



17 June 2015

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 02

Series of 2015

**SUBJECT : GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF VALIDATION PROCESS
FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ORGANIC PRIMARY AND
POSTHARVEST FOOD, NON-FOOD AND INPUT PRODUCERS**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 16 (Registration of Organic Food and Organic Input Producers) and Section 17 (Labeling of Organic Produce) of the Republic Act (RA) No. 10068 otherwise known as the *Organic Agriculture Act of 2010*, the Department hereby adopts and prescribes this Circular covering the procedures on the validation process for the registration of organic primary and postharvest food, non-food and input producers for the information and guidance of all concerned.

**SECTION 1
OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for issuing these guidelines are to:

1.1 provide guidance for the conduct of validation activities such as pre-registration as part of the registration, monitoring and post-market surveillance; and

1.2 ensure that products being marketed are conforming with the Philippine National Standards (PNS) for Organic Agriculture (OA) and other relevant PNS.

**SECTION 2
SCOPE**

2.1 These guidelines cover the validation activities for the issuance of Certificate of Registration (COR), monitoring of registered organic agriculture and fishery establishments, and post-market surveillance of registered organic primary and postharvest food, non-food and inputs in market outlets.

2.2 Validation shall cover the validation of farms/establishments under the following categories:



2.2.1 Primary and Postharvest Food

- 2.2.1.1 Crops
- 2.2.1.2 Livestock and Poultry
- 2.2.1.3 Fish

2.2.2 Non-Food Products (*e.g.*, fiber, feeds, tea bags)

- 2.2.2.1 Planting Materials
- 2.2.2.2 Brood Stocks/Fry/Fingerlings
- 2.2.2.3 Breeding Stocks/Slaughter Stock
- 2.2.2.4 Feeds and Feed Ingredients

2.2.3 Inputs

- 2.2.3.1 Organic Fertilizers (soil conditioners, plant supplements, microbial inoculants)
- 2.2.3.2 Bio-Control Agents (microbials, macrobials, semiochemicals, botanicals)

2.3 Pre-Registration Activities for Organic Inputs

All organic input establishments applying for a COR with the Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (DA-BAFS) shall undergo validation process.

2.4 Monitoring of Registered Organic Establishments

All registered organic establishments shall be subjected to monitoring at any time within the validity of the license, or in case of filed formal complaints.

2.5 Post-Market Surveillance

All registered organic primary and postharvest food, non-food products and inputs in market outlets shall be subjected to validation in order to check compliance with applicable Philippine National Standards for Organic Agriculture (PNS OA) and Aquaculture.

SECTION 3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

As used in this Circular, the following terms shall be understood to have the meaning correspondingly provided below:

3.1 Agriculture or Fishery Establishment - refers to the facility used for production of primary and postharvest foods (including operations carried out in the crop industry, animal husbandry and aquaculture), postharvest handling, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport and/or storage, but excluding those sites, buildings and structures, such as laboratories, administrative offices and other areas where food is not handled and where people handling food do not normally enter. The term "*Agriculture or Fishery Establishment*" also includes facilities involved in activities related to inputs in the primary and postharvest stages of production.



3.2 Aquaculture - refers to fishery operations involving all forms of breeding, raising and farming of fish and other fishery species in fresh, brackish and marine water areas.

3.3 Certification - refers to the procedure by which official certifying bodies or officially recognized certifying bodies provide written or equivalent assurance which foods or food control systems conform to the PNS OA requirements. Certification of food may be, as appropriate, based on a range of inspection activities, which may include continuous on-line inspection, auditing of quality assurance systems, and examination of finished products.

3.4 Fish and Fishery/Aquatic Products - refers to finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, echinoderms, marine mammals, and all other species of aquatic flora and fauna and all other products of aquatic living resources in any form.

3.5 Livestock - refers to any cattle, sheep, goat, swine, poultry or equine animals used for food or in the production of food, fiber or feed or other agricultural-based consumer products (e.g. milk and egg); wild or domesticated game; or other non-plant life, except such term shall not include aquatic animals for the production of food, fiber, feed or other agricultural-based consumer products.

3.6 Market Authorization - refers to the permits and certificates of compliance issued by the DA-BAFS to establishments that sell or offer to sell organic products.

3.7 Microbial Inoculants - refer to biologically active products containing optimum population of one or a combination of active strains of beneficial bacteria, actinomycetes, enzymes, algae and fungi that are useful in different biological activities, such as N₂ fixation, accelerated decomposition of a specific element from the soil for faster nutrient absorption by the plant.

3.8 Monitoring - refers to the scheduled validation activities to verify continued compliance with PNS OA and other related standards after the issuance of COR by the DA-BAFS.

3.9 Nonconformity - refers to a nonfulfillment or failure to meet the requirements of PNS OA and other relevant standards.

3.10 Non-Food Product - refers to agriculture and fishery products that are not used directly for human consumption such as feeds, fiber and tea bags

3.11 Organic Agriculture Validation Team refers to the team of experts and representatives from various regulatory agencies and concerned offices officially designated to perform validation activities.



3.12 Organic Certificate - refers to the official document issued by the officially accredited organic certifying bodies attesting that the entity conforms to organic agriculture requirements. The official document identifies the name and address of the entity certified, effective date of certification, expiration date of certification, certification number, scopes of products and/or process certified, identification of certified sites, name and address of certification agent, and standards to which the entity is certified.

3.13 Organic Fertilizer - means any product in solid or liquid form, of plant (except by-products from petroleum industries) or animal origin that has undergone substantial decomposition that can supply available nutrients to plants with a total Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K). This may be enriched by microbial inoculants and naturally occurring minerals but no chemical or inorganic fertilizer materials has been added to the finished product to affect the nutrient content.

3.14 Organic Input - refers to organic materials necessary for organic agriculture production such as plant nutrition (fertilizer, compost/soil conditioner, microbial inoculants, plant growth regulator and plant food supplement)) and plant protection or pest management products (bio-control agents), which are used to comply with the requirements of organic agriculture standards.

3.15 Organic Product - refers to the product that has been produced, processed, or handled in compliance with the applicable organic standards

3.16 Post-market Surveillance - refers to activities, after market authorization has been issued, relating to safety and quality monitoring of organic primary and postharvest food, non-food products and inputs. This shall also include, among others, adverse events reporting, product safety and quality update reporting, collection and testing of organic products in the market.

3.17 Registration - refers to the process by which DA-BAFS record and verify information about agriculture and fishery establishments engaged in the primary production and postharvest stages of the food supply chain, including facilities involved in activities related to organic inputs in the primary and postharvest stages of production, in an official list or official system for entering names and information.

3.18 Soil Conditioner - refers to any product in solid or liquid from, of plant (except by-products from petroleum industries) or animal origin that has undergone substantial decomposition that can supply available nutrients to plants with a total Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K). This may be enriched by microbial inoculants and naturally occurring minerals but no chemical or inorganic fertilizer material has been added to the finished product to affect the nutrient content. Compost and soil conditioner can be used interchangeably.

3.19 Validation - refers to official control activities conducted by DA-BAFS as the regulatory agency for organic agriculture to verify compliance to relevant PNS OA.

These validation activities include pre-registration inspection and sampling, monitoring and post-market surveillance.

SECTION 4

COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE VALIDATION TEAM (OAVT)

4.1 The Organic Agriculture Validation Team (OAVT) shall be composed of representatives from the following Department of Agriculture (DA) regulatory agencies and other concerned offices:

4.1.1 Pre-Registration and Monitoring Team:

- 4.1.1.1 Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)
- 4.1.1.2 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
- 4.1.1.3 Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)
- 4.1.1.4 Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)
- 4.1.1.5 National Dairy Authority (NDA)
- 4.1.1.6 National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS)
- 4.1.1.7 Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA)
- 4.1.1.8 Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)
- 4.1.1.9 Academe/Research Institutions
- 4.1.1.10 Designated BAFS Consultants
- 4.1.1.11 Designated representative from DA RFOs
- 4.1.1.12 Concerned DA agencies

4.1.2 Post-Market Surveillance Team

- 4.1.2.1 Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS)
- 4.1.2.2 Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)
- 4.1.2.3 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
- 4.1.2.4 Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)
- 4.1.2.5 Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)
- 4.1.2.6 National Dairy Authority (NDA)
- 4.1.2.7 National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS)
- 4.1.2.8 Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA)
- 4.1.2.9 Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)
- 4.1.2.10 Other concerned DA agencies

4.2 The Regional Executive Director (RED) designates the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division, Regulatory Division and Operations Division from the Regional Field Office (RFO) as members of the Regional Post-Market Surveillance Team.

4.3 The DA-BAFS shall serve as the Technical and Administrative Secretariat of the OA Validation Team and Post-Market Surveillance Team including its Regional Team.



SECTION 5

FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE VALIDATION TEAM

5.1 Pre-Registration Validation

The team assigned to conduct pre-Registration validation shall have the following functions:

- 5.1.1 Assess the veracity of the information indicated in the submitted application documents (verification of records and inspection of farm and its products); and
- 5.1.2 Conduct validation activities prior to the issuance of COR for organic inputs by the Organic Agriculture Registration Section (OARS).

5.2 Monitoring

The team assigned to conduct monitoring of registered organic establishments shall have the following functions:

- 5.2.1 Conduct regular monitoring of registered organic establishments at a frequency based on risk categorization;
- 5.2.2 Collect product samples from organic establishments/farms based on risk categorization for laboratory analyses; and
- 5.2.3 Conduct special case monitoring in cases of receipt of written complaints or reports of non-conformities to PNS OA.

5.3 Post-Market Surveillance

The teams assigned to conduct post-market surveillance shall have the following functions including their area of jurisdiction:

5.3.1 *Organic Agriculture Validation Team*

- 5.3.1.1 Conduct post-market surveillance of registered organic primary and postharvest food, non-food products and inputs in market outlets in the National Capital Region (NCR);
- 5.3.1.2 Collect product samples from organic market outlets for laboratory analyses;
- 5.3.1.3 Prepare list of organic products sold in market outlets; and
- 5.3.1.4 Train designated Regional Post-Market Surveillance Teams on the provisions of the standards and work procedures of validation.



5.3.2 Regional Post-Market Surveillance Team

5.3.2.1 Conduct post-market surveillance of registered organic primary and postharvest food, non-food products and inputs in market outlets in their respective regions;

5.3.2.2 Collect product samples from organic market outlets for laboratory analyses;

5.3.2.3 Prepare list of organic products sold in market outlets; and

5.3.2.4 Submit report to OAVT on a regular basis.

5.4 The OAVT shall prepare reports on the conducted validation activities and submit such reports to the DA-BAFS Director.

SECTION 6 CONDUCT OF VALIDATION ACTIVITY

6.1 The validation activities will be conducted following the *OAVT Operations Manual*.

6.2 The following are the requirements for each validation process:

6.2.1 Pre-Registration

6.2.1.1 Import/Export Records, if applicable;

6.2.1.2 Organic certificate;

6.2.1.3 Internal Control System (ICS) Manual, if applicable (group certification); and

6.2.1.4 Issued certificates by other regulatory agencies.

6.2.2 Monitoring

6.2.2.1 Production Records;

6.2.2.2 Sales Records;

6.2.2.3 Import/Export Records;

6.2.2.4 Updated copy of organic certification (laminated/framed, displayed organic certification) (non-display of certification is a non-conformity); and

6.2.2.5 ICS Manual, if applicable.

SECTION 7 CONFIDENTIALITY AND OBJECTIVITY

7.1 BAFS OAVT Secretariat shall require the members of the Validation Team to sign a *Confidentiality Agreement* and must be maintained at all levels among Validation Team members, and the producers.

7.2 Farm protocols and other intellectual property of the farm must not be disclosed to non-authorized personnel.

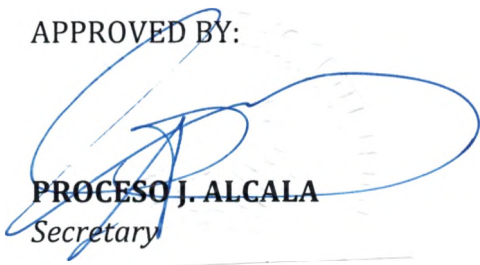


7.3 The results of the Validation Team shall only be disclosed to the owner of the establishment, OAVT members and the OA Registration Section (OARS).


SECTION 8
EFFECTIVITY

8.1 This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation and after its filing with the National Administrative Register of the University of the Philippines Law Center (UPLC).

APPROVED BY:



PROCESO J. ALCALA
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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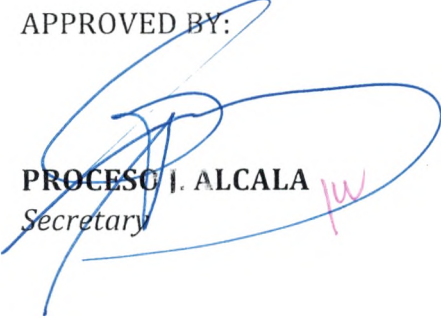


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ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DETAILS	TIMELINE	
<pre>graph TD A[Receiving the list of entries from OARS] --> B[Evaluation of documents] B --> C{Conflict of Interest} C -- No --> D[Planning of validation activities parameters] C -- Yes --> E[Request for disqualification in validation activity] E --> B D --> F[Contact the applicant on pertinent information to facilitate validation proper] F --> G[Validation of compliance of the establishment with standards/Discussion of results with the applicant] G --> H[Submission of report to BAFS Director]</pre>	OAVTS	List of pre-Registration applicants and registered producers/establishments	1-2 working days after the receipt of list of entries from OARS	
	OAVT	The OAVT will assess the documents and will notify the OAVTS if there is conflict of interest.		
	OAVT member			
	OAVTS	The OAVTS will take charge on the planning of itineraries for the validation proper. The team members will be sent with the following documents: Copy of registration application documents submitted to OARS by the applicant and other relevant documents, if applicable (e.g. list of certified farms/establishments) Applicable checklist Validation plan List of registered establishments/farms (monitoring)	1-2 weeks after the evaluation of documents	
	OAVTS	The OAVTS will notify the applicant on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposed date and time of validationVerification of information and lacking/incomplete documents, if anyConfirmation of background information regarding: multi-site operations; on-farm or off-site processing and handling, storage facilities; and parallel productionConfirmation of the presence of appropriate personnel that shall be present during the evaluationEvaluation protocols		
	OAVT	The OAVT members will conduct a validation activity. All observed non-conformities will be discussed to the management	1 week after the receipt of confirmation from the applicant	
	OAVTS	The OAVTS will submit the report to the BAFS Director, with a copy furnished to the Organic Agriculture Division.	Maximum of 3 working days after the validation proper	

Figure 1. Process flow chart of the pre-Registration activity and monitoring activities.

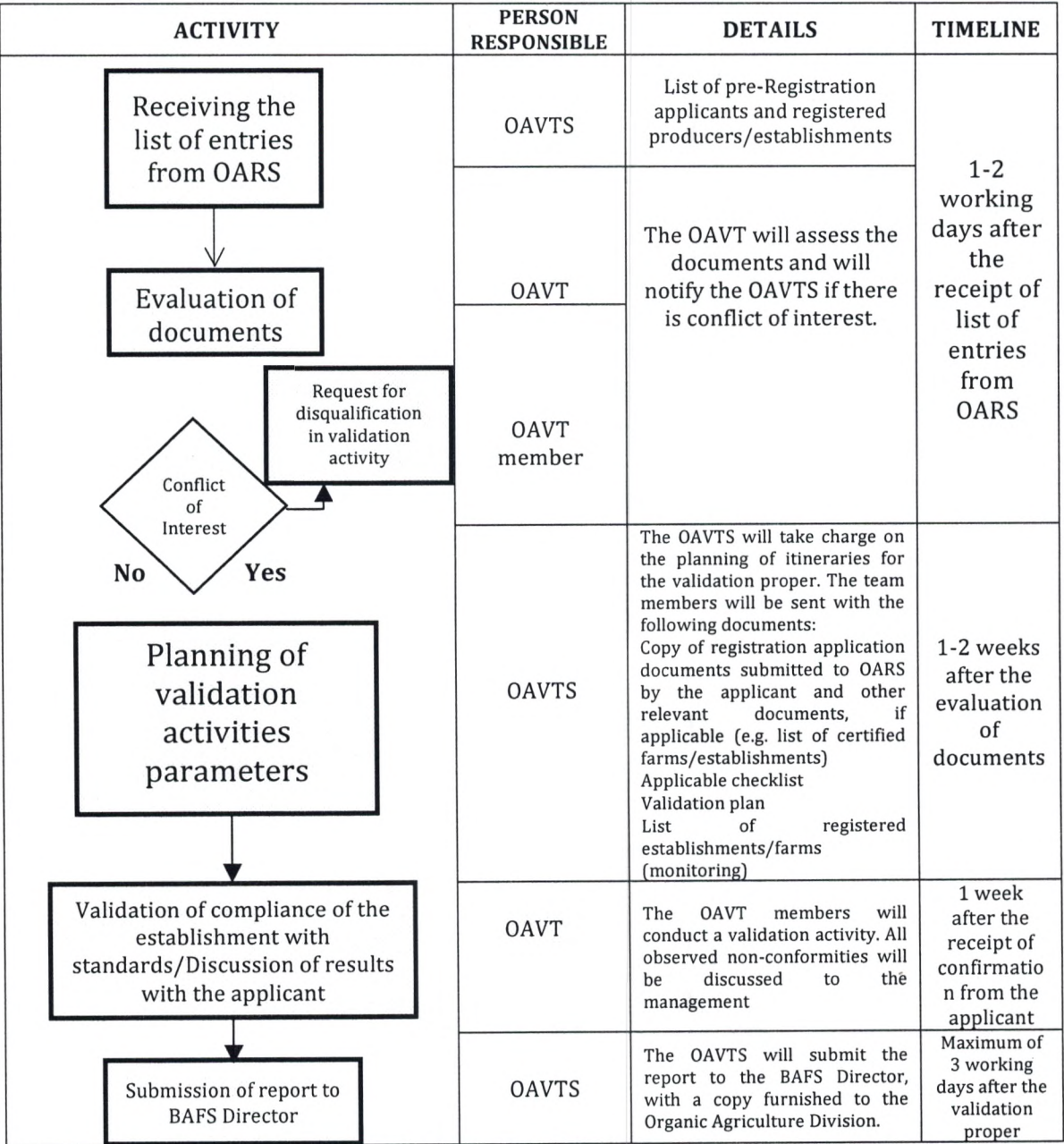


Figure 2. Process flow chart of the post-market surveillance.

