON REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION

The ISEAL Alliance, a not-for-profit organization promoting codes of good practice for social and environmental standards, has recently facilitated agreement on a set of common requirements for the certification of producer groups which may potentially be adopted as baseline requirements across systems (available at:

www.isealalliance.org/index.cfm?nodeid=1). The resulting document focuses on certification requirements for the credible structure and functioning of a group of producers. It does not include performance requirements that are specific to any one standard but is intended to complement them. Although the document is aimed at standard-setting organizations and certification bodies, it may constitute a useful guide for organizations setting up an internal control system in preparation for group certification.

PREPARING FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION

While certification processes differ from one certification scheme to the next (see below), two problems related to external inspection that are frequently occurred across the scope of certification schemes are the following:

- The information provided by farmers is inconsistent with the information contained in the organization's files. To ensure that the information kept by the organization on its farmers is correct, each farmer should be given an updated copy of his file and sign his file to mark his agreement with its contents. If the farmer cannot read, the file should be read out to her by someone who has her full trust (i.e. not the cooperative/organization's field officer);
- Many farmers in developing countries have become accustomed to being questioned by strangers in preparation for new projects; in order to increase their chances of benefiting from such projects, farmers often complain about a lack of training, low prices or weak sales. If an organization's farmers

complain to external inspectors, they have not understood the purpose of the external inspection.

The above problems may be avoided by training farmers, not only about improved production methods and compliance with a scheme's requirements, but also about the objectives of certification and the various elements of the certification process, including external inspection. The organization's field officer generally accompanies the external inspector on his farm inspection round. The field officer should ensure that the external inspector is properly introduced, to prevent farmers from confusing the inspection visit with project identification missions. Detailed standard-specific guidance on group certification is provided in the below sections.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

ORGANIC PRODUCTION VS ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

Choosing to grow organic and choosing to apply for organic certification are two separate decisions; an organization may choose to produce organically and respect generally accepted organic standards, without however obtaining third party certification.

The decision to start producing organically may be inspired by a number of factors, including:

- The desire to increase the yields of traditional farming systems without using expensive external inputs;
- Environmental reasons: to avoid polluting the environment with agrochemicals or to increase farm biodiversity;
- Health-related reasons: to avoid the handling of agrochemicals by farm workers or to avoid pesticide residues in food;
- The desire to gain access to the niche market for organic products (where products generally generate a price premium).

The fourth and last objective, gaining access to the market for organic products, is the only objective requiring

organizations to provide guarantees to customers as to the organic status of their products. Depending upon the requirements of your particular niche market, these guarantees may be given in the form of a) a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), or b) third party certification.

PGS provide a credible and affordable alternative to third party certification for smallholders and organizations marketing their products locally, in the absence of public regulations concerning the labelling of organic products. PGS are centered around local, publicly available standards for organic agriculture. They are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange, and recognize producers as organic through a process based on stakeholder participation. For more information on PGS, visit IFOAM's website at www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs.html.

Where markets are governed by public regulations concerning the labelling of organic products, third party certification is indispensable. The remainder of this section deals with organic third party certification.

STEPS TOWARDS CERTIFICATION

Overview of steps

- i. Select the organic standard against which you want to get certified;
- ii. Draw up a shortlist of potential certification bodies (see below), download their forms and gather information regarding their specific requirements (e.g. for group certification);
- iii. Ensure the compliance of your operations with the standard. Design your record keeping and Internal Control Systems in a way that allows you to easily fill out all the required forms;
- iv. Request a quotation, select a certification body and sign a contract;
- v. Decide whether or not your organization requires a pre-audit prior to the actual inspection;
- vi. Fill out all the forms and send in all the necessary documentation;
- vii. Once the documentation is accepted, agree on the inspection date. The certification body will send you a preliminary invoice, requesting your organization to pay an advance fee (generally around 50–70 percent of the total certification fee);
- viii. Perform the last internal inspection and inform farmers and staff members about the coming external inspection;
- ix. External inspection;
- x. Immediate corrective actions;
- xi. Upon reception of the final invoice, pay the outstanding amount;
- xii. The certification body will decide whether your organization complies with the requirements for certification; if the decision is positive, the certification body will send out a certificate (certain bodies will wait for this final decision before sending out their final invoice).

Selecting the appropriate organic standard

As a minimum, your products will need to comply with the public regulations concerning organic products in your target market. However, certain markets are characterized by a strong presence of private organic labels (often owned by national farmers associations), imposing requirements over and beyond those set by public regulations. The most important markets governed by public regulations concerning the production and sale of organic products include:

- The European Union, with its “Council Regulation on Organic Production and Labelling of Organic Products”. See: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/splash_en;
- The United States, with its “National Organic Program” (NOP). See: www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop;
- Japan, with its “Japanese Agricultural Standard” (JAS). See: www.maff.go.jp/e/jas/index.html;
- Canada, with its “Organic Products Regulations”. See: www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioe.shtml.

Examples of important private organic labels include Bio Suisse (Switzerland) (see www.bio-suisse.ch); Demeter (biodynamic agriculture, worldwide) (see www.demeter.net); Naturland (worldwide) (see www.naturland.de); the Soil Association (United Kingdom) (see www.soilassociation.org); KRAV (Sweden), (see: www.krav.se/System/Spraklankar/In-English/KRAV-/>).

A useful overview of public and private organic standards can be found at www.imo.ch/imo_regulation_organic_production_en.2002.998.html.

Choice of certification body

Your choice of an appropriate certification body should be determined by the following factors:

- Range of certification products;
- Price;
- Buyer preferences;
- Services.



The EU organic logo

Range of certification products

Your choice of a certification body will be limited to those certification bodies that offer certification against the standard that you have selected. While most private labels require applicants to be inspected by the certification body that owns them, other private labels may have authorized third parties to verify compliance with their requirements (even if the final decision is taken by the certification body owning the label). The Soil Association, for example, has authorized the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) to verify compliance with its criteria; while IMO issues the certificate of compliance with the EU public regulations, the Soil Association issues a certificate demonstrating compliance with its own additional requirements (see www.imo.ch/imo_services_organic_private_soil_association_en.2770.998.html).

It is useful to verify whether your chosen certification body offers certification not only against your standard of choice, but also against other (organic) standards; this will make it easier for your organization to obtain additional certifications as market opportunities arise.

Price

Inspection and certification fees may vary considerably from one certification body to the other. Request all certification bodies offering your preferred certifications to send you a quote. The certification body will require information on the number of farmers, the area under production, the complexity of your production and processing operations, etc. in order to calculate a price; make sure you have this basic documentation ready. Request a detailed breakdown of costs, not just an overall sum, to gain an insight into what makes one certification body more expensive than another (e.g. travel costs, inspection fees, the final decision on certification).

Certification bodies with an office in your country or those working with local inspectors are not necessarily cheaper. Since running an office or hiring local inspectors also carries a price tag (e.g. for training), it may well be cheaper for certification bodies to fly in an inspector once in a while, especially when the number of inspections to be carried out in the country are limited. The best method to limit your certification fees is to limit the time the certification body and its inspector need to dedicate to your organization. If an inspection reveals many critical non-conformities, the certification body will require that they are corrected first; it will then carry out another inspection before granting the certificate. Implementing an efficient Internal Control System is therefore the best way to

limit your inspection fees. After several years of compliance with a particular standard, the certification body may decide to lower its risk assessment of your organization and reduce its inspection time, thereby reducing the costs of certification for your organization.

Buyer preferences

Ask your buyers if they prefer any particular certification. While it is generally easier to trade internationally when both the seller and the buyer are certified by the same certification body, recent changes in the European Union's regulations aimed at simplifying administrative procedures may facilitate operations involving multiple certification bodies in a single supply chain. Put aside these administrative considerations, market preferences may dictate your organization's choice of a particular certification scheme. In some markets, consumers clearly prefer certain (private) labels to others, while organic products imported into the European Union may carry the European and/or a national organic label. Meanwhile, certain buyers may prefer suppliers that have been certified by a certification body with a reputation for thoroughness.

Services

Ask other organizations about the quality of the services offered by their certification body. How fast does the certification body react to queries? Do they provide regular and clear updates about changes in the standards and procedures? Do they speak your language? How long does it take for the certification body to reach a decision as to the certification of an organization? There may be a trade-off between price and quality. Cheaper certification bodies may organize fewer meetings of their evaluation committee, resulting in delays in the certification procedure, while certification bodies that guarantee a rapid decision after inspection may charge higher fees. While certification bodies with local offices or inspectors are not necessarily cheaper (see above), applicants may find it cheaper and easier to contact local representatives who speak their own language. In addition, local inspectors are likely to have a better understanding of the specific circumstances in which organizations operate.

While the result of the inspection for compliance with a particular standard should be the same irrespectively of which certification body or inspector that carries out the inspection, in practice this can make a large difference. Ask certified companies and farmer associations about their experiences with a certain certification body and/or inspector. Do they make big problems out of minor issues?

Pre-audit

You may ask your certification body to carry out a pre-audit as part of the preparations for the development of an Internal Control System. A pre-audit will demonstrate if and where your system does not yet conform to the requirements of the certification scheme. A pre-audit may be particularly useful for organizations where farmers do not use agrochemicals. Even if the Internal Control System of such an organization is not yet ready for certification, a pre-audit may already document the non-use of agrochemicals – this may be considered as the start of the organization's organic conversion period.

Forms

The certification body will send you precise instructions regarding the required documentation. Adapt your Internal Control System to these requirements to ensure you have all the necessary information and align your documentation system to the formats used by the certification body for membership lists, sanction reports etc. This is especially important for Internal Control Systems for group certification, since different certification bodies have different requirements as to how an Internal Control System should operate and be documented.

Internal inspection

We advise you to carry out a last internal inspection just before the external inspectors arrive, to verify

whether your organization complies with all (documentary) requirements. This final inspection round provides an opportunity to explain to all farmers why and when this external inspection is carried out and secure their full cooperation.

External inspection

Cooperate fully with the external inspector, comply with all documentary requirements and organize the field visits as efficiently as possible. The longer the inspector needs to wait for a piece of information, the more expensive his visit will be.

Of course, the inspector should also treat the organization's staff members and farmers in a correct and polite manner. If you feel the inspection was not conducted properly, complain to the certification body in writing. Possible grounds for complaints include:

- Language: the inspector did not understand the local language; there was no translation and farmers were forced to speak in a language they do not fully master;
- Lack of understanding of the crop or product;
- Improper conduct e.g. intimidation of farmers.

Immediate corrective actions

The certification body may request an inspected organization to implement immediate corrective measures (e.g. providing additional or improved documentation) before certification is granted.

INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM MANUALS



IFOAM. 2007. *Internal Control Systems for Group Certification – Training Curriculum for Producers*.

Available in English, French, Spanish and Turkish from

<http://shop.ifoam.org/bookstore/index.php?cPath=64_68_46_47> (free for IFOAM members; EUR25 for downloads, EUR28 for CD ROM).

The document *Smallholder Group Certification – Guidance Manual for Producer Organizations*, which forms part of the *Training Curriculum*, can be downloaded free of charge at

<www.imo.ch/portal/pics/documents/ics_guidance_manual.pdf>.

Overview of steps

According to the IFOAM Training Curriculum, the implementation of an Internal Control System for organic agriculture consists of the following essential steps:

- Selection of qualified personnel and staff training on organic production and Internal Control Systems;
- Identification of farmers; farmer awareness raising on organic principles;
- Development of an ICS manual, containing tailor-made procedures and forms (initially, the manual does not need to be worked out into the smallest detail; what is more important is that the manual's procedures and forms are fully understood and implemented by all staff members);

- Evaluation of the ICS manual by the certification body, preferably before, or else during, the first inspection round; the certification body may provide useful comments or suggestions to improve the manual;
- Gradual improvement of the ICS manual (procedures, forms etc.) and its implementation by ICS staff members.

Examples of ICS manuals

For an example of what an ICS manual may look like, consult the following documents:



Agro Eco. 2001. *Smallholder Group Certification – Internal Control System – Example Document*.

Available at: <http://faq.smallholders-go4quality.org/dynamic/media/2/files/Internal_Control_System_example_document_complete.pdf>.



FAO. 2009.

Example document describing an internal control system for organic group certification.

(Example document developed by the project (adapted from the Agro Eco example), specific for the fruit sector for both farmer organizations and exporters with outgrower groups).

See <www.fao.org/organicag/organicexports/oe-rationale-strategy/oe-activities/en/>.

Please note that using these documents as examples for the development of your own ICS Manual does not guarantee the approval of your ICS by the certification body. These documents are examples only; do not copy them! Adapt your ICS to the specificities of your organization's situation, in collaboration with the people who will be responsible for the implementation of the system. Consult your certification body about their specific requirements for ICS and group certification – they may have developed standard formats for ICS documents.

FAIR-TRADE CERTIFICATION

RATIONALE

The objective of fair-trade initiatives is to improve the terms and conditions under which smallholders participate in the market. They typically offer a price premium; the FLO system also offers a guaranteed minimum price. Suppliers operating under a fair-trade system must ensure that the benefits of the system are shared with producer members and/or workers.

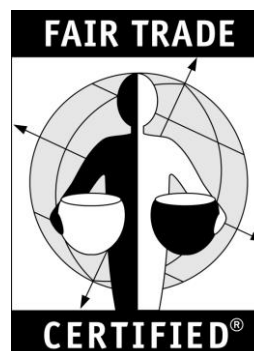
Although the fair-trade system was meant to improve market access for smallholders, in practice it is often the importers who look for suppliers to meet the demand for fair-trade products. Fair-trade certification then becomes a means to exploit a market opportunity. Before investing in fair-trade certification, you should try to find a potential buyer for your fair-trade products. Your current conventional or organic buyer may be interested in entering the fair-trade market.

SELECTING A CERTIFICATION SCHEME AND BODY

Fair-trade initiatives include:

The FLO system

The fair-trade system developed by Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), centered around the Transfair, Max Havelaar and Fairtrade labels, is the world's most important fair-trade scheme for agricultural products. FLO labelled products are certified by FLO-Cert (<www.flo-cert.net>). For more information, see <www.fairtrade.net>.



WFTO

The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO, formerly IFAT) authorizes member organizations respecting WFTO's *10 Principles of Fair Trade* to use the WFTO logo (which, unlike the FLO labels, is not a product mark). WFTO's Sustainable Fair Trade Management System (SFTMS) seeks to provide a management system certification for fair-trade goods and their production processes, complementing FLO's existing product labelling approach. SFTMS is tailored to the needs and the reality of small organizations. After a successful, independent third-party audit and validation of a published report, products sold by an SFTMS certified and registered organization may carry a label communicating that the items were sourced and produced under fair-trade principles and practices. For more information, see www.wfto.com and www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=915&Itemid=285.



Fair-trade certification schemes developed by organic certification bodies

- Ecocert Fair Trade (EFT) programme: www.ecocert.com/-EFT.html;
- IMO's Fair for Life brand: www.imo.ch/imo_services_social_accountability_fair_trade_en.1778.998.html or www.fairforlife.net.

Smaller initiatives

There are numerous local initiatives from consumers who import small quantities under fair-trade conditions (for example Equiterre, www.equiterre.com, or Minga, www.minga.net).

FLO FAIR-TRADE CERTIFICATION – STEPS

Overview

- Download the relevant standards from www.fairtrade.net/standards.html;
- Study the standards to assess whether your organization could comply with them, how much preparation time it would need and how much compliance would cost;
- Find a buyer before making any investments;
- Start the compliance process and apply for certification with FLO-Cert (www.flo-cert.net).

Costs

The costs of certification under the FLO system depend on the current situation of your organization. Farmer organizations operating under the FLO system must be democratically organized; their members must have a voice in decision making structures and profits must be distributed fairly amongst members. In practical terms, organizations operating under the FLO system must organize annual general meetings; their members must understand the concept of fair-trade and agree to seek FLO certification. Large organizations whose members are spread across various villages must organize elections for representatives to the general assembly. Developing democratic structures is generally the most important cost incurred by organizations seeking FLO certification. FLO standards require hired labourers to have the right to join independent unions to

collectively negotiate working conditions, while a joint body bringing together managers and workers decides on the use of the Fairtrade premium. Organizations operating under the FLO system must pay FLO minimum wages and implement health and safety measures to avoid work related injuries. If your organization has not yet developed any of these measures, compliance with the FLO standards may be quite costly. However, as improvements in working conditions generally lead to increases in productivity, these costs may be earned back over time. In addition to these compliance costs, your organization will need to pay a certification fee. For an overview of the fees charged by FLO-Cert, see www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/main.php?id=13. To help new smallholder organizations pay their initial certification costs, FLO has set up a Certification Fund (see below).

Finding a buyer

To prevent suppliers from incurring inspection costs without having any assurances as to finding an outlet for their fair-trade products, FLO-Cert only inspects organizations that can present a letter of intent from a potential buyer.

To find a buyer you may adopt one or several of the following approaches:

- Contact FLO to ask if they are aware of any importers looking for your product. FLO has liaison officers in many countries (see www.fairtrade.net/liaison_officers.html) who may be able to help you; they can be contacted through FLO;
- Check the list of FLO licensees for your product in your target market (see www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/main.php?id=10);
- Contact FLO's national "Fairtrade Labelling Initiatives" to find out about potential buyers in each of the national markets (see www.fairtrade.net/fairtrade_near_you.html);
- See [Module 7](#) for information regarding general marketing tools.

Compliance and application for certification

Once you have found a potential buyer, you may start preparing for compliance with the FLO standards. Organize a general assembly to elect an executive

committee, revise your organization's constitution (if necessary) and approve the decision to apply for Fairtrade certification. Fill out the FLO-Cert application form (available at: www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/main.php?id=10) and send it to FLO-Cert.

FLO-Cert will evaluate whether your organization falls within the scope of its certification scheme; if it does, you will need to pay an application fee. FLO-Cert will then send you further information concerning the certification process, as well as additional forms and, for small farmer organizations, application forms for the FLO Certification Fund (see www.fairtrade.net/producer_certification_fund.html?&scale=0), which may cover up to 75 percent of the certification fee during the first year, and a smaller proportion during the second year (over time, organizations are expected to pay their certification fees with the additional revenues they generate by exporting under the Fairtrade system).

GLOBALGAP

GLOBALGAP is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products. The GLOBALGAP standard, one of the most widely recognized international standards, is a pre-farm gate standard aimed at minimizing the detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reducing the use of chemical inputs and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety and animal welfare. GLOBALGAP is a business-to-business label. It is not directly visible to consumers, but assures your buyer that you respect the GLOBALGAP requirements, for example in the field of food safety. Certain buyers require their suppliers to be GLOBALGAP certified. The steps to obtain GLOBALGAP certification include:

- Obtain information about your buyer's precise requirements. Many buyers do not require full GLOBALGAP certification, but rather ask their suppliers to demonstrate that they are working towards obtaining certification, e.g. by way of their own documentation, evidence of training or a pre-audit. While suppliers are of course expected to eventually obtain full certification, this approach allows organizations to spread investments towards compliance over time;
- Carefully study the GLOBALGAP requirements. The GLOBALGAP standards can be downloaded from www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idart=34;
- We strongly recommend you to have your organization pre-audited by a qualified person to

determine which standards you do (not) comply with, and which requirements do not apply to your organization's situation. GLOBALGAP approved certification bodies normally offer a pre-audit service. Alternatively, independent consultants may be cheaper and may also provide advice as to the choice of your certification body;

- Draw up an action plan based on the pre-audit results, setting out the necessary actions to ensure 95 percent compliance with GLOBALGAP's so-called "minor musts" and 100 percent compliance with its "major musts";
- Select your certification body. For a list of all GLOBALGAP approved certification bodies, see www2.GLOBALGAP.org/apprcbs.html;
- Prepare for inspection (and organize one last internal inspection just before the inspection by external inspectors).

Group certification

To reduce the costs of GLOBALGAP compliance and certification for small-scale farmers, a collective certification scheme (GLOBALGAP Option 2) was set up to allow groups of farmers to comply with the GLOBALGAP requirements as a unit. GLOBALGAP Option 2 allows producer groups to centralize compliance measures (e.g. pesticide storage), allowing them to reap certain benefits of scale. The structure of the producer group must enable the application of a Quality Management System across the whole group. In cooperation with the German "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische

Zusammenarbeit" (GTZ) and the "Gesellschaft für Ressourcenschutz" (GfRS), GLOBALGAP has developed a manual for smallholders, including operational procedures and recording forms to be used as templates by producer groups. The latest version of this manual can be downloaded from:

www.GLOBALGAP.org/cms/upload/Documents/QMS_Manual-Final-1.pdf. In 2007, GLOBALGAP appointed an Africa Observer to participate in GLOBALGAP's Sector Committees, provide technical support to

GLOBALGAP members in developing countries and act as a "smallholder ambassador" by identifying ways to facilitate the compliance of smallholders with GLOBALGAP standards. For more information, see www.africa-observer.info. In February 2008 a GLOBALGAP Smallholder Taskforce was established, see:

www.GLOBALGAP.org/cms/front_content.php?idart=299&idcat=70&lang=1&client=1.

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Any business support organization developing an ICS manual for a producer group should do so in close collaboration with the group, to ensure that the manual is adapted to the particular situation of the group. Indeed, the quality of an ICS crucially depends upon its implementation by ICS staff members. Involving the group's staff in the development of the ICS doubles as a sensitization and training process.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CONTRACTS

Several donors and projects now provide financial support to farmer organizations to pay for certification fees in the preparation or conversion period. This is a very simple and straightforward tool to help smallholder organizations take advantage of the markets for certified products.

Donors are advised to make this financial support directly available to the farmer organization, rather

than paying the certification body themselves or via a business support organization. Handling invoices, bank transfers etc. will be a learning process in itself for the organization, and prevent the business support organization from becoming the certification body's interlocutor. Maintaining contacts with the certification body is a useful test for farmer organizations. If an organization is incapable of maintaining such contacts, the business support organization may need to provide permanent support services; alternatively, the group may opt to obtain certification through an exporter, who owns the certificate (in such cases, the group can only sell certified products through this exporter).

Business support organization are advised to conclude contracts with farmer organizations concerning the management of funds, the actions that need to be undertaken in order to export certified products etc. Negotiating and honouring such contracts may provide a useful learning experience for organizations preparing themselves for their first commercial contracts.

