

**CERTIFICATION REGULATION**

**Contents**

**Preamble ..... 3**

**GLOBALG.A.P. Standards ..... 3**

**Q CHECK Inspection and Certification Organization ..... 3**

**The GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Standard (Version 6)..... 4**

**Certification Options ..... 5**

**Application process..... 7**

*Application and Certification Scope ..... 8*

*Service Contract & GLOBALG.A.P. Sub-license Agreement ..... 9*

*GLOBALG.A.P. Service Contract termination ..... 9*

**Registration Process..... 9**

*Parallel Production (PP) or Parallel Ownership (PO) ..... 10*

*Additional Requirements for producers with PP/PO ..... 10*

*Registration renewal ..... 11*

*The GLOBALG.A.P. Database..... 11*

*Data Access Rules ..... 11*

**Assessment Process .....14**

**Option 1 – Single Sites and Multisites without QMS .....15**

*Self-assessments by the producer ..... 15*

*Announced CB*

*audit.....1216*

*Unannounced CB audit ..... 18*

**Option 2 and Option 1 Multisite with QMS .....18**

*Internal Assessments by Producer Groups and Multisite Producers with QMS..... 18*

*Q CHECK Quality Management System (QMS) Audit ..... 18*

*Q CHECK Producer/Production Site Inspections..... 24*

**Requirements to Achieve and Maintain GLOBALG.A.P. Certification .....25**

*Inspection/Audit Reporting ..... 30*

*Inspection duration..... 31*

**Certification Process .....33**

*Certification Decision ..... 33*

*GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate ..... 35*

*GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate and Certification Cycle..... 36*



*Extension of Certificate Validity* ..... 36

*Non-Compliance and Non-Conformance* ..... 37

*Producer Non-Conformance and Sanctions* ..... 38

*Sanctions* ..... 38

*Warning* ..... 38

*Product Suspension* ..... 39

*Self-declared Product Suspension* ..... 40

*Cancellation* ..... 41

*Notification and Appeals* ..... 41

**GLOBALG.A.P. Trademark**.....42

**The GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN)** .....42

**Traceability through the GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN)** .....44

**Final Provisions**.....44

**Contact**.....44

## **Preamble**

The present Certification Regulation describes the general requirements for the implementation of Q CHECK's GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Certification Scheme and is meant to serve as a guide for the producers.

Producers seeking certification against GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Standard, shall always refer to the normative documents distributed by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat at [https://www.globalgap.org/uk\\_en/documents/](https://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/documents/) for information. The reference documents shall at least include the General Regulations, the corresponding scope Regulations, the Principles & Criteria and the Quality Management System Checklists (for option 2 and option 1 with QMS), all in their latest versions.

The present Certification Regulation does not in any way substitute the original normative Documents but is meant to assist producers identify the key elements for achieving GLOBALG.A.P. Certification status.

## **GLOBALG.A.P. Standards**

GLOBALG.A.P. is a global Organization with a crucial objective: safe, sustainable agriculture worldwide. They set voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the globe. G.A.P. stands for Good Agricultural Practice and GLOBALG.A.P. is a globally recognized standard that assures it. GLOBALG.A.P. members create private sector incentives for agricultural producers worldwide to adopt safe and sustainable practices. Globally connecting farmers and brand owners in the production and marketing of safe food, GLOBALG.A.P. Certification offers reassurance for consumers. The implementation of the Standard lays the foundation for the protection of scarce resources by the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices.

GLOBALG.A.P. Certification generally covers:

- Food safety and traceability
- Environment (including biodiversity)
- Workers' health, safety and welfare
- Animal welfare
- Includes Integrated Crop Management (ICM), Integrated Pest Control (IPC),
- Quality Management System (QMS), and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)

GLOBALG.A.P. Standard demands great efficiency in production. It improves business performance and reduces waste of vital resources. It also requires a general approach to farming that builds in best practices.

## **Q CHECK Inspection and Certification Organization**

Q-CHECK is an independent Accredited Certification and Inspection Body providing assessment, auditing and inspection services for system and products against specific International and European standards, schemes and protocols.

Q-CHECK currently holds the following accreditations:

Accredited against ISO17021:

- ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems
- ISO 22000: 2018 Food Safety Management Systems
- FSSC 22000 Food Safety Scheme

Accredited against ISO 17065:

- Organic Product Certification EU (Regulations 848/2018)
- Private Organic Product Certification Scheme equivalent to EU (Regulation 1235/2008)
- GLOBALG.A.P. IFA

Q-CHECK is the holder of Accreditation Certificates No. 725 and No. 827, accredited by the National Accreditation Body of Greece, E.SY.D. Detailed information can be accessed at E.SY.D website <http://www.esyd.gr/portal/p/esyd/en/catalogues.jsp>

### **The GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Standard (Version 6 smart & GFS)**

The GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Standard V6 is built on a system of modules that enables producers to get certified for several sub-scopes in one audit. It consists of:

- **General Regulations:** These map out the criteria for successful P&Cs implementation as well as set guidelines for the verification and the regulation of the standard.
- **Principles & Criteria (PC):** These clearly define the requirements for achieving the quality standard required by GLOBALG.A.P.

The Principles & Criteria (P&Cs) are also modular-based consisting of:

- The **Scope Module:** This defines clear criteria based on the different food production sectors. GLOBALG.A.P. covers 3 scope s: Plants, Livestock and Aquaculture.
- The **Sub-scope Module:** These P&Cs cover all the requirements for a particular product or different aspect of the food production and supply chain Fruit and Vegetables, Hop, Flowers and Ornamentals.

To get certified, producers must comply with all the P&Cs relevant for their sub-scope. For example, a strawberry grower must comply with the P&Cs Fruit and Vegetables to receive a GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Fruit & Vegetables Standard Certificate.

GLOBALG.A.P. also provides checklists for each sub-scope to help producers better prepare their farms and make the necessary changes before a certification body inspector performs an audit or inspection.

At present, Q -check Accreditation covers the scope “**Plants**” and the sub-scope “**Fruit and Vegetables, Hop, Flower and Ornamentals**”.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Fruit and Vegetables, Hop, Flower and Ornamentals Standard covers all stages of production, from pre-harvest activities such as soil management and plant protection product application to post-harvest produce handling, packing and storing.

Under the CoC standard, the applicant can apply for certification under one option, individual certification, with three sub-options.

## **Certification Options**

GLOBALGAP IFA / CoC and Q-CHECK Quality Management System offer the following Certification Options:

### **Option 1 – Individual Certification**

An individual producer applies for certification (GLOBALG.A.P. or a benchmarked scheme). For option 1, the individual producer is the certificate holder once certified.

### **Option 1 – Multisite without Implementation of a Quality Management System**

An individual producer or one organization owns several production sites that do not function as separate legal entities.

### **Option 1 – Multisite with Implementation of a Quality Management System**

An individual producer or one organization owns several production sites that do not function as separate legal entities, but where a QMS has been implemented. In this case the rules of the General Regulations Part II – Quality Management System Rules (QMS Rules) shall apply.

### **Option 2 (Group Certification Option)**

- A producer group applies for group certification (GLOBALG.A.P.).
- The group, as a legal entity, is the certificate holder once certified.
- A group shall have a QMS implemented and comply with rules set out in the GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations Part II – Quality Management System Rules.
- The option to apply for GLOBALG.A.P. certification as a group of producers (Three or more) where a quality management system (QMS is implemented). (this producer group might consist of three members or the group itself with its own production sites and two more producer group members.)

## **CoC CERTIFICATION OPTIONS**

### **Option 1 – Individual Certification**

An individual producer/ company applies for certification (CoC standard). For option 1, the individual producer/company is the certificate holder once certified.

### **Option 1 – Single site**

An individual producer/ company with a single processing, handling, storage and final consumer sale or administrative site shall be certified as one legal entity with one CoC number.

### **Option 1 – Multisite**

A producer/company owns several processing, handling, storage, final consumer sale, or administrative sites that do not function as separate entities.

In the case of multisite certification, all sites where certified products are sold, processed, handled, stored, or administered shall be assessed internally, and audited and certified by CB. This applies equally to subcontractors and the administrative sites of brokers that do not touch the product.

Sampling of sites for internal and Q-check audits is not allowed, except for retail stores and restaurants which may be sampled by Q-check for audits. All sites will be registered as one legal entity with one CoC number.

### **Option 1 – Multisite for retail stores and restaurants chains in franchise**

An individual company owns a franchise network of retail stores or restaurants. The individual retail stores and restaurants (sites) function as separate legal entities.

In the case of multisite certification, all sites where certified products are sold, processed, handled, stored, or administratively managed shall be inspected internally. This applies equally to any subcontractors of those sites. Sampling of sites for audits is allowed for stores, distribution centers, and restaurants. These may be sampled for audits according to the table below.

The selection process shall include randomly selected sites and shall ensure that the overall sample selected is representative of the multisite under evaluation and covers the widest possible range in terms of:

- i) Geographical distribution, ii) size of the participating sites (number of workers), iii) activities and/or number of products

Q-check shall avoid visiting the same participating sites in consecutive audits unless there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so. The central office shall be audited by Q-check in addition to the selected participating sites. A) at least 10% of audited sites shall be audited as an unannounced audit, b) at least one traceability exercise shall be performed per site.

If more than three major must nonconformances are raised during the audit, the unannounced sample shall be increased to 50% of the sample size and two traceability tests per site shall be done during the next Q-check audit to assure that corrective actions implemented remain effective. All sites registered as one legal entity with one CoC number.

Total number of sites	Number of sites to be visited during Q-check audit	
	Initial Q-check audit	Subsequent Q-check audit
1 to 3	1	1
4 to 6	2	1
7 to 9	3	2
10 to 16	3	2
17 to 25	4	2
26 to 36	4	2
37 to 49	4	2
50 to 64	5	3
65 to 84	5	3
85 to 100	5	3
101 to 121	6	4
122 to 144	6	4
145 to 169	7	5
170 to 196	7	5
197 to 225	8	5
226 to 256	8	5
257 to 289	9	6
290 to 324	9	6
325 to 361	10	6
362 to 400	10	6
401 to 441	11	6
442 to 484	11	6
485 to 529	12	7
530 to 576	12	7
577 to 625	13	7
626 to 676	13	7
677 to 729	14	8
730 to 784	14	8
785 to 841	15	8
842 to 900	15	8
901 to 961	16	8
962 to 1024	16	8
Over 1024	Square root multiplied by 0.5 rounded up	Square root multiplied by 0.25 rounded up

### Application process

Any producer of primary agricultural products covered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Standards may apply for GLOBALG.A.P. Certification, according to Q-check Certification System.

For GLOBALG.A.P. Certification, the term “producer(s)” refers to persons (individuals) or businesses (company, individual producer or producer group) that are legally responsible for the production processes and the products of the respective scope, sold by those persons or businesses.

Producers can apply for certification using any of the 2 available options (individual or group certification under GLOBALG.A.P.). The options are based on the constitution of the legal entity applying for certification. The

assessment process for each of these options is different and meets the minimum requirements set out in GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations.

All production sites to be certified shall be registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems. The product scope is linked to the location where that product is produced. Products produced in nonregistered location shall not be included in the certification scope. Likewise, products that are not registered but are grown in a registered location shall not be included in the certification scope. Only individual producers or producer group may apply to register their production process for GLOBALG.A.P. certification. A certificate and sublicense are issued to the registered producer for production sites where the products are produced (and packed or handled if applicable) and for the products declared.

Only the legal certificate holder (i.e., the legal entity indicated on the certificate) may market products with reference to a GLOBALG.A.P. certificate. Producer group members are not legal certificate holders. Thus, they shall not market any products under their name with reference to the producer group certificate. All products that are sold without reference to the certificate shall be recorded in the producer group mass balance system. Exception may apply following GlobalG.A.P. General Regulations -Rules for Flexible Distribution”.

### **Application and Certification Scope**

Q-check’s scope of GLOBALG.A.P. Certification covers the following:

- The controlled production process of primary products. It does not cover crops harvested in the wild.
- Only plant products included in the respective GLOBALG.A.P. Product List (version in force) may be approved for certification during the application process.
- The application shall cover only products that are produced by the producers themselves. Producers cannot receive certification for the production of products that are not produced by themselves. This is a criterion for application rejection.

All the elements above shall be assessed whenever a new application is received by Q-check. If the criteria are not met, the application shall be rejected or partly rejected (ex. in case some of the products applied for certification are not included in the GLOBALG.A.P. Product List) and the producer shall be notified in writing in due time.

Applications received from producers/operators that do not manage any land for the production of the registered products (either owned or rented) shall not be accepted by Q-check.

### **CoC Chain of Custody registration process**

The applicant shall choose a GLOBAL.G.A.P. approved CB-Q-check to be registered and receive its own CoC Number.

Q-check is responsible for the audit and certification process and for the registration in the GLOBAL.G.A.P. IT Systems.

Q-check has set up and explain to clients the detailed fee structure and specify the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fee, which Q-check pays to GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat for each particular client.

Q-check is responsible for Data handling and registration in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems.

### **Service Contract & GLOBALG.A.P. Sub-license Agreement**

Once the application of the producer/company/producer group is accepted, the applicant shall receive Q check Service Contract and the GLOBALG.A.P. Sub-license and Certification Agreement in its latest version. Both documents shall be originally signed and stamped, if the applicant is a legal entity. The original documents shall be submitted to Q-check and the corresponding fees shall be settled by the applicant before the initial inspection takes place.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Service Contract between Q-check and the producer may be valid for up to 4 years, with subsequent renewal for periods of up to 4 years.

### **GLOBALG.A.P. Service Contract termination**

In case an applicant requests the termination of the Service Contract and the Sub-License and Certification Agreement, the following actions shall be taken:

- The applicant shall send a formal termination request to Q -check .
- If the Certification Cycle is not over by the time the request is submitted, the applicant shall also inform all clients that he withdrew from GLOBALG.A.P. System and take any necessary actions to remove any references to the Certification Scheme from any harvested products and/or transaction documents.
- Upon acceptance of the termination of the Contract Service, Q -check shall immediately modify or update the GLOBALG.A.P. Database accordingly.
- From the specific contract termination date onwards, Q -check shall block the producer (GGN) in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.
- Q CHECK shall contact the GLOBALG.A.P. Database Customer Support Team for shortening of the certificate validity.
- It shall be decided by Q -check if the Certification Fee applies for the current Certification Cycle.

Any Service Contract that is not timely renewed by the producer/company/producer group, shall terminate on the date of its expiration.

On termination of the Service Contract (GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Agreement) and the Sub-License and Certification Agreement the right of the producer to use the GLOBALG.A.P. claim, including the trademark, GGN, or the QR code logo, terminates with immediate effect. The producer shall immediately stop using any reference to Q-check Inspection and Certification Body, as the GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Scheme is concerned and make any further use of Q -check logo.

### **Registration Process**

Once the producer is registered at the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, shall be supplied with a unique GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN), which is used as a unique identifier for all GLOBALG.A.P. activities. If a producer who has

already been registered changes CB or applies to Q-check for certification of a different product, the producer shall communicate the GGN assigned by GLOBALG.A.P. to Q-check. Before registering a new applicant, Q-check staff shall check the GLOBALG.A.P. Database to verify if the applicant is already listed.

For the registration to be completed, the applicant shall satisfy all the following conditions:

- (i) Submit to Q-check the relevant application that shall include all the necessary information.
- (ii) Sign acceptance of the GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement in its latest version with Q-check, or the applicant shall explicitly acknowledge the receipt and the inclusion of the GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement with signature on the service contract/agreement with Q-check and Q-check shall hand over a copy of the Sublicense and Certification Agreement to the applicant.
- (iii) Be assigned a GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN), if they don't already have a GGN or a Global Location Number (GLN).

Agree in writing to pay the GLOBALG.A.P. registration fee, as explained in the latest version of the GLOBALG.A.P. fee table.

- (iv) For individual producers: the producer shall use the GLOBALG.A.P. claim according to the rules in the "GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: Policy and guidelines" document.

The registration process, in case of initial certification and transfers, shall always be finalized before inspection is planned and can take place.

In the case of first registration Q-CHECK shall confirm the application and provide the applicant with the GGN within 28 calendar days of receiving the complete application.

### **Parallel Production (PP) or Parallel Ownership (PO)**

Any applicant/certificate holder (individual producer, multisite or producer group) who owns GLOBALG.A.P. and non-GLOBALG.A.P. products (of the same product) at any time needs to register for Parallel Production (PP) or Parallel Ownership (PO).

Q-check shall register the producer (per product) in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database for PP and/or PO.

Producers can register for PP/PO at any time if they start carrying out PP/PO activities, but cannot use the registration as immediate corrective action to avoid sanctions in the case of a non-conformance.

The information regarding PP/PO is requested from the producers at least when they submit the application or if they renew their registration. This takes place at least once per year.

### **Additional Requirements for producers with PP/PO**

All products shall be traceable to the respective production site/PHU (Product Handling Unit), and certified and non-certified products shall be fully segregated at all times. Producers shall be able to demonstrate that their traceability and recording system guarantees full traceability and segregation.

The handling of certified and non-certified products is possible within the same product handling facility. Parallel production in one production site is not allowed. Exceptions, when possible, are explained in the respective scope-specific rules.

### **Registration renewal**

The registration of the producer and the proposed products for the relevant scopes shall be confirmed with Q-check annually before the expiry date of the Certificate. All producers are required to re-submit an application before the expiry date of their Certificates in order to confirm their products and production sites before the re-registration of their products for the next production cycle. Q-CHECK notifies all producers in a timely manner in order to submit their annual applications before re-registration.

### **The GLOBALG.A.P. Database**

The GLOBALG.A.P. Database is an internet-based platform for worldwide certification management and related services. The database stores and connects the assessment and certification data of all GLOBALG.A.P. certified farms in over 135 countries, making it one of the largest online sources for validated farm data on food safety and sustainability. All GLOBALG.A.P. approved certification bodies, like Q-check, obligatorily use it to register and manage their clients' certification data.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Database is an important part of the organization's comprehensive Integrity Program. Reliable certification information, linked to other traceability data in the food chain, is key to proper quality management.

The most important feature of the GLOBALG.A.P. Database is the online certificate validation tool, which is used by the retailers and traders. A certificate that cannot be found on the publicly available search site is immediately considered invalid. The system secures instant and complete accessibility of registration and status data of every producer and product for all options to make the standard transparent.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Database can be accessed at the following web address:

<https://database.globalgap.org/globalgap/search/SearchMain.faces?init=1>

### **Data Access Rules**

Q-check collects various information through the application, audit and certification process from its clients. A significant part of the information is obligatorily registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat offers producers various services in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database. This requires data to be collected and processed. According to the data protection policy, GLOBALG.A.P. commits to strict requirements for processing of personal data and ensures compliance with the National and International data protection laws, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and German applicable data protection acts. Among other things, personal data is collected to allow GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to contact producers/companies/ e.g. in case of food crises, complaints, or audits in the framework of GLOBALG.A.P.

Integrity Program. By participating in the GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) Standard, the producer/company/operation grants access to the producer/company/operation data as well as product and certification data as displayed in the respective tables.

At any time, producers (this term also includes producer groups) as well as producer group members and companies/operations whose data is registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database may release more data to the different data access groups via Q-check.

In the public search of the GLOBALG.A.P. Database any person seeking information over certified producers may always see the name, city and country of the certificate holder (individual producer under Option 1 or producer group under Option 2, but no Option 2 members of a producer group), as well as the GGN or the previous GGN, if applicable and the CB registration number.

Should the applicant require more information regarding data access rules, contact Q-check staff directly or seek the “Data Access Rules” booklet at the GLOBALG.A.P. website ([www.globalgap.org](http://www.globalgap.org)).

Data access rules shall be defined and signed by the producer/producer group during registration with Q-check. The data owner is responsible for granting and determining the level of rights for data access.

The data owner, however, can transfer the responsibility to other users (e.g., CB)

Q-check shall inform the producer of and explain the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules available on website.

Q-check shall inform the producer of and explain any changes to the data access rules whenever applicable.

Data protection: within the GLOBALG.A.P. system, the data access rules define different levels of authorization, allowing different parties to the system (e.g., producers, CBs, GLOBALG.A.P. market participants, the public, etc.) to access different levels of data.

In addition, the producer can provide their personal data to trading partners who have been previously authorized by the producer, or the producer may instruct a third party to provide this data. Such authorization can be revoked online at any time. Any other access to the producer’s personal data is illegal and is prevented by the operator of the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems in accordance with the German Federal Data Protection Act.

GLOBALG.A.P. has a policy of keeping the applicant's/producer's certification history in its IT Systems for a minimum of 5 years.

### **Registration process for CoC**

Once the producer is registered at the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, shall be supplied with a unique GLOBALG.A.P. Number (CoC number), which is used as a unique identifier for all GLOBALG.A.P. activities. If a company already has IFA and/or Compound Manufacturing (CFM) certification and therefore an assigned GGN, the 13-digit CoC number will be the same as the GGN. The company shall use the “CoC” prefix when referring to those products not covered by the GLOBALG.A.P. certificates for IFA and/or CFM.

The CoC Number identified a registered or certified CoC company that handles processes, stores, sells, or trades the certified product post-farm.

The CoC number will be used as a unique identifier for all GLOBALG.A.P. activities.

The GLOBALG.A.P. claim refers to when a company claims, in communication materials, marketing, or packaging, that a process, service, or product complies with requirements of a GLOBALG.A.P. standard.

Confidentiality, data use, and data release:

- i) During registration, applicants give written permission to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat/FoodPLUS GmbH and Q-check to use the registration data for internal processes and sanctioning procedures.
- ii) All data in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems is available to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat as well as Q-check the company/producer is working with. This data can be used for internal processes and sanctioning procedures.
- iii) The minimum and obligatory data release level is defined in the GLOBALG.A.P. data access rules available at [www.globalgap.org](http://www.globalgap.org). The following data are included in the minimum level and are available to public: The GGN, CoC Number, GLOBALG.A.P. certificate number, scheme, version, option, CB, accreditation Body(AB), scope, products and status, attributes related to the scope (e.g. completion of labeling), the certificate holder's company name and address, site address, and certificate validity.
- iv) If an applicant does not agree to the minimum data release level, the applicant is not in agreement with the sublicense and certification agreement and cannot be certified.

The service contract between Q-check and the producer/company may be valid for up to four years, with subsequent renewal for periods of up to four years. The service term shall be given in the sublicense and certification agreement.

An applicant producer/company:

- i) Is not permitted to register products in one scope (plants, livestock, or aquaculture) with different CBs, but may use different CBs for different scopes (e.g., it is possible to register apple/plants with one CB and salmon/aquaculture with another CB or both products with the same CB). Consequently, the applicant is not permitted to register the same scope (product) with different CBs.
- ii) Is not permitted to register a site multiple times for the same scope.
- iii) Is not permitted to register a site as belonging to different companies at the same time (i.e., a site belonging to or owned by one company cannot be registered as a separate and independent company again)
- iv) Is not permitted to register sites in different countries with any CB. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may grant exemptions on a case-by-case basis or within NIGs (if made available)

Registration with a New CB

If an applicant that has already been registered changes their CB or applies to a new CB for certification of a different scope, the applicant shall communicate the existing GGN or CoC number assigned by the

GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to the new CB. Failure to do this will result in an additional fee of 100€ per individual applicant in addition to the registration fee.

Certificate holders who are sanctioned cannot change their CB until the outgoing CB closes out the relevant non-conformance or until the sanction penalty period is over.

### Acceptance

For the registration to be accepted, the applicant shall satisfy all the following conditions:

- i) The applicant submits to Q-check the relevant application, including all necessary information
- ii) The applicant shall have formally committed to complying with the obligations indicated above
- iii) The applicant shall accept (sign) the sublicense and certification agreement with Q-check or the applicant shall explicitly acknowledge the receipt and the inclusion of the sublicense and certification agreement with their signature on the service contract / agreement with Q-check, and Q-check shall hand over a copy of the sublicense and certification agreement to the company/producer.
- iv) If the GGN label is used, the applicant shall sign the GGN label license agreement
- v) The applicant shall be assigned a CoC number
- vi) The applicant shall pay the GLOBALG.A.P. registration fee as explained in the current GLOBALG.A.P. fee table.

The registration and acceptance process shall be finalized before Q-check audit can take place.

For first registration: Q-check shall confirm or deny the acceptance of the application and provide the applicant with the CoC number within 28 calendar days of receiving the completed application.

### Audit Process

During registration, the producer defines the scope of certification, in doing so, the producer generates a customized set of P&Cs and corresponding GLOBALG.A.P. GR which will apply to the audit process. During each CB audit's opening meeting, the CB shall check that the checklist used by the producer for the self-assessment/ internal audit is correct according to the certification scope defined during registration.

During registration, questions regarding the producer's specific certification process (e.g., product handling unit (PHU) included/not included, controlled environment/ open field, GMO applicable/not applicable, seedlings (Ova/juveniles) additionally purchased, feed supplied (externally or internally), etc.) are included to filter the P&Cs applicable to each specific producer and thus provide a customized checklist.

Q-check shall carry out the audit using the complete checklist of the applicable scope(s) annually.

Q-check audit shall cover:

- All registered product and production processes
- All registered production sites

- All registered PHUs
- Where relevant, the administrative sites.

In both Option 1 and Option 2, CB audit content shall be organized in a three-year cycle:

- First CB audit (for version 6): all requirements included in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Subsequent CB audit (year 2): Operational items as identified in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Subsequent CB audit (year 3): Operational items as identified in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits)
- Recertification audit: all requirements included in the applicable checklists (for QMS and farm audits), same as initial CB audit.

Q-check may conduct additional announced or unannounced audits or on-site visits to investigate complaints.

In order to achieve certification, at all times prior to being audited by Q-check, a registered producer/company/producer group shall perform either a self-assessment (Option 1 and Option 1 Multisite without QMS) or internal inspections/audits (Option 1 Multisite with QMS and Option 2). Then they shall receive inspections/audits externally by Q-check to assess compliance to the criteria laid down in the GLOBALG.A.P. IFA.

### **Option 1 – Single Sites and Multisites without QMS**

Covers all applicants that are single legal entities (individual producer or company) with single production sites or multiple production sites that are not separate legal entities and operated without the implementation of a QMS.

#### **Self-assessments by the producer**

The Self-assessment shall:

- Cover all registered production sites, products, and processes under the certification scope to verify compliance with the requirements defined in the applicable P&Cs.
- Be carried out by or under the responsibility of the producer.
- Be carried out annually before the CB audit.
- The self-assessment checklist shall a) be available on-site for review at all times & b) contain comments of the evidences observed for all non-applicable and non-compliant Major must and Minor must P&Cs. Recommendations do not need comments regardless of whether they are not applicable or not complied with.

## Q CHECK audit

The audits (announced and unannounced) shall be carried out by a CB auditor approved for the specific scope.

The CB auditor shall carry out the audit using the complete checklist of the applicable scope(s)

The CB audit shall cover:

All accepted products and production processes;

- All registered production sites;
- Each registered product handling unit;
- Where relevant, the administrative sites.

### Announced CB audits

Each producer shall undergo one announced initial CB audit and thereafter one CB audit per annum

### Unannounced CB audits

A producer has a 10% chance of receiving a subsequent CB audit as unannounced audit during the CB audit window.

The notification of the unannounced CB audit shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days). In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the producer to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the producer will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced CB audit. There shall be objective evidence of the justification available (e.g., medical document). If no evidence of a justifiable reason is available, the producer shall accept a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted, regardless of whether the rejection is justified or not. The producer will receive another 48-hour notification for a new unannounced CB audit. If that CB audit cannot take place, a suspension of all products will be issued. The suspension will be lifted when the unannounced CB audit has been conducted.

Especially for GFS version 6.2.2b) is replaced by: There is no notification to the applicant before the CB audit takes place. In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the producer to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the producer will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced CB audit. There shall be objective evidence of the justification available (e.g., medical document). If no evidence of a justifiable reason is available, the producer shall accept a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted, regardless of whether the rejection is justified or not. The producer will receive another unannounced CB audit. If that CB audit cannot take place, a suspension of all products will be issued. The suspension will be lifted when the unannounced CB audit has been conducted

### Off-site and on-site stages

Q-check may divide announced CB audits (both initial and subsequent) into two stages, which shall be carried out by the same CB auditor:

Off-site stage: this consists of a desk review or documentation sent by the producer to the CB auditor before the CB audit, including, for example, the self-assessment, risk assessments, procedures required in various

P&Cs, animal health plan (where applicable), analysis program (frequency, parameters, location), analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used (where applicable), list of plant protection products used (where applicable), proof of laboratory accreditation, certificates of assessment reports of subcontracted activities, plant protection product/fertilizer/medicine application records, etc.

The off-site stage shall be conducted no more than four weeks before the on-site stage. The documentation may be supported by interviews and a remote CB audit on the site and facilities.

On-site stage: this consists of an onsite CB audit of the remaining content of the checklist, the production process, and the verification of the information already reviewed off-site.

Q-check shall offer this option to their clients. The use of two stages is to be mutually agreed with each producer. Overall duration of the CB audit (off-site and on-site stages) is not reduced by this option. The producer has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered confidential. In this case the information shall be available during the on-site stage.

The full remote the process is according to GLOBALG.A.P. Full Remote document v6.0\_se22.

### **Initial and subsequent CB audits**

#### Initial CB audit

This section applied to:

- Producers seeking GLOBALG.A.P. certification for the first time
- Producers who want to add a new product to an already existing GLOBALG.A.P. certificate
- Producers changing their status from producer group member to individual producer.

When a producer changes from one CB to another, or from a GLOBALG.A.P. standard to an approved modified checklist or an equivalent certification scheme (or the other way around), it is not considered an initial CB audit, but a subsequent one. In initial CB audits, the following requirements shall be fulfilled:

- a) No CB audit can take place until Q-check has accepted the producer's registration
- b) The entire scope for certification shall be audited prior to issuing the certificate
- c) A product shall not be included in the certificate before all applicable P&Cs are audited during the production process (i.e., it is not possible to certify a future production process)
- d) The producer shall have records from the registration date onward or for at least three months before the initial CB audit takes, please, whichever is longer.
- e) Products that are already harvested/processed/ slaughtered before registration with the GLOBALG.A.P. CB cannot be included in the certificate.
- f) Records that relate to harvest or product handling before the producer has registered with GLOBALG.A.P. CB are not valid.

#### Subsequent audits

- a) The entire scope for certification shall be audited annually by the Q-check prior to issuing the certificate.

- b) This also applies if a producer changes CB's
- c) Subsequent CB audits of 10% of certified producers without implemented QMS shall be done unannounced.
- d) Subsequent CB audit can be carried out at any time during an audit window that extends over a period of eight months: from four months before the original expiry date of the certificate, an (only if the Q-check extends the certificate validity in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems) up to four months after the original expiry date of the certificate.
- e) There shall be a minimum period of six months between two recertification audits.
- f) No CB audit can take place until Q-check has registered the producer in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. Reregistration shall be finalized before the date of the subsequent CB audit.

### **Option 2 and Option 1 Multisite with QMS**

Covers producer groups and individuals with multiple sites who have implemented a QMS that complies with the requirements set in the GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations -Rules for QMS.

The applicant (Producer Group/Multisite Producer with QMS) is responsible for ensuring that all producers and production sites under the certification scope comply with the certification requirements at all times.

### **Internal audits by Producer Groups and Multisite Producers with QMS**

Applicants shall undertake internal QMS audits and internal farm audits of all producers and/or production sites, covering all products and processes under the certification scope to verify and ensure compliance with the certification requirements.

The internal audits shall comply with requirements determined in General Regulations – Rules for QMS and shall at least include the following:

- A minimum of one internal audit of the QMS to be carried out by the internal auditor before the first audit carried out by Q-check and thereafter once per annum.
- A minimum of one internal farm audit of each registered producer, production site and product handling facility (PHU) to be carried out by the internal inspector before the first farm audit carried out by Q-check and thereafter once per annum.

### **Q-check Quality Management System (QMS) Audit**

Q-check shall conduct a QMS audit annually.

For the plants scope, if there is only one central PHU (i.e., the PHU is used by more than one producer group member), it shall be audited every year while in operation. When there is more than one central PHU, the square root of the total number of PHUs registered shall be audited while in operation.

Where product handling does not take place centrally but on the farms of the producer group members, this factor shall be taken into account when determining the sample of producer group members to be audited. The PHU is then audited within the specific producer group member on whose farm it is.

As part of the CB audit, the CB shall audit a sample of all registered member/sites annually according to table 1 below.

For smart

	Initial audit	Subsequent audit
<b>Internally by the producer group/multisite producer with QMS</b>		
Internal QMS audit	Complete QMS	Complete QMS
Internal farm audit	Entire scope (all registered members/sites and PHUs)	Entire scope (all registered members/sites and PHUs)
<b>Externally by the CB</b>		
CB QMS audits	Certification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; before CB farm audits	Recertification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; annually before CB farm audits
	Initial audit	Subsequent audit
Unannounced CB QMS audit	-	Recertification audit Minimum of 10% of all producer groups/multisite producers with QMS
CB Farm audits	Certification audit (minimum) square root of the total number of registered members/sites.	Recertification audit a) If non-conformances detected during previous CB surveillance audit: (minimum) square root of actual number of registered members/sites.  Or b) If no non-conformances detected during previous CB surveillance audit: (Minimum) square root of actual number of registered members/sites minus the number of members/sites audited during the previous CB surveillance audit.
	CB surveillance audit during certificate validity (Minimum) 50% of the square root of the actual number of certified members/sites	CB surveillance audit during certificate validity (Minimum) 50% of the square root of the actual number of certified members/sites

For GFS

	Initial audit	Subsequent audit
<b>Internally by the producer group/multisite producer with QMS</b>		
Internal QMS audit	Complete QMS	Complete QMS

Internal farm audit	Entire scope (all registered members/sites and PHUs)	Entire scope (all registered members/sites and PHUs)
CB audits for producer groups/multisite producers with QMS, without members/sites/PHUs classified as high-risk*		
CB QMS audits	Certification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; before CB farm audits	Recertification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; annually before CB farm audits
	Initial audit	Subsequent audit
Unannounced CB QMS audit	-	Recertification audit Minimum of 10% of all producer groups/multisite producers with QMS
CB Farm audits	Certification audit (minimum) square root of the total number of registered members/sites.	Recertification audit a) If non-conformances detected during previous CB surveillance audit: (minimum) square root of actual number of registered members/sites.  Or b) If no non-conformances detected during previous CB surveillance audit: (Minimum) square root of actual number of registered members/sites minus the number of members/sites audited during the previous CB surveillance audit.
	CB surveillance audit during certificate validity (Minimum) 50% of the square root of the actual number of certified members/sites	CB surveillance audit during certificate validity (Minimum) 50% of the square root of the actual number of certified members/sites
CB audits of producer groups/multisite producers with QMS, and members/sites/PHUs classified as high-risk*		
CB QMS audits	Certification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; before CB farm audits; no sampling of PHUs classified as high-risk	Recertification audit Complete QMS + square root of the total number of registered central PHUs while in operation; annually before CB farm audits, no sampling of PHUs classified as high-risk
	Initial audit	Subsequent audit
Unannounced CB QMS audit	-	Recertification audit Minimum of 10% of all producer groups/multisite producers with QMS
CB Farm audits	Certification audit No sampling of members/sites classified as high-risk; all registered members/sites classified as high-risk shall be audited by the CB before issuing the certificate.	Recertification audit No sampling of members/sites classified as high-risk; CB audits possible in one or two visits.

- Members/sites/PHUs deemed high-risk are not eligible for sampling  
In order to classify a producer group/multisite producer with QMS, site, or PHU as high-risk, Q-check shall examine a combination of product and process risk factors. If a high-risk product is combined with a high-risk process, the member/site (farm or PHU) shall be classified as high-risk.

High-risk products include fresh herbs, leafy greens, berries, and cantaloupe melons. This list may be updated and shall be checked (see products marked as high-risk (marked with <sup>HR</sup>) in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list.

High-risk processes include:

- Post harvest use of water/ice/steam

- Preharvest and/or harvest activities where water touches the edible part of the product.
- Preharvest use of raw organic manure applied less than 60 days before harvest.

### **CB QMS audits (including central PHUs)**

CB QMS audits (announced and unannounced) shall be carried out by a CB QMS auditor.

The CB QMS audits (announced and unannounced) shall be based on the QMS checklist that is available in the GLOBALG.A.P.IT Systems and shall cover all requirements managed at QMS level.

During the initial certification audit, the CB QMS audit shall include the central PHUs, if applicable. During subsequent CB audits, the CB may decide to see one or more of the central PHUs during the CB surveillance audit, based on risk.

Q-check shall carry out an announced CB audit of the QMS during the initial audit and thereafter one announced CB audit per annum.

However, for subsequent CB audits, a minimum of 10% of the annual CB QMS audits of the certified producer groups/multisite producers with QMS shall be unannounced. The notification of the unannounced CB audit shall not exceed 48hours (2 working days). For GFS: there is no notification to the producer group/multisite producer with QMS before the CB audit takes place. In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the producer to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the producer will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced CB audit. There shall be objective evidence of the justification available (e.g., medical document). If no evidence of a justifiable reason is available, the producer shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted regardless of whether the rejection is justified or not. The producer will receive another 48-hour notification for a new unannounced CB audit. For GFS the producer will receive another unannounced CB audit. If that cannot take place, a suspension of all products will be issued. The suspension will be lifted when the unannounced CB audit has been conducted.

The closing meeting of the complete CB QMS audit shall take place only after the QMS, the PHUs, and the minimum sample of members/site have been audited. The complete QMS audit (including audit at the central PHUs and the same of members/sites) shall be concluded in a maximum of one month. The final CB audit report shall include all findings and the final results for the entire producer group/multisite producer and shall be represented during the closing meeting. A representative of the QMS shall sign the report or specifically confirm its content by email. The 28 days for closing the non-conformances found shall be counted from this date on.

### **CB QMS audit off-site and on-site stages**

The CB may divide announced CB QMS audits (both initial and subsequent) into two stages, which shall be carried out by the same CB QMS auditor:

Off-site stage: this consists of a desk review of documentation sent to the CB auditor before the audit, including, for example, internal QMS audit and internal members/sites audit reports, the internal register of approved members/sites, risk assessments, procedures, residue monitoring system documentation (frequency, parameters, sampling program), residue analysis reports, licenses, list of medicines used (where

applicable), list of PPPs used (where applicable), proof of laboratory accreditation, certificates or internal reports of subcontracted activities, etc. the off-site stage shall be conducted no more than four weeks before the on-site stage. The documentation may be supported by interviews and a remote CB audit of the site and facilities.

On-site stage: this consists of an on-site CB audit of the remaining content of the QMS checklist, and the verification of the information reviewed off-site and the way the QMS works on-site (e.g., internal audits, traceability, segregation and mass balance, central PHUs, etc.)

Q-check shall offer this as an option to clients.

The use of two stages is to be mutually agreed with each producer group/multisite producer.

Overall duration of the CB QMS audit (off-site and on-site stages) is not reduced by this option.

The producer group/multisite producer has the right not to send certain requested documents to the CB if they are considered confidential. In this case the information shall be available during the on-site stage.

### **CB audits of members/sites (including individual PHUs on farm)**

Q-check auditor shall audit the entire checklist of the applicable scope(s) during all CB audits.

CB audit per selected member/site shall cover all accepted products, production processes, administrative sites, and, where applicable, the PHUs.

CB audits shall be carried out at each registered production site and their corresponding PHUs. Site production-related records (e.g., medicine, PPP application records) shall be present and audited on-site to cross-check them with the farm situation (products, interviews, stores, etc.)

### **Sampling of members/sites**

At least the square root (or next whole number rounded up if there are any decimals) of the total number of the members/sites in the certification scope shall be audited before a certificate can be issued.

Where sampling is applicable, CB farm audits shall be split into two separate visits during the certification cycle, with the aim of increasing the reliability of the system:

- Certification/recertification audit (QMS, PHUs, and members/sites)
- CB surveillance audit during validity of the certificate (members/sites)

The sample size of the following recertification audit by Q-check may be reduced to the square root of the actual number of the members/sites minus the number of members/sites audited during the previous CB surveillance audit as long as the following prerequisites are met:

- There are no non-conformances detected on the day of the previous member/site CB surveillance audit.
- The result of QMS audit does not raise doubts about the robustness of the system.

The sample size may be increased by Q-check, for example if non-conformances are found during CB farm audits, to ensure adequate confidence in the QMS's conformance.

Selection of members/sites shall be based on the risk assessment carried out by Q-check.

Q-check notification to the QMS representatives of specific names of members/sites to be sampled shall not exceed 48hours (2 working days) before the member/site audit.

### **Initial and subsequent CB audits**

#### **Initial CB audits**

This apply to producer groups/multisite producers where a QMS is implemented seeking for GLOBALG.A.P. certification for the first time.

Producer groups/multisite producers with QMS who want to add a new product to an already existing GLOBALG.A.P. certificate.

When a producer group/ multisite producer changes from one CB to another, or from a GLOBALG.A.P. standard to an approved modified checklist or equivalent certification scheme (or the other way around), it is not considered an initial CB audit, but a subsequent CB audit. In initial CB audits, the following requirements shall be fulfilled:

- a) No CB audit can take place until Q-check has accepted the applicant's registration.
- b) The entire scope for certification shall be audited prior to issuing the certificate.
- c) A product shall not be included in the certificate before all applicable P&Cs are audited during the production processes (i.e., it is not possible to certify a future production process).
- d) The producer group/multisite producer shall have records from the registration date onward or for at least three months before the initial CB audit takes place, whichever is longer.
- e) Products that are already harvested/slaughtered/processed before registration with the producer has registered with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat cannot be included in the certificate.
- f) Records that relate to harvest or product handling before the producer has registered with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat are not valid.

#### **Subsequent CB audits**

The entire scope of certification shall be audited annually by Q-check prior to issuing the certificate.

In the case of producer groups/multisite producers with QMS that change CBs, the sample size shall not be reduced by the number of members/sites audited during the last surveillance CB audit by the outgoing CB.

Subsequent CB QMS audits (including central PHUs where applicable) of 10% of certified producer groups/multisite producers with QMS shall be done unannounced

Subsequent CB audits can be carried out at any time during an audit window that extends over a period of eight months: from four months before the original expiry date of the certificate, and (only if Q-check extends the certificate validity in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems) up to four months after the original expiry date of the certificate.

There shall be a minimum period of six months between two recertification audits.

No CB audit can take place until Q-check has registered the producer group/multisite producer in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. Reregistration shall be finalized before the date of subsequent CB audit.

### **Q CHECK Producer/Production Site Inspections**

Q CHECK inspectors or auditors shall carry out the inspections. The inspector/auditor shall inspect the complete checklist (Major Musts, Minor Musts and Recommendations) of the applicable scope(s) and sub-scope(s) during ALL inspections.

The inspection per selected producer member or production site shall cover all accepted products, production processes and where relevant the product handling units and administrative sites.

For the initial inspection, for not high-risk products, Q CHECK shall inspect as a minimum the square root (or next whole number rounded upwards if there are any decimals) of the total number of the producers/production sites in the certification scope before a certificate can be issued. During the validity period of the certificate, the surveillance inspection of (minimum) 50% square root of certified producers/production sites shall also be carried out.

For producers with high-risk products, at least 20% of the inspection of the selected producer members or production sites shall be unannounced. When high-risk products are to be included in the scope of certification, all the members of the group or sites with these products shall be inspected (no square root sampling).

The selection aim to cover all producer members/sites of the producer group/company throughout a period of 10years. The selection takes into consideration, risk factors, new producers, and random selection. Unless there is a particular reason, the subsequent sampling normally shall not include producers/sites already sampled during previous assessments. Factors for inclusion in the initial or subsequent sampling may include higher risk of operation, special status of their member, number or products, previous inspection results, multisite member, records of complaints, variations in site size, variations in shift patterns, modifications since last certification audit, environmental issues or variability, differences in language or cultural practices at sites, and geographical distribution. Producers that move from one group to another shall have a higher possibility of being included in the sample of producers chosen by Q-check.

After the first certification cycle, Q CHECK shall carry out announced external inspections of each producer group and multi-site annually. The inspections shall be split into two separate visits during the certification cycle, with the aim of increasing the reliability of the system:

- Re-certification audit; and

- Surveillance producer inspections.

This shall not reduce the minimum number of inspections necessary during the certification cycle.

For not high-risk products the number of producers/sites to be inspected during a certification cycle shall be equivalent to the square root of the current number of producers/production sites (grouped by the same production type). Half (50%) of the square root of the producers/production sites shall be inspected during the surveillance inspections. The 25% of the selected producer members or sites shall be selected randomly.

The sample size of the following regular announced audit by the CB may be reduced to the square root of the current number of the producers/production sites minus the number of producers/production sites inspected during the previous surveillance inspections as long as the following prerequisites are met:

- There are no non-conformances detected on the day of the producer/production site surveillance inspections; and
- The result of the QMS audit does not raise doubts about the effectiveness of the internal control system.

Before a certification decision can be made, at least the square root of the total number of current producers/production sites shall have been inspected during the last 12 months.

Q CHECK may decide to increase the sample during surveillance inspections if there is a need to investigate whether a non-compliance is structural or not.

## **Requirements to Achieve and Maintain GLOBALG.A.P. Certification**

### **Certification rules**

To obtain GLOBALG.A.P. certification, the following is required:

- a) Full compliance (100%) with the QMS requirements
- b) The standard documents consist of three types of P&Cs: Major musts, Minor musts, and Recommendations.
  - Major Musts: 100% compliance with all applicable Major Must P&Cs is compulsory.
  - Minor Musts: 95% compliance with all applicable Minor Must P&Cs is compulsory.
  - Recommendations: No minimum percentage of compliance required.
- c) The producer/ producer group/multisite producer shall comply with the agreements signed (GLOBALG.A.P. sublicense and certification agreement and Q-check service agreement in the current version).
- d) The producer/ producer group/multisite producer shall comply with the requirements defined in the applicable GLOBALG.A.P. GR in their current version.

### **Minor Must Compliance Calculation**

For the sake of calculation, the following formula shall apply:

Total number of Minor Must P&Cs	Minus (-)	Not applicable Minor Must P&Cs	Multiplied (X) 5%	Equals (=)	Total Minor Must P&Cs non- compliance allowed
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The total number of Minor Must control point non-compliance allowed is shall always be rounded down.

In all cases, the calculation to show compliance (or non-compliance) shall be available after all self-assessment,

In a multisite operation without QMS, the compliance level is calculated for the entire operation in one checklist. Any applicable P&Cs common to all sites needs to be taken into account for all sites.

In a multisite operation with QMS, the compliance level is calculated per sampled production site. Each production site shall comply with the certification requirements. Any applicable P&Cs common to all sites (e.g., central chemical storage) shall be taken into account for all sites.

In a producer group, the compliance level is calculated per sampled producer group member. Each producer group member shall comply with the certification requirements. Any applicable P&Cs common to all producers group members (e.g. central chemical storage) needs to be taken into account for all producer group members.

**CoC Chain of Custody audit process**

Option 1 -Single site and multisite producers

In order to achieve certification, a registered company shall conduct a self-assessment and be audited by Q-check. This section applies to applicants that are a single legal entity (individual producer, producer group or company) with single sites or multiple sites that are not separate legal entities and are all centrally managed by the applicant. Summary of Q-check audits to be undertaken before a GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate is issued (initial Q-check audit).

Initial and subsequent audit

Self assessment by the producer / company	1. Entire scope (all registered sites)
Q-check audit	2. Announced Q-check audit of entire scope for all registered sites. Note: for option 1 multisite retail stores and restaurants and for option 1 multisite retail stores and restaurant chains in franchise, sampling of the sites applies. 3. Unannounced Q-check audit of at least 10% of all certified producers/companies (GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate holders)

Self-assessments

The self-assessment shall:

- Cover sites, products and processes under the certification scope and comply with the requirements set in the applicable control points.
- Be carried out under the responsibility of the applicant/certified company
- Be carried out before the initial Q-check audit and thereafter at least annually before the announced subsequent Q-check audits against the complete checklist of all relevant scopes and registered sites, with the completed checklist available on the site for review at all times.
- Involved recording comments, evidence, corrective actions, and positive findings for each control point during the self-assessment.

#### Q-check audits

Q-check audit (announced or unannounced) shall be carried out by a Q-check auditor. Q-check shall audit the complete checklist (Major must, Minor musts, and Recommendations) of the applicable scopes. Any resulting comments, evidence, corrective actions, and positive findings shall be recorded for each control point.

#### Announced Q-check audits

Each company shall undergo one announced Q-check audit and thereafter one Q-check audit per year. Q-check audit shall cover:

- All GLOBALG.A.P. certified products
- All production processes and sites dealing with or handling certified products.

Note: for option 1 multisite retail stores and restaurants and for option 1 multisite retail stores and restaurant chains in franchise, sampling of the sites applies.

#### Unannounced Q-check audits

Q-check shall carry out additional unannounced audits annually of at least 10% of all producers/companies Q-check has certified per scope.

Q-check shall audit all applicable control points. Any findings (e.g. non-compliance) shall be handled in the same way as those found during an announced Q-check audit.

Q-check may inform the company in advance of the intended audit. In general, this notification shall not exceed 48 hours (two working days). In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the company to accept the proposed date (for medical or other justifiable reasons), the company shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted. The company shall receive another 48-hour notification of a visit. If the unannounced Q-check audit cannot take place because of unjustifiable reasons, a suspension shall be issued. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat may request that in the 10% unannounced Q-check audits Q-checks include targeted checks related to products labeled with the visual elements of the GGN Label. If an option 1 multisite for retail stores and restaurants chains in franchise has been chosen for an unannounced Q-check audit, the number of sites to be audited shall follow the next table point Subsequent Q-check audit.

#### Audit timing

The self-assessment and Q-check audit shall be conducted at a time when handling, processing, storage, and/or other relevant activities are being carried out. Audit timing shall allow Q-check to gain assurance that all products, even if not present at the time of the audit, are handled in compliance

with the certification requirements. Q-check audits during off-season or when activities are minimal shall be avoided.

#### Initial (First) CB audits

This section applies to applicants seeking GLOBALG.A.P. certification for the first time, to already certified entities changing from one CB to another, and to already certified entities who want to add new types of process to their GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate.

No Q-check audits can take place until the CB has accepted the applicant's registration.

In the initial Q-check audit, each process for the products to be sold as certified shall be completely audited (all applicable control points shall be verified) prior to issuing the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate.

Where the applicant has not yet started to trade in certified products, the system shall be demonstrated by examples, mock tests, etc

The applicant shall have records either from the registration date onwards or for at least three months before the first Q-check audits takes place, and Q-check shall audit these records.

#### Subsequent audits.

GLOBALG.A.P. certified products and/or related operational records shall be available during the Q-check audit. GLOBALG.A.P. certified products and/or product handling facilities shall be audited in operation by Q-check at least every three years.

The subsequent Q-check audits can be conducted at any time during an "audit window that extends over a period of eight months: from four months before the original expiry date of the GLOBALG.A.O. CoC certificate, and (only if Q-check extends the certificate validity in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems) up to four months after the original expiry date of the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate. There shall be a minimum period of six months between two Q-check audits for recertification.

#### Remote audits

A remote Q-check audit may be conducted via video conference. The remote Q-check audit shall follow the same basic structure as a normal Q-check audit (i.e., opening meeting, interview, and closing meeting). Q-check auditor shall confirm the identity of the auditee. Remote Q-check auditing via email exchange is not permitted. There shall be two-way verbal communication between Q-check auditor and auditee. A qualified Q-check auditor shall use the same checklist as in on-site Q-check audit. The auditor shall send an audit plan before the audit. The remote audit may be split into several sessions. At the end of the session(s), the auditor shall send a report summarizing all findings to the auditee for written confirmation and acknowledgement. Receipt of the report shall be documented. General confidentiality rules apply to Q-check concerning all the information/evidence used for the audit.

#### **Subcontractors**

A subcontractor can be defined as a person or company that does an activity on behalf of another person or company, while the latter remains responsible for the product. The organization may outsource activities within the scope of its certificate to contractors with and/or without CoC Certification. Activities that are subject to outsourcing agreements are included in the scope of the organization's GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, such as a purchase, processing, packing, storage, labeling, and invoicing of products.

Subcontractors with a valid GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, PHA, or IFA

If a subcontractor of the GLOBALG.A.P. certificate holder for CoC also holds an own GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, PHA, or IFA for the same product included on the subcontracted activity, the company shall ensure that their subcontractor's GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, PHA, or IFA is valid and covers all relevant scopes and activities. Q-check does not need to audit each subcontracted site, but can accept the subcontractor's CoC, PHA, or IFA certificate and validate its scope and validity.

Subcontractors without a valid GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, PHA, or IFA

Subcontractors shall be included in the certificate holder's GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate. The CoC certificate holder is responsible for monitoring the control points applicable to subcontractor activities covered in the CoC standard, by checking and signing the subcontractor assessment for each task and process/activity contracted. As part of the self-assessment, the CoC certificate holder shall assess its subcontractor(s) and shall keep records/evidence of the compliance with the applicable control points. This evidence shall be available at the company during Q-check audits. Subcontractor assessments can be conducted by an internal on-site or off-site assessment, according to the risk defined under the following section.

The subcontractor(s) shall agree that CoC-approved Q-check is allowed to verify the assessments through on-site audit.

Subcontractor audit – Q-check rules for subcontractors

Subcontractors shall be audited by Q-check according to the risk of misidentification, substitution, or dilution of certified products with noncertified products.

Subcontractors that engage in (re)processing, (re)packing, and/or (re)labeling of certified products, that engage in storage and handling of bulk products (unpacked, unsealed, or unlabeled), or that engage directly in storage and handling of packed but unlabeled products are classified as high-risk (processing or packing activity, labeling, a warehouse where unpacked or unlabeled products are stored, etc).

Subcontractors that engage in storage and handling of packed, sealed, and labeled products with minimal risk of product mixing or identify modification are classified as low-risk (cross-docking activities, loading and unloading of packed and labeled products, a warehouse where only packed and labeled products are stored, etc) .

If the subcontractors do not have a CB audit in the form of an own GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, PHA, or IFA, Q-check conduct risk-based sampling audits of the subcontractors (on-site audit). subcontractors with high-risk processes related to the scope of CoC ((re)packing, (re)labeling, any type of (re) processing, etc.) shall be audited by Q-check every year. The contractor's CoC CB can arrange with a CB in the country / region of the subcontractor to have a local auditor conduct the audit of the subcontractor.

Note: this does not apply to those units, locations, or sites that belong to the CoC-certified company (i.e., are part of the same legal entity as the CoC-certified company). Those units shall be audited by Q-check and do not receive their own CoC certification.

Subcontractors with low-risk processes (related to the scope of CoC) do not need to be audited every year by Q-check. The certified company shall maintain a constantly updated list of the subcontractors classified as low-risk and shall immediately inform Q-check of any changes to that list. Q-check checks the list of the approved subcontractors during the annual subsequent audit, and if there are any doubts, Q-check may decide to verify the subcontractors through on-site audits.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Integrity Program and Q-check reserve the right to randomly check and audit these units.

### **Subcontracted transport**

Subcontractors merely providing transport of products legally belonging to the certificate holder, along with proof that no modification at product and packaging level has occurred, shall be recorded under the subcontracting parties of the certificate holder. Transport subcontractors do not need to implement CoC requirements. A statement from the transport subcontractor(s) that the transported product is not modified at any time shall be kept along with relevant subcontractor records.

Note: storage sites can be included on the transport exemption where they constitute stopping places as part of transportation or logistic services. However, if an organization contracts a service provider to store products that have not yet been sold to a customer, this is considered as an extension of the storage site of the organization and is therefore subject to subcontractor risk classification.

### **Inspection/Audit Reporting**

On completion of the full evaluation process, a full written audit report will be produced by Q-check which shall contain the following:

- i. All data fields marked as required in the Audit Online Hub checklist
- ii. Scope of the CB audit: company, site, PHU, and product information according to the GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements
- iii. Calculation of the total applicable Major must, Minor must, and Recommendation P&Cs and the % of compliance achieved for each level
- iv. List of non-compliances, non-conformances, and follow-up actions agreed with the producer (includes the relevant P&Cs, the finding details based on objective evidence, the deadline for corrective action, a description of the corrective action agreed with the producer, reference to objective evidence of implementation of the corrective action, the evaluation results of the corrective action (open/closed), and the relevant dates of these actions)
- v. Conclusion of whether the producer is compliant
- vi. Reviewers name
- vii. Stage of the CB audit report, i.e., preliminary or final

Where available, Q-check shall use the audit report template issued by the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.

Compliance shall be indicated with a “Yes” (for compliant), “No” (for not compliant), and “N/A” (for not applicable). P&Cs that are indicated as “No N/A” cannot be answered as “not applicable”. In exceptions in which the P&Cs is not applicable, the answer shall be given as “yes” with a clear justification.

Comments shall be recorded according to the guideline for audit methodology, when available, to enable the audit trail to be reviewed after the event. The comments shall include details of evidence checked during the CB audit. If there is no guideline for audit methodology published for a given scope or standard, it is obligatory to provide comments for all the complied, non-compliant, and nonapplicable Major musts and QMS P&Cs, as well as for all non-compliant, and not applicable Minor must P&Cs audited in all CB audits. This is applicable

for CB audits and internal audits. In case of self -assessments (option 1 without QMS) it is obligatory to provide comments for all the non-compliant, and nonapplicable Major musts and Minor musts only. Comments and evidence, such as which document(s) were samples, which workers were interviewed, etc. shall be site and product-specific and included in the checklist to ensure that all the P&Cs have been properly audited for all applicable sites and products.

The individual producer or producer group representative shall sign or confirm the CB audit outcome (including at least date and duration of the CB audit (start and end time), name of the CB auditor, scope of the CB audit, audited sites, producer group members, facilities, the result in % of compliance for the different levels of P&Cs and list of findings) during the closing meeting. A documented or electronic confirmation by the producers is accepted as equivalent to the producer's signature. In case of a digital signature, it shall be a genuine and valid one (i.e., jpg images are not considered valid signatures).

Copies of the CB audit report, the objective evidences of implementation of the corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall be provided to the regulatory authorities when requested, as per applicable national legislation. They shall also be provided by default to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and request to the AB. Any additional release shall only be provided if the producer allows access by written authorization.

The Q-check report (e.g., CB audit report, corrective action report, etc.) and the completed audit checklist distributed externally, must be protected or otherwise controlled to prevent unauthorized modification or tampering prior to distribution.

The fully completed audit checklist shall include all applicable P&Cs, requested comments, findings, and the objective evidence of implementation of the corrections and/or corrective action. Q-check shall provide the final CB audit report including the completed audit checklist to the producer where the country of destination (as registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems) includes the USA and/or Canada, at the latest by the time of the certification decision. Additionally, if any producer requests it, Q-check shall provide the full CB audit report including the completed audit checklist, within five working days of its completion. It is not obligatory for Q-check to send out a report before it has been through internal technical review. If the automatically generated CB audit report (including the checklist) is available from the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, this report shall be used.

When the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat requires it, the Q-check report and the completed audit checklist shall be uploaded/transferred into the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems.

### **Inspection duration**

The audit report shall include a recording of the CB farm audit duration (start and end times for each day). A sufficient CB farm audit duration shall allow CB farm auditor to:

- have an opening meeting with the farm management (re-confirm the scope, etc.);
- audit all applicable P&Cs ;
- audit the production process of all products included in the audit scope;
- visit all production, storage, processing and other critical locations (e.g., water source);
- audit the used machinery;

- interview personnel;
- evaluate the records;
- complete the checklist with sufficient comments and
- present the results to the producer during the closing meeting immediately after the CB farm audit has finished.

The usual CB farm audit duration for GLOBALG.A.P. IFA standard, plants scope shall be between 3 and 8 hours on-site (Option 1 producer). The minimum of 3 hours duration shall apply to the simplest circumstances (one production site, one or few crops, simple machinery, few workers, no produce handling, subsequent CB farm audit, documentation is well organized, etc.). This minimum duration excludes preparation, travel (during the CB audit) and the Grasp assessment or any other add-on CB audit included in the registration scope.

CB farm audit duration is minimum two hours per producer group member/production site of an option 1 multisite producer with QMS or Option 2 producer group in simple circumstances. However, shorter time duration may be justified for particular circumstances, depending on the complexity of the farming situation.

Factors that will increase the CB farm audit duration beyond minimum of 3 hours (the list is not exhaustive and is applicable for Option 1 and for Option 2 members) are as follows:

- Initial CB farm audit
- Addition of new products during subsequent CB farm audit
- Addition of new locations during subsequent CB farm audit
- Storage included
- Produce handling included
- Different types of products (product groups)
- Different types of harvests (harvesting methods)
- Multiple sites and locations
- Subcontractors used (not checked by third party)

### CoC Process

In the case of an option 1 multisite company, all production sites where products registered for certification are handled shall be audited by Q-check before the certificate may be issued. In this case, even if Q-check may internally use one checklist per site, the result shall be combined into a single checklist including all registered sites and summarizing the result for the whole legal entity. On completion of the full audit process, a full written Q-check report shall be produced which summarizes the audit activity undertaken, provides objective evidence and information on how the company complies with the requirements of the standard, and, where applicable, lists any non-compliances and/or non-conformances identified. The audited company's representative shall sign or confirm Q-check audit outcome (including at least the date and duration of the CB audit (start and end time), name of the auditor, scope of the audit, visited sites, facilities, the result in % of compliance for the different levels of control points, and list of findings) during the closing meeting. A documented or electronic confirmation by the company is accepted as equivalent to the auditee's signature. In this case of a digital signature, it shall be a genuine and valid one (i.e., JPG images are not considered valid signatures). Compliance is indicated with a "YES" (for compliant), "No" (for not compliant), and "N/A" (for not

applicable). CPCCs indicated as “NO, N/A” shall not be answered as “not applicable”. In exceptions in which the control points are not applicable, the answer shall be given as “yes” with a clear justification.

Comments shall be recorded according to the guideline for audit methodology, when available, to enable the audit trail to be reviewed after the event. The comments shall include details of evidence checked during the audit. If there is no guideline for audit for all the complied, non-compliant, and not applicable Major must control points, as well as for all non-compliant and not applicable Minor must control points. This is applicable for Q-check audits and self-assessments. In the case of self-assessments, comments shall be provided by minimum for all the non-compliant and non-applicable Major musts and Minor musts. Comments and evidence, such as which documents were sampled, which workers were interviewed, etc., shall be site- and product specific and included in the checklist to ensure that all the control points have been properly audited for all applicable sites and products.

Copies of Q-check audit report, the objective evidence of implementation of the corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall be provided to regulatory authorities if requested, as per applicable national legislation. They shall also be provided by default to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and on request to ESYD. Any additional release shall not be provided unless the company allows by written authorization. Q-check reports (Audit report, corrective action report, etc.) and the completed audit checklist distributed externally shall be write-protected or otherwise controlled to prevent unauthorized modification or tampering prior to distribution. The fully completed audit checklist shall include all applicable control points, requested comments, findings, and the objective evidence of implementation of the corrections and/or corrective action. Q-check provide final audit report including completed audit checklist to the company where the country of destination (as registered in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems) including the USA and/or Canada, at the latest by the time of certification decision. Additionally, if any producer requests it, Q-check provide the full audit report including the completed audit checklist within five working days of its completion. If the automatically generated audit report is available from the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, this report is used.

CoC audit report and the completed audit checklist is uploaded / transferred to the GLOBALG.A.P. IT system. Q-check has a process in place to address situations where translations of the reports are requested.

## **Certification Process**

### **Certification Decision**

Q-check shall make the certification decision within a maximum of 28 calendar days after closure of any outstanding non-conformances. In case no non-conformances are detected during the CB audit, it means that Q-check shall make the decision no later than 28 days after the end of the CB audit.

Any complaints or appeals against Q-check, follow Q-check’s own complaints and appeals Procedure. In case Q-check does not respond adequately, the complaint can be addressed by the producer directly to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat using the GLOBALG.A.P. Incident/Complaint Form, available on the GLOBALG.A.P. website ([www.globalgap.org](http://www.globalgap.org)).

### **Certification process for CoC**

Non-compliance and non conformance

Non compliance with a control point: a CoC control point in the checklist is not fulfilled according to the compliance criteria.

Non-conformance to the CoC certification rules: a CoC rule that is necessary for obtaining the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate is infringed (e.g. non-compliance with one or more major must or more than one Minor must control point).

Contractual non-conformance: breach of any of the GLOBALG.A.P. related agreements signed in the contract between Q-check and the company:

Q-check can impose a suspension of all products. Examples of contractual non-conformance: trading in a product that does not comply with legal requirements, false communication by the company regarding GLOBALG.A.P. certification. GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks misuse, payments not made in accordance with contractual conditions, etc.

Requirements for achieving and maintaining CoC certification

Control points and compliance criteria consist of three categories: Major must, Minor must, and Recommendations. To obtain CoC certification, the following are required:

Major musts: 100% compliance with all applicable Major must control point is compulsory.

Minor musts: the current CoC CPCCs have only two Minor Must control points (applicable to aquaculture). The company is allowed to fail one minor must control point and still achieve certification, provided that all Major Musts are complied with.

Recommendations: no minimum percentage of compliance.

Comments, evidence, positive findings, negative findings, corrective actions, and/or corrections shall be recorded for all control points. This is obligatory for self-assessment as well as Q-check audits.

In a multisite operation, the compliance level is calculated in one checklist for the entire operation. Any applicable control points common to all sites (such as packhouse) shall be taken into account for all sites.

### **Certification decision CoC**

Q-check shall make the certification decision within a maximum of 28 calendar days after closure of any outstanding non-conformances.

For initial audits: if no non-conformances is detected, Q-check shall reach a certification decision, issue the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate and register the certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems with 28 days of the completed audit.

If a non-conformance is detected, the company has 28 days to submit corrective actions. Q-check shall review the corrective action and make a certification decision within 28 days of the submission of the corrective actions. The decision can be a positive certification decision or an “open non-conformance” status in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.

If the status is set to “open non-conformance”, the company has three months to submit corrective actions after the audit. The three-month period begins on the last day of the audit. Q-check has 28 days to evaluate the submitted corrective actions and make a positive or negative certification decision. If the decision is negative, Q-check shall conduct a new on-site audit and the status remains “open non-conformance”. Therefore, the maximum time period between an initial audit and the certification decision is three months+28days. If the time period is longer, Q-check shall conduct a new audit.

For subsequent audits: if no non-conformance is detected during a subsequent audit, Q-check shall reach a certification decision, issue the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate, and register the certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems within 28 days after Q-check audit completion.

If a non-conformance is detected during a subsequent audit, the company has 28 days to submit corrective actions. Q-check has a further 28 days for review of the submitted evidence and conclusion of the certification process. The (positive) certification decision shall therefore be reached within a most 28+28 days after Q-check audit has been concluded. This means that a maximum of 56 days is allowed between a subsequent audit in which non-conformance has been detected and the update of the company’s/producer’s status to “recertified”

However, if the review of the submitted evidence is negative (or if the company has not submitted any corrective actions), the suspension shall be registered within 28days of completion of the audit.

If a non-conformance is identified during the report review (and not during Q-check audit), the 28days are counted from the date on which the non-conformance is communicated to the company.

For company transfer (when the company/producer has a valid GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate):

In the case of a transfer between CBs, the deadline of 3 months+28days may be exceeded. The incoming CB shall wait to recertify the company until the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate of the outgoing CB has expired.

Any complaints or appeals against Q-check shall follow Q-check’s own complaints and appeals procedure, which Q-check have and communicate to its clients. If Q-check doesn’t respond adequately, the complaint can be addressed to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat using the GLOBALG.A.P. complaint form, available on the GLOBALG.A.P. website.

### **GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate**

After a positive certification decision, Q-check shall issue a Certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems.

The certificate may only be issued based on the information available at that time in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems for that unique GLOBALG.A.P. identification number.

A list of all the producers, production sites, and PHUs to which the certificate relates shall be issued in an annex referred to in the certificate. Q-check shall keep this list up-to-date.

Q-check may issue communications other than the Certificate related to the producer status (registered, audited, etc.) as long as it is clear that these are not certificates and each contains the sentence: “The actual GLOBALG.A.P. status of this producer is always displayed at: [www.globalgap.org/search](http://www.globalgap.org/search)”.

### **GLOBALG.A.P. IFA & CoC Certificate and Certification Cycle**

The GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate can only be issued to the applicant legal entity (i.e., producer, producer group/multisite producer). The name of the trader could optionally be mentioned on the certificate only with the following disclaimer: “Can be exclusively traded through XYZ”.

Q-check P.C. will provide the final CB audit report including the completed audit report checklist to producers registered for any GLOBALG.A.P. GFSI Standard at the latest by the time of the certification decision.

A certificate GLOBALG.A.P. IFA & GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate is not transferable from one legal entity to another when production sites change legal entity. In this case a complete CB audit, following the rules for subsequent CB audits, is required. The new legal entity shall receive a new GGN. For CoC, if a company changes its legal entity (i.e., is merged, bought up, franchised, split up, or otherwise reorganized) a new audit is required. The term “certification cycle” is defined as the period for which GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate is valid and within which the certificate shall be renewed. This default certification cycle is 12 months, subject to any sanctions and extensions in accordance with the scope described.

The IFA certification cycle is 12 months subject to any sanctions and extensions in accordance with the scope described.

in case there is a need to change the certificate validity dates to be able to do the CB audits according to the CB audit timing requirements described in the scope-specific rules, Q-check may shorten the certificate validity.

### **Extension of IFA & CoC Certificate Validity**

The validity may be extended beyond the 12 months (for a maximum period of 4 months) only if there is a valid reason, which has to be recorded. Here are the only reasons that are considered to be valid:

- Q-check wants to schedule the on-site CB audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process, because it has not been seen in the previous CB audit, because it is considered to be a high- risk process in terms of product safety or to be able to see a newly added product, process or a new or particular member of a producer group.
- Q-check needs to be able to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
- Q-check was not able to conduct the on-site CB audit and/or the producer was not able to receive Q-check planned CB audit due to circumstances beyond their control (force majeure) e.g.: natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic or unavailability of the producer due to medical reasons.

If the certificate has expired, it cannot be extended any more.

If an extension is given, the full GLOBALG.A.P. System participation fee shall be paid for the next certificate

The producer group/multisite producer/ producer for CoC producer/ company shall be reaudited during the extension period

The producer/ producer group/ multisite producer cannot change CBs for the certificate subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted

The following certificate validity shall be calculated by extracting the duration of the extension period from the normal 12 months validity.

Upon the producer's request, Q-check IFA and CoC (which issued the extended certificate) re-accepts the product in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database for a full next cycle within the original validity period of the certificate.

The full registration fee for IFA & CoC shall be paid for the next cycle.

The producer shall be re-inspected during that extension period.

The producer cannot change CB in the cycle subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted.

If a certificate that was not extended and not "re-accepted" expires and the subsequent CB audit is going to take place in less than 12 months after the expiration date, a new certification cycle should start. The old cycle can be reinstated by setting the same "valid to" date as before. The cycle remains the same if the certificate was extended. However, Q CHECK shall apply the rules for initial (first) inspection if the certificate expired for more than 12 months.

### **CoC certificate Scope extension**

The scope of the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate (i.e., the included processes and products) may be changed during the validity of the certificate. The certified company shall inform Q-check about any changes affecting the scope of the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate. This may include adding or discontinuing processes, products, scopes and locations/sites. The certified company shall conduct a self-assessment covering the changes. Q-check shall evaluate the changes and, if necessary, update the GLOBALG.A.P.IT Systems and reissue the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate.

### **Non-Compliance and Non-Conformance**

Non-compliance (with a P&Cs): When a Minor Must or recommendation in the GLOBALG.A.P. checklist is not fulfilled according to the P&Cs.

Non-conformance (with the GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Rules): When a GLOBALG.A.P. rule that is necessary for obtaining the certificate is infringed (e.g., non-compliance with one or more Major Musts, or more than 5% of applicable Minor Musts).

Contractual Non-Conformances: Breach of any of the agreements signed in the contract between the CB and the producer related to GLOBALG.A.P. requirements.

### Sanctions

If a non-conformance is detected either at the producer, QMS level or member/site level, Q-check shall apply a sanction (warning, suspension, or cancelation) as indicated in the section.

Producers, producer groups/multisite producers cannot change CBs until the non-conformance that led to the respective sanction is not satisfactorily closed.

Only Q-check that has issued the sanction is entitled to lift it provided there is sufficient and timely evidence of corrective action (either through a follow-up visit or other written or visual evidence).

When a sanction is issued, the producer status shall be updated in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems to reflect the current status (the time between issuing the sanction and updating the status in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems shall not exceed more than one working day)

### For CoC

If a non-conformance is detected, Q-check shall apply a sanction for the whole legal entity (warning, suspension of a product, or cancellation).

The company cannot change CBs until the non-conformance that led to the respective sanctions are satisfactory closed out.

Only Q-check that issued a sanction is permitted to lift it, provided there is sufficient and timely evidence of corrective action (either through a follow-up audit or other written or visual evidence).

### Warning

A warning is issued for all types of non-conformances detected (i.e. non-conformance to P&Cs, GR or contractual requirements). If a non-conformance is detected during the CB audit, the producer shall be given a warning when the audit is finalized. This is a provisional report that can be overridden by Q-check decision – making committee.

Initial CB audit:

- If an individual producer or producer group does not comply with 100% of applicable Major Must and 95% of the applicable Minor Must P&Cs, and all contractual requirements within three months after an initial CB audit, a complete CB audit shall be performed again before a certificate can be issued.
- 

Subsequent CB audit:

- Non-conformances shall be closed within a maximum of 28 calendar days.

- In the event of non-conformances with contracts, the General Requirements or a Major Must P&Cs, and/or more than 5% of Minor must P&Cs, Q-check shall decide what period is given to the producer/ producer group/ multisite producer for closing the non-conformance before suspending the certificate. This period shall never exceed 28 days and may be shortened according to the criticality of the non-conformance in terms of safety of workers, environment and consumers.
- An immediate suspension shall be issued where a serious threat to food safety, the safety of workers, the environment, consumers and/or product integrity (i.e., sale of non-certified products as certified) is present. This will be communicated via an official suspension letter. The CB inform the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat within 24hours.

### **For Coc**

A warning issued for all types of non-conformances detected.

If a non-conformance is detected during an audit, the company shall be served a warning when the audit is completed. This warning is issued in the form of a provisional report that can be overridden by Q-check.

Initial audit: Outstanding non-conformances shall be closed within three months of the date on which Q-check audit was completed. If the company does not conform to 100% of Major Musts and/or fails more than one minor must control point within 28 days after an initial audit, the status “open non-conformance” is set in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems. If the cause of the warning is not resolved within three months, a complete audit shall be conducted before a GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate can be issued.

Subsequent audit: outstanding non-conformances (e.g., a Major must non-conformance or more than one Minor must non-compliances) shall be closed within 28 calendar days. If the cause of the warning is not resolved within the period set (maximum of 28 days), a suspension is imposed.

### **Product Suspension**

If the cause of the warning is not resolved within the defined period (maximum of 28 days), a suspension shall be imposed by the Certification Body or the producer group on its members immediately.

Q-check can only lift product suspensions imposed on producers and producer groups issued by its Certification Committee. Producer groups can lift product suspension on their accepted producer members issued by them.

A suspension can be applied to one, several or all of the products covered by the certificate. Although, a product cannot be partially suspended for an individual producer (single or multisite), this means that the entire product shall be suspended, if applicable.

When the suspension is applied, Q-check or the producer group shall set the period allowed for correction (not longer than 12 months). During the period of suspension, the producer is prohibited from using the GLOBALG.A.P. logo/trademark, license/certificate or any other type of document that is in any way linked to GLOBALG.A.P. in relation to the suspended product. Furthermore, during the period of suspension, the producer is also prohibited to use the logo or the name of Q-check in a way as to claim to any third party that he maintains the certification against GLOBALG.A.P. IFA.

If a producer notifies Q-check that the non-conformance is resolved before the defined period, the respective sanction can be lifted, subject to satisfactory evidence and closing off.

If the cause of the suspension is not resolved within the defined period, a cancellation is imposed.

The suspension remains as long as the CB or producer group does not lift it or impose a cancellation.

### **Self-declared Product Suspension**

A producer or producer group may voluntarily ask Q-check for a suspension of one, several or all of the products covered by the certificate (unless Q-check has already imposed a sanction). This can occur if the producer experiences difficulty with compliance to the standard and needs time to close any non-conformance.

This suspension will not delay the renewal date, nor will it allow the producer to avoid paying registration and other applicable fees.

The deadline for closing non-conformance is set by the declaring producer/producer group, which shall be agreed upon with Q-check nonetheless.

The same applies for members of a producer group who may voluntarily ask the respective group to temporarily suspend their product(s). Here too, the deadline for rectifying non-conformance is set by the declaring producer, which shall be agreed upon with the respective producer group QMS.

In the GLOBALG.A.P. Database the product status “self-declared suspension” shall be set for the respective products under the responsibility of Q-check.

### **CoC scope suspension**

A suspension can be applied to one, several, or all of the scopes covered by the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate. A scope cannot be partially suspended for an individual company, i.e., the entire scope shall be suspended. During the period of suspension, the company will be prohibited from using the GLOBALG.A.P. claim, including the logos/trademarks, license/certificate, and/or any other type of document that it is in any way linked to GLOBALG.A.P. in relation to the suspended scope. If the company notifies Q-check that the non-conformance is resolved before the set period, the respective sanction will be lifted, subject to satisfactory evidence and closing out. The suspension shall not delay the renewal date, nor allow the company to avoid paying registration and/or other applicable fees. If the cause of the suspension is not resolved within the set period, a scope cancellation is imposed.

Two types of suspensions exist:

Self-declared suspension: a certified producer/ company may voluntary ask Q-check for a suspension of one, several, or all of the scopes covered by the GLOBALG.A.P. CoC certificate (unless Q-check has already imposed a sanction). This may occur if the company experiences difficulty with conformance to the standard and needs time to close out any non-conformance. The company’s status shall change to “self-declared suspension” on the scope level. The deadline for closing the non-conformance(s) is set by the declaring company. The deadline shall be agreed upon with Q-check, and the non-conformance(s) shall be closed out before Q-check may lift the suspension.

Q-check declared suspension: Q-check can issue and lift suspension to certified entities. Shall issue a suspension when the producer / company cannot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective actions after a warning has been issued. Q-check can issue a suspension for a certain scope, several scopes, or all scopes of the certified entity. After the suspension is applied, Q-check will set the period allowed for the correction.

### **Cancellation**

A cancellation of the Service Contract and the GLOBALG.A.P. SubLicense and Certification Agreement shall be issued where:

- Q-check finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust to comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements, or
- A producer/producer group cannot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective action before the suspension period set by either Q-check or the producer group has elapsed.

A cancellation of the Service Contract results in the total prohibition (all products, all sites) of the use of the GLOBALG.A.P. logo/trademark, license/certificate, or any device or document that may be linked to GLOBALG.A.P. or Q-check.

Producers that have received a cancellation shall not be accepted for GLOBALG.A.P. Certification within 12 months of the date of cancellation.

### **CoC cancellation**

A cancellation of the contract shall be issued if one or more of the following apply:

Q-check finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust in the company's compliance with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements. The company cannot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective actions after Q-check declared suspension. There is a contractual non-conformance. A cancellation of the contract will result in the total prohibition (all scopes, all sites) of the use of the GLOBALG.A.P. claim, including the logos / trademarks, license/certificate, or any device or document linked to GLOBALG.A.P. The company whose contract has been cancelled shall not be accepted for GLOBALG.A.P. certification for 12 months after the date of cancellation.

### **Notification and Appeals**

The producer shall either resolve the non-conformances communicated or appeal to Q-check in writing against the non-conformances, explaining the reasons for the appeal. If the non-conformances are not resolved within the permitted period, the sanction will be escalated.

### **Coc Notification and appeals**

The producer shall either resolve the non-conformances communicated or appeal to Q-check in writing against the non-conformances, explaining the reasons for the appeal. If the non-conformances are not resolved within the set period, the sanction will be increased.

### Sanctioning of Q-check

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat reserves the right to sanction Q-check if it receives evidence that Q-check has not followed procedures or clauses of the license and certification agreement signed between FoodPLUS GmbH/ the GLOBALG.A.P Secretariat and Q-check.

### GLOBALG.A.P. Trademark

Once certification is granted by Q-check, it entitles the producer/company to distribute and market their products under the trademark and, if applicable, under the QR code logo only to the extent that these products have been registered with Q-check and are produced, handled or traded in a production site or location registered with Q-check and are in full compliance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Standard.

The producer shall only use the trademark and/or the QR code logo in connection with products that are. In cases where certified producers who have not signed up for voluntary GLOBALG.A.P. membership use the GLOBALG.A.P. logo and/or the “G”-shape logo, they shall combine the logo with their corresponding GGN.

The GLOBALG.A.P. trademark shall never appear on the product, consumer packaging of products intended for human consumption or at the point of sale where it is in direct connection with single products.

Certified producers may only use the GLOBALG.A.P. trademark on pallets that contain only certified GLOBALG.A.P. products and they shall have to make sure that it will never appear at the point of sale.

GLOBALG.A.P. certified producers may use the GLOBALG.A.P. trademark and the QR code logo in business-to-business communication, and for traceability, segregation or identification purposes on site at the production site.

Producers shall only use the GLOBALG.A.P. Trademark according to the requirements and specifications laid down in GLOBALG.A.P. TRADEMARKS USE : Policy and Guidelines V1.0-1 04/07/2022

### The GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN) & CoC Number

The GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN) is the combination of the prefix “GGN” plus a 13-digit numerical number, not including the GLOBALG.A.P. trademark, and is unique to each and every producer and any other legal entity in the GLOBALG.A.P. System. For this number GLOBALG.A.P. requires existing Global Location Numbers (GLN) issued by, and to be purchased from, the local GS1 organization or alternatively – in its absence – GLOBALG.A.P. assigns its own interim GLN. In any case, the Global/International Location Number (GLN/ILN) from the GS1 is used as the GGN.

The CoC Number is the combination of the prefix “CoC” plus a 13-digit numerical number, not including the GLOBALG.A.P. trademark, and is unique to each and every CoC company. For this number GLOBALG.A.P. requires existing Global Location Numbers (GLN) issued by, and to be purchased from, the local GS1 organization or alternatively – in its absence – GLOBALG.A.P. assigns its own interim GLN. In any case, the Global/International Location Number (GLN/ILN) from the GS1 is used as the GGN.

The following rules are valid:

- a) In any cases the producer has already his own number, the producer shall use his own number,
- b) In cases the producer has not an own number, the producer will always get an GLN/ILN from GLOBALG.A.P. and
- c) In case a producer would get an own GLN/ILN after he got a GLN/ILN from GLOBALG.A.P., this number will replace the GLOBALG.A.P. number.

The GGN identifies a registered or certified producer, CoC number identifies a company registered for a certified to the CoC standard, both may only be used as indicated in the CPCS. It cannot be used to label a product that is not certified. The GGN and/or CoC number may appear on the product, consumer packaging of the product or at the point of sale were in direct connection with individual certified products. The GGN & CoC number shall only be used on transaction/sales documents including certified products. When the transaction/sales documents include certified and non-certified products, the certified items shall be clearly identified as required by the relevant All Farm Base Control Points and Compliance Criteria.

The legal entity that labels the product with a GGN, CoC number and/or the visual elements of the GGN label shall be a holder of a valid GLOBALG.A.P. IFA, CoC certificate issued by Q CHECK or a CoC equivalent standard.

The GGN and CoC shall be used only in connection with the GLOBALG.A.P. system. It is prohibited to use it in any other context or in relation to third parties.

The GGN and CoC number may be used in (converted into) generic QR code format or GLOBALG.A.P. QR code logo format.

The right of the company to use the GLOBALG.A.P. claim, including the GLOBALG.A.P. logos/trademarks, GGN, CoC number, and/or the QR code logos terminates immediately on termination of the sublicense and certification agreement.

If it becomes necessary to identify the company/producer in other contexts or additional applications, the company/producer may apply for their own GLN and report this number to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat, which shall register the company/producer under their own number and withdraw the GGN or/and CoC number accordingly. The own GLN then replaces the GGN and CoC number in the GLOBALG.A.P. System.

Where a GLN already exists and the company's / producer's client asks to use this GLN on all products labels, regardless of the certification status, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will grant an exemption and allow them to get a CoC NUMBER. The GGN will be used to identify only products originating for GLOBALG.A.P. certified production processes, as the exact status will already be reflected in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. The GLN will not appear in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems nor on the GLOBALG.A.P. certificate.

### **The visual elements of the GGN label**

Producers/ companies with CoC or IFA certification (e.g. aquaculture or flowers and ornamentals) are not automatically authorized to use visual elements of the GGN label. The visual elements of the GGN label shall be used under the GGN label license agreement. This agreement is granted only to companies/producers with IFA or CoC certification. The company/producer requires a valid GLOBALG.A.P. certificate for CoC or a CoC equivalent standard.

### **Traceability through the GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN)**

The GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN) is a 13-digit number that uniquely identifies each producer and individual member of a producer group in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database. The system provides instant and complete accessibility of registration and status data of every producer and product for all options. The GGN matches the Global Location Number (GLN) on GS1, the international standards organization, and is officially registered with GS1 Organization.

### **Final Provisions**

The present Certification Regulation is based on GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Version 6 smart &GFS Standard and covers the sub-scope(s) that Q-check is accredited against. It shall be amended accordingly whenever a new version of the IFA is set in force or whenever updates of Q-check Product Certification Quality Management System, should be communicated to any interested party.

Applicants in need of further information or interpretations for specific topics covered by the present Certification Regulation, should contact Q-check directly.

### **Contact**

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