

**Preamble:**

This guidance document is a publically available document issued by Getcert Pvt. Ltd. Based on CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020 “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards” and CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists” and COR OM C.12 “Requirements for grower group certification under COR”. This document provides basic guidance about the requirements for crop production and grower group certification under COR as cited in CAN/CGSB- 32.310 and relevant sections of CAN/CGSB- 32.311 and COR OM C.12.

This is to declare that Getcert Pvt. Ltd. do not make any claims about the ownership of CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020; “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards”; CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists” and COR Operating Manual including C.12

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide basic guidelines to the users, applicants, certified operations and other significantly interested parties; about the standard requirements. In any case these guidelines (*GD (GG) CAN/CGSB- 32.310, 32.311 & COR OM C.12.*) shall not supersede or replace the requirements of the standard (*CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020; “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards”; CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists, COR OM C.12 “Requirements for grower group certification under COR”*). For the purpose of conducting audit, taking certification decision or in event of any appeal, dispute or legal proceedings of any kind related to the certification, the requirements as cited in the standard (*CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020; “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards” and CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists, COR OM C.12 “Requirements for grower group certification under COR”*) shall prevail in its recent version.

The use of this guidance document (*GD (GG) CAN/CGSB- 32.310, 32.311 and COR OM C.12.*) is voluntary and is not mandatory for the users. Any claim shall not be made by any significantly party based on the guidance document (*GD (GG) CAN/CGSB- 32.310, 32.311 and COR OM C.12*)

This guidance document (*GD (GG) CAN/CGSB- 32.310, 32.311 & COR OM C.12*) shall always be read with the certification standard (*CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020; “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards”, CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists and COR OM C.12.*) in its most recent version. In case of any differences, gaps or doubts in the requirements, always and every time the requirements as cited in the standard (*CAN/CGSB- 32.310- 2020; “Organic Production Systems- General Principles and Management Standards”, CAN/CGSB- 32.311- 2020 “Organic Production System- Permitted Substances Lists and COR OM C.12 “Requirements for grower group certification under COR”*) shall prevail in it’s most recent version.

## General principles of organic production:

**Principle of health** – Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plants, animals, humans and the planet as one and indivisible.

**Principle of ecology** – Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.

**Principle of care** – Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

**Principle of fairness** – Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

## Organic Practices:

Please refer 0.3 General Practices of CAN/CGSB- 32.310-2020.

### 1. Scope:

#### 1.1 What can be certified – (please refer 1.1 of CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for more details)

- a. Unprocessed plants and plant products, livestock and livestock products,;
- b. Processed agricultural crop and livestock products intended for human consumption or use and derived from the items mentioned in 1.1 a);
- c. Livestock feed;
- d. Processed agricultural crop and livestock products intended for animal consumption or use and derived from the items mentioned in 1.1 a).

#### 1.2 Organic products shall be derived from the production system that-

- a. seeks to nurture ecosystems through its management practices in order to achieve sustainable productivity;
- b. provides control of pests including insects, weeds and disease through enhancement of biodiversity, recycling of plant and animal residues, crop selection and rotation, water management, tillage and cultivation.

#### 1.3 Units and measures:

Quantities and dimensions in this standard are given in metric units with yard/pound equivalents, mostly obtained through soft conversion, given in parentheses. The metric units shall be regarded as being official in the event of dispute or unforeseen difficulty arising from the conversion.

#### 1.4 Prohibited materials and techniques in organic production preparation (please refer 1.4 of CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for more details)

- a. GM products/ material or products/ materials resulting from genetic engineering (GE), as specified in 4.1.3, 5.1.2 and 6.2.1 of CAN/CGSB-32.311;
- b. all products, materials or processes intentionally using nanotechnology, (exceptions: naturally occurring nano-sized particles or those produced incidentally through processes such as grinding flour and contact surfaces, such as equipment, work surfaces or packaging, where transference of nano-sized particles to organic crops, livestock or products is unintended and unlikely to occur);
- c. irradiation treatment, except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311.
- d. cloned livestock and its descendants;

- e. equipment, harvest and storage containers, storage facilities and packaging materials treated with fungicides, preservatives, fumigants and pesticides not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311, except as permitted in 8.2.3 and 8.3.3 of CAN/CGSB-32.310.

### **1.5 Prohibited substances in organic production preparation:** *(please refer 1.5 of CAN/CGSB-32.310 for more details)*

Following products/ substances are prohibited in organic production and preparation.

- a. soil amendments, such as fertilizer or composted plant and animal material, that contain a substance not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311;
- b. sewage sludge;
- c. any crop production aids or substances not listed in CAN/CGSB-32.311;
- d. plant, fungal and animal growth regulators, except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311;
- e. veterinary drugs, including antibiotics and parasiticides, except as permitted by this standard;
- f. non-organic ingredients, food additives and processing aids used in organic product preparation, including sulphates, sulphites, nitrates and nitrites, except as permitted by this standard or specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311;
- g. formulants except as specified in CAN/CGSB-32.311;

### **2. Normative references** *(Please refer 2 of CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for more details)*

- 2.1 **CAN/CGSB- 32.310-** Organic production systems- General principles and management standards;
- 2.2 **CAN/CGSB-32.311** – Organic production systems – Permitted substances lists;
- 2.3 **CAN/CGSB-32.312** – Organic production systems: Aquaculture—General principles, management standards and permitted substances lists.
- 2.4 **Canada Organic Regime Operating Manual** – C.12 (Requirements for grower group certification under COR)
- 2.5 **Part 13 of SFCR** (Safe food for Canadians Regulation)

### **3. Terms and Definitions**

Please refer “3- Terms and Definitions” of CAN/CGSB-32.310 *for more details*

### **4. Organic Plan** *(please refer 4 of CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for more details)*

*(Please refer 4 of Guidance Document- Crop Production [https://getcert.co.in/assets/images/pdf/GuidanceDocument-CropProduction\\_engVer0-1.pdf](https://getcert.co.in/assets/images/pdf/GuidanceDocument-CropProduction_engVer0-1.pdf) for more details)*

### **5. Crop Production** *(please refer 5 of CAN/CGSB- 32.310 for more details)*

*(Please refer 5 of Guidance Document- Crop Production [https://getcert.co.in/assets/images/pdf/GuidanceDocument-CropProduction\\_engVer0-1.pdf](https://getcert.co.in/assets/images/pdf/GuidanceDocument-CropProduction_engVer0-1.pdf) for more details)*

### **C.12 Requirements for grower group certification under COR**

*(Please refer COR OM C.12 for more details)*

<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/food-labels/organic-products/operating-manual>

#### **C.12.1 Requirements for grower group organizations** *(Please refer C.12.1 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

- C.12.1.1 Grower group shall only seek certification with a CB accredited by CFIA under the COR that is accredited to certify grower groups.
- C.12.1.2 The CVB shall assess the ability of the CB to perform the group certification and recommend it for accreditation to the CFIA. A CB shall be accredited for grower group scope if they have policies and procedures to verify compliance of the group and the individual group members.
- C.12.1.3 The grower group composed of production units, sites, or facilities, shall be recognized as a “person” according to part 13 of SFCR.
- C.12.1.4 The grower group may be organized on itself, that is, as a co-operative, or as a structured group of producers affiliated to a processor.
- C.12.1.5 All members of the grower group shall apply similar production systems and should be in geographical proximity to each other. Only small farmers can be members of the group covered by group certification. Large farms can also belong to the group but have to be inspected annually by the CB. (Small farmers both: a. where the cost of external certification is 2% or more of annual gross revenue; b. less than 50 acres)
- C.12.1.6 The grower group shall be established formally, based on written agreements with its members. It shall have a central management, established decision procedures and be a legal entity.
- C.12.1.7 The grower group shall have in place an effective and documented internal control system (ICS).
- C.12.1.8 The management of the grower group shall sign a legally enforceable agreement with the CB specifying the responsibilities of both parties. The management shall obtain signed obligations from all grower group members to comply with the Canada Organic Standards and to permit inspection by the CB, the CVB or the CFIA.
- C.12.1.9 The practices of the grower group operation shall be uniform and reflect a consistent process or methodology, using the same inputs and processes.
- C.12.1.10 Participation in the grower group shall be limited to those members who market their organic production only through the group. A member of a group shall register to only one group for a given product. Maximum size of a grower group shall be 2,000 members.

#### **C.12.2 Requirements for internal control system (ICS)** *(Please refer C.12.2 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

- C.12.2.1 The grower group shall document and implement an internal control system (ICS) for supervision and documentation of production practices and inputs used at each sub-unit, and collected at each production unit, site, or facility. An identified person or body is responsible for verifying compliance with the Canada Organic Regime of each member of the group.
- C.12.2.2 The internal control system shall include a contractual arrangement with each member of the grower group.
- C.12.2.3 The internal control system shall be implemented by competent personnel including ICS manager and ICS inspectors. ICS inspectors designated by the grower group shall carry out internal controls.

- C.12.2.4. Adequate number of ICS inspectors shall be identified from within the group based on the type, structure, size, products, and the activities of the group. The ICS inspectors shall be trained annually and their knowledge shall be assessed and documented at the end of the training.
- C.12.2.5 The ICS inspectors shall carry out at least 1 annual on-site inspection visit to each individual member including visits to fields and facilities. Any additional risk-based inspections shall be conducted in accordance with the schedule and the procedures provided by the ICS manager.
- C.12.2.6 The ICS inspectors shall draft internal inspection reports and submit it within a timeframe specified in the ICS to the ICS manager.
- C.12.2.7 The internal control system shall contain appropriate records including:
- production description, production and/or preparation specifications for products to which the application applies
  - maps, description of the farms and the facilities of all members
  - list of inputs (ingredients and agricultural substances)
  - a copy of organic production and/or preparation plans
  - traceability records, including information on the quantities, on the following activities, where relevant:
    - i. purchase and distribution of farm inputs including plant reproductive material by the group;
    - ii. production including harvest;
    - iii. storing;
    - iv. preparation;
    - v. delivery of products from each member to the joint marketing system;
    - vi. placing on the market of products by the grower group.
  - corrective actions required by the CB during the previous certification cycle, as well as any corrective measures implemented by members concerning these requests
  - a complete list of registered group members
  - continuous verification of implementation of the internal inspections
  - summary of the internal inspection reports including the date of the last internal inspection with the name of the ICS inspector
  - the training of members of the group on the ICS procedures and the requirements of COR
  - the approval of new members in an existing group or, where appropriate, the approval of new production units or new activities of existing members upon the approval by the ICS manager on the basis of the internal inspection report
- C.12.2.8 The internal control system shall have a mechanism to remove noncompliant group members from the list. The CB should be notified when a (noncompliant) member is sanctioned and/or when voluntarily withdrawn.
- C.12.2.9 The internal control system shall record all nonconformities. The ICS shall require the member to respond to the NC report issued by the ICS within 30 working days of its receipt. The response shall either provide evidence of completion of corrective action taken to address each NC or present a plan with milestones as to how each NC will be addressed. This plan shall include a completion date not exceeding 90 working days from receipt of the NCs. The ICS shall accept times greater than those stated for the closure of a NC as long as they are justified and documented.

**C.12.3 Initial certification** (Please refer C.12.3 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)

C.12.3.1 The CB shall evaluate the effectiveness of the ICS to assess compliance of all members with the requirements set out in CAN/CGSB 32.310, CAN/CGSB 32.311 and CAN/CGSB 32.312.

C.12.3.2 The certification inspection of the grower group by the CB shall include an assessment of the risks to organic integrity within the grower group and the geographical location in which it functions. A sample of all sites under the grower group's responsibility shall be subject to inspection visits by the CB to assess the effectiveness of the ICS. The CB may justify exceptions to this rule based on risk assessment.

C.12.3.3 The number of group members subject to the initial certification inspection shall be based on the results of a risk assessment and the following calculations.

C.12.3.3.1 Factors to define the risk as normal, medium and high shall include:

C.12.3.3.1.1 factors related to the magnitude of the grower group

- organization size and sites' size
- value of the products
- numbers of years the grower group has functioned
- number of new members registered yearly
- staff turnover
- the management structure of the internal control system
- volume and value of the production
- the type of non-compliances

C.12.3.3.1.2 factors related to the characteristics of the grower group

- variations in the product systems
- risks for intermingling and/or contamination
- geographical dispersion of the sites
- degree of uniformity among the production units, sites or facilities

C.12.3.3.2 For normal risk situation, the number of group members subject to the initial certification inspection shall not be lower than the square root of the total number of units under the responsibility of the group.

C.12.3.3.3 If the risk is medium, the resulting number from C.12.3.3.2 shall be multiplied by 1.2.

C.12.3.3.4 if the risk is high, the resulting number from C.12.3.3.2 shall be multiplied by 1.4.

C.12.3.3.5 All calculation totals from C.12.3.3.2 – C.12.3.3.4 ending with decimals are to be rounded up.

C.12.3.4 The CB shall assign VOs who have appropriate training on inspection of internal control systems.

C.12.3.5 During the certification inspection the VO shall determine whether:

C.12.3.5.1 all internal control documentation is in place

C.12.3.5.2 internal inspections of all group members have been carried out annually

C.12.3.5.3 new group members are only included after successful resolution of any NCs found during the internal inspection, according to the procedures agreed with CB

C.12.3.5.4 all non-compliances have been dealt with appropriately by the ICS

C.12.3.5.5 inspection records have been maintained up to date by the ICS

C.12.3.6 The VO shall carry out a witness audit to determine whether the inspections of the ICS are conducted as written by ICS inspectors.

**C.12.4 Maintenance of certification** *(Please refer C.12.4 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

C.12.4.1 Each year the CB shall define and justify a risk-based sample of members subject to annual inspection to assess the effectiveness of the ICS. The minimum number of members subject to annual CB inspection shall be square root of the total number of members multiplied by 1.5.

C.12.4.2 In cases of high-risk members the CB shall increase the number of group members subject to annual inspection to at least 2 times the square root of the number of the members in the grower group (for example, ICS has issued a lot of internal sanctions, or a lot of new members).

C.12.4.3 The members visited by the CB shall be predominantly different from 1 year to another. In addition to the risk factors defined at C.12.3.3.1, the CBs may consider the following selection criteria when selecting the sites being subject to visits:

- results from internal control system inspection
- complaint files
- significant variations of the sites' size
- modifications since the last certification

C.12.4.4 The CB shall ensure that the grower group maintains an updated list of all members and informs the CB in a timely manner anytime there are changes to the status of the members and changes to the group as a whole.

C.12.4.5 The CB shall ensure that the grower group has established procedures for adding new members to the grower group.

**C.12.5 Records** *(Please refer C.12.5 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

C.12.5.1 The CB shall ensure that the grower group has record-keeping protocols for the individual production units, sites, or facilities within a grower group.

C.12.5.2 The CB shall maintain records of sample inspection to ensure that over time, the inspections are representative of the grower group as a whole and consider any previously identified risk.

**C.12.6 Certification documents** *(Please refer C.12.6 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

C.12.6.1 The CB shall provide certification documents to the grower group as a whole. Members within a grower group that have had its operations or product certified cannot possess individual certificates unless that member has obtained its own certification independent from the grower group for a different product.

**C.12.7 Suspension and cancellation** *(Please refer C.12.7 of Canada Organic Regime operating manual for more details)*

C.12.7.1 The CB shall hold the grower group as a whole responsible for compliance of all members.

C.12.7.2 The CB shall have a documented suspension policy in the event of noncompliance by the grower group or a member.

C.12.7.3 The CB shall suspend or cancel the certification granted to the grower group as a whole, in accordance with part 13 of the SFCR, in cases where the grower group's internal control system fails to act on these non-compliances.