Procedure for Certificate issue, suspension and withdrawal

1.0 Purpose

To describe a procedure for granting, for maintaining, for extending, or reducing the scope of certification, for suspending, withdrawing or for refusing certification. Annexure 1 states the certificate issue, suspension and withdrawal for GLOBALG.A.P. certification.

2.0 Scope

This procedure covers all types of product certifications services and all management system certification services provided by **African Certification and Testing (hereafter referred to as ACT).**

3.0 Responsibility

3.1 **Quality Manager**, if not involved in the evaluation process of the client, is responsible for granting, for maintaining, for extending, or reducing the scope of certification, for suspending, withdrawing or for refusing certification. He is supported by the support staff for all routine activities. He is submitting the certificate to the client for the product certified and/or management system certified after receipt of approval in the certificate by Nominated Representative.

3.2 **Nominated Representative** is responsible for approval / authorization of certificate of product and/or management system certification. In case the Quality Manager was involved in the evaluation of the client the Nominated Representative is responsible for the granting, for maintaining, for extending, or reducing the scope of certification, for suspending, withdrawing or for refusing certification.

4.0 Description of Activity

4.1 Receipt and review of Evaluation report

4.1.1 Evaluation team submit the Evaluation documents / reports to the Quality Manager upon completion of Evaluation.

4.1.2 All such documents are reviewed by Quality Manager for the completeness of the documents as well as signature of the Evaluation team.

4.1.3 Quality Manager, if not involved in the evaluation process of the client, reviews the filled evaluation checklist / records and suportive documents submitted by Evaluators (Evaluation personnel) or Auditors (Auditing personnel). If the Quality Manager was involved in the evaluation process the Nominated Representative is responsible to review the filled evaluation checklist / records and suportive documents submitted by Evaluators or Auditors.

4.1.4 If required, the Quality Manager may consult other Quality Managers or Nominated Representative and Technical Experts for such review.

4.1.5 Based on review of evaluation records, decision for the issue of certificate for the product and/or management system is taken subject to closure of the non–conformities / observations issued during the evaluation.

4.2 Granting of certificate

4.2.1 Upon receipt of corrective actions from the client against the non–conformities / observations, the same have been verified by evaluation team. Based on the recommendation of the evaluation team for the closure of the non–conformities / observations. The evaluation report along with the corrective actions and recommendation of evaluation team is put in the certification committee for its review

4.2.2 Meeting of certification committee is held as needed and chaired either by the Quality Manager or the Nominated Representative (person not involved in the evaluation process). During the meeting all the evaluation records are verified and upon successful verification the certification committee recommend to ACT that the client is certified. The decision for granting the certificate lies with the Quality Manager or the Nominated Representative (person not involved in the evaluation process)

4.2.3 The chair compiles the meeting agenda (F32) prior to the certification committee meeting and takes the attendance (F33) during the meeting.

4.2.4 Members are requested to complete F39: Confidentiality, Impartiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement whereby they agree to the safeguarding mechanism of ACT at the start of every Certification Committee Meeting.

4.2.5 With regards to product certification, the certification committee use the requirements of the General Permit Condition (QP13) and applicable Specific Permit Condition(s) (QP18, QP19, QP20, QP20.s, QP21 and QP21.s) as criteria to base their recommendation to ACT.

4.2.6 With regards to management system certification, the certification committee use the requirements of the ISO 9001 Certification Agreement (F69.21) as criteria to base their recommendation to ACT.

4.2.7 With regards to product certification, each of the certification committee members complete the Certification Committee Review Checklist (Initial) (CC01) for initial clients and make use of Certification Committee Review Checklist (Recertification) (CC02) and the chair summarise the outcome in the minutes of the meeting (F31).

4.2.8 With regards to management system certification, each of the certification committee members complete the Audit Report Review Checklist (F75) and the chair summarise the outcome in the minutes of the meeting (F31).

4.2.9 Based on the recommendation of the certification committee, the chair decides either to grant certification or not grant certification. This decision should be based on the majority vote of the certification committee upon approval of the client being certified the Quality Manager prepare certification documents with all the relevant information related to the product and/or certification and client.

4.2.10 Regardless of the chair's decision, the client will be informed by means of an email from ACT (@africancertification.co.za).

4.2.11 Upon completion of the certification documents it is given to the Nominated Representative for the approval by means of signing.

4.2.12 Product certificate (All the content as mentioned in clause no. 7.7 of Quality Manual) is issued to the client after approval of the Nominated Representative.

4.2.13 The certificate for management system certification is issued to the client after approval of the Nominated Representative.

4.2.14 The use of promotional material including the certificate shall be reviewed during evaluation visits. The website shall be reviewed after the grant, suspension or withdrawal of certificates.

4.2.15 A directory of certified clients is maintained on the ACT website.

4.3 Maintaining certificate for the product

4.3.1 For maintaining the certification for the product, the periodic surveillance audit is conducted as per the details given in the QP09 for the periodic evaluation.

4.3.2 For maintaining the certification for the management system, the periodic surveillance audit is conducted as per the details given in the QP09.21 for the periodic evaluation.

4.3.3 Based on the successful periodic evaluation, the product certification is maintained till the next periodic evaluation.

4.4 Extending certificate for the product

4.4.1 The certificate may be extended in the following circumstances;

- Evaluation is already done in time, but due to heavy workload, it is not possible to review evaluation documents by certification committee,
- Nominated Representative may not be available for approval of the certificate,
- Due some other unavoidable circumstances.

4.4.2 Based on any of the above situations, the decision for the extending the certificate is taken by Quality Manager and extension letter is prepared and is issued to the customer with the reference to the certificate number.

4.4.3 All such extension is given for the period of three months from the expiry date of the certificate.

4.5 Termination (cancellation), reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

When a non-conformity with certification requirements is substantiated, either as a result of surveillance or otherwise, ACT shall consider and decide upon the appropriate action. Appropriate action includes, but is not limited to:

a) Continuation of certification under conditions specified by ACT (e.g. increased surveillance)

b) Reduction in the scope of certification to remove non-conforming product

variants

c) Suspension of the certification pending remedial action by the client

d) Withdrawal of the certification

4.6 Reducing the scope of certification

4.6.1 Reduction in the scope of certification is possible in the below circumstances;

- Any of the product from the present certification may fails to comply with the relevant requirements,
- Client may require voluntarily withdrawal of the product from the present certification certificate,
- Due some other unavoidable circumstances.

4.6.2 Based on above, decision for the reduction is taken and scope of certification is reduced by removal of the product and/or management system (as identified) and the revised certificate is sent for the approval of Nominated Representative with the reason for the reduction in the scope of certification. Certificate is then issued to the client after approval of the Nominated Representative with the date of issue.

4.7 Suspension, and withdrawal or cancellation of certificates

4.7.1 This instruction covers suspension procedures through withdrawal or cancellation of the certificate and revision of the register of certified clients for the identified products and/or management systems.

- Grounds for action are brought to the attention of the Quality Manager, who reviews the information and decides whether to proceed.
- If the Quality Manager decides to proceed, the certified client must reply to **ACT** within fifteen days of receipt of letter.
- If the Quality Manager determines that the action or position contained in the certified client reply is satisfactory, he issues a letter stating this, and mails it to the certified client via registered mail.
- If actions are required, due dates must be set and Quality Manager must review the actions at those times to ensure that they are effectively completed in order to prevent suspension or cancellation.
- If the certified client does not reply in fifteen days, if the reply is not satisfactory, or if the actions required are not effectively completed in the allowed time (1 month), the Quality Manager determines whether to suspend or cancel certification.
- Should a decision to suspend certification be approved by the Nominated Representative (who base the decision on a majority vote of the certification committee) of ACT, a certificate shall be suspended for a period of 1 month.

Failure to resolve issues that have resulted in the suspension, within the suspension period (1 month), shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

- Appeals are dealt with by the impartiality committee, with a majority vote being the final verdict.
- If the decision is made to cancel certification, the Nominated Representative is responsible for suspending the certified client or canceling the certified client from the Register of Certified client, advising the certified client by registered mail / courier, and publicizing the cancellation, if necessary.

4.7.2 The following reasons are considered grounds for suspension or cancellation of product certification:

- Major non–conformance(s) or effective corrective action not implemented within a specified time period.
- Improper use of the certificate, symbol, or logo not remedied to the satisfaction of **ACT**
- Certified client ceases to supply services of the certified quality for an extended period of time.
- Certified client's has persistently fails to meet any of the requirements for certification including requirements for the effectiveness.
- Certified client fails to meet financial obligations to **ACT**
- Certified client makes a formal request to withdraw certification.
- Infringement by the certified client of any contractual conditions between the certified client and **ACT**
- Certified client is unable or unwilling to ensure conformance to revisions of standards.
- Existence of a serious complaint, or a large number of second or third party complaints, which indicate that the system is not being maintained.
- Certified client does not allow periodic evaluation to be conducted at the required frequency

4.7.3 The following reasons are considered grounds for suspension or cancellation of management system certification:

- The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.

- The certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequency or has failed to pay the due fees.
- The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension
- In order to comply with regulations, including regulations applicable to specific industry sectors.
- Major non–conformance(s) or effective corrective action not implemented within a specified time period.
- Improper use of the certificate, symbol, or logo not remedied to the satisfaction of **ACT**
- Certified client ceases to supply services of the certified quality for an extended period of time.
- Certified clients has persistently fails to meet any of the requirements for certification including requirements for the effectiveness.
- Certified client fails to meet financial obligations to **ACT**
- Certified client makes a formal request to withdraw certification.
- Infringement by the certified client of any contractual conditions between the certified client and **ACT**
- Certified client is unable or unwilling to ensure conformance to revisions of standards.
- Existence of a serious complaint, or a large number of second or third party complaints, which indicate that the system is not being maintained.
- Certified client does not allow periodic evaluation to be conducted at the required frequency

4.8 Conditions for Suspension or Cancellation of Certified client

4.8.1 Subject to actions by the certified client, the following steps will be taken leading to possible suspension or cancellation of the certified client's product and/or management system certification:

- Unless a reply is received to the letter accompanying notification within 15 days, certification will be suspended and a notification of suspension may be published at the discretion of **ACT**

Under suspension the client’s management system certification is temporarily invalid

- The certified client's response to the accompanying letter will be reviewed and the proceedings may be put on hold while clarification is sought.

- Where mutually agreed–upon corrective action is to be implemented, a time period for implementation will be specified and a review of the corrective action undertaken at the appointed time. This may be the subject of a special surveillance visit or of review of submitted objective evidence, at the discretion of **ACT** Should the corrective action not be considered adequate or not be completed by the appointed time, certification will be automatically suspended.
- In the case of serious circumstances, **ACT** may invoke suspension during the period pending the implementation of corrective action.
- Where suspension has been invoked, unless otherwise specified, the certified client must advise **ACT** every 15 days of the current situation of corrective action. Failure to meet this requirement will result in cancellation of the certified client's certification.
- Where suspension has been invoked due to failure to conduct periodic evaluation, the certified client shall give justification for failure and offer suitable date. An additional day shall be added to routine periodic days. The date shall not be later than 15 months from last Evaluation. Failure to offer for Evaluation within 15 months shall result in cancellation of certification.
- When corrective action to resolve the problem(s) taken by the certified client has been verified, certification will be resumed. The period of certification will not be revised to cover the period of suspension.
- Cancellation of certification will be invoked where; following suspension of certification, the certified client fails to respond to **ACT** communications within the 15 days grace period or fails to implement corrective action within the appointed time period.
- In extreme circumstances **ACT** may invoke the cancellation of certification with immediate effect without recourse to initial certification suspension.
- Cancellation of certification will require the certified client to assume the status of non–approval and return all certification documentation to **ACT**
- Use of certification documents, symbols, or logos by the certified client following certification cancellation may result in legal action being taken against the certified client.
- Re–approval after certification cancellation will be on the same basis, and follow the same process, as that of initial application for a new certified client. This will require a full assessment, with optional document review at the discretion of **ACT**
- The de–certification will be published as a separate list and will be available at the **ACT** office and made available upon request.

- The certified client has the right to appeal any decisions of **ACT** and a copy of the appeals procedures will be made available upon request.
- Quality Manager shall remove the companies where the certificate has been cancelled. During suspension, suspension remark shall be placed in the registered of certified client.
- The certified client files for all cancelled cases shall be archived for a period of 3 months and marked as obsolete.

Note: failure to resolve issues that have resulted in the suspension in the timeframe established by ACT, will result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

When the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements the result of the reduction of scope will be to exclude the parts not meeting the applicable certification requirements and that of the standard used for certification.

4.9 Refusing certification

4.9.1 Refusal of the certification can be done in the following circumstances;

- Client fails to submit the corrective actions within the allowed time frame from the date of evaluation,
- Corrective actions submitted by the client are not satisfactory considering the non–conformities / observations,
- Client fails to pay the required fees in the given time frame,
- Client does not want to have certificate after completion of the assessment,
- Objective evidence submitted during the evaluation found fake.

4.9.2 All the above reason will lead to refusal of product certification even after completion of the evaluation. Quality Manager will takes decision on the refusal of certificate based on the above circumstances.

4.9.3 Details of refusal of the certificate are given to the client in the writing and show cause notice is submitted to the client for such incidence.

4.9.4 Client is requested to reply in writing against the show cause notice.

4.9.5 The details of refusal of certificate are maintained in the client file and then file is closed.

4.9.6 Quality Manager maintains the list of refusal of the certificates.

5.0 Reference

5.1	QP13	General Permit Conditions
5.2	QP18	Addendum 4 to specific permit conditions

5.3	QP19	Addendum 1 to specific permit conditions
5.4	QP20	Addendum 2 to specific permit conditions
5.5	QP20.s	Addendum 2 to specific permit conditions (Softwood Species)
5.6	QP21	Addendum 3 to specific permit conditions
5.7	QP21.s	Addendum 3 to specific permit conditions (Softwood Species)
5.8	F69.21	ISO 9001 Certification Agreement
5.9	QP09.21	Procedure for audit planning conducting and reporting
5.10	QP09	Procedure for Evaluation

6.0 Forms

6.1	F26	Sample Certificate
6.2	F30	Schedule of Certification
6.3	F31	Meeting Minutes
6.4	F32	Meeting Agenda
6.5	F33	Attendance register
6.6	F39	Confidentiality, Impartiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement
6.7	CC01	Certification Committee Review Checklist (Initial)
6.8	CC02	Certification Committee Review Checklist (Recertification)
6.9	F26.21	Certificate
6.10	F30.21	Schedule of Certification
6.11	F75	Audit Report Review Checklist

Annexure 1: GLOBALG.A.P. Requirements

1.0. Producer Registration and Acceptance:

1.1. General:

a) All production sites to be certified shall be registered on the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
b) The product scope will be linked to the location where the product is produced. Products produced in a non-registered location will not be certified, and likewise products that are not registered but are grown on a registered location will not be certified.
c) Only producers may apply to register their production process for GLOBALG.A.P. certification.
d) A certificate and sublicense will be issued to the registered producer, for production sites where the products are produced (and packed or handled if applicable) and for the products declared.
e) Only the legal certificate holder (i.e. the legal entity that is indicated on the certificate) may market products with reference to a GLOBALG.A.P. certificate. All products that are sold without reference to the certificate shall be recorded in the group mass balance system.
f) **IFA Version 6 GFS addition:** Exception may apply following "GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for flexible distribution".

1.2. Producer Registration:

a) African Certification and Testing (Pty) Ltd (referred to as ACT) and the producer shall agree to a 'Service of Notice' terms which shall include a commitment by ACT to confirm the receipt of formal application for (first) registration within 28 calendar days after ACT has received the unique GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN) from the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems. This is stipulated in QP13.gg – General Permit Conditions.
b) ACT shall set up and explain to its prospective clients its own detailed fee structure, which shall specify the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fees in the form of a quote. ACT will then invoice the producers/producer groups, and any other accompanying document with each invoice, which shall clearly identify the GLOBALG.A.P. registration fee.
c) The quotation will be signed by the applicant on acceptance and will include the audit duration and it's justification. This shall include the different parts of the CB audit to be considered (e.g. QMS, PHU 1, PHU 2, producer 1, producer 2, site 1, site 2 etc.) and the travel time to and between the sites/PHU.
d) ACT shall explain to its prospective clients that the payment of the relevant GLOBALG.A.P. inspection and certification fee does not guarantee the issuing of the certificate.
e) If a producer or producer group that has previously had a GGN applied for registration with ACT, ACT shall act according to the GLOBALG.A.P. procedure for transfer between certification bodies as set out in section 6.0 below.

f) Before registering a new applicant in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, ACT shall verify if the applicant is already registered or has any active status or sanction with another CB.

g) If a producer wishes to change to a new certification body (CB) and have applied for certification with ACT, ACT shall as a first step for all of these applicants carry out a search on the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems to verify the status before any further actions are taken.

h) If a producer uses the services of more than one CB, each CB shall conduct the respective inspections (Option 1) independently.
   a. If one of the CB's issues a sanction, all CB's operating with that producer or producer group have the obligation to communicate with each other regarding the scope and, if appropriate, details of actions to be taken across all CB's.
   b. The communication of a sanction to all CB's operating with that legal entity is an obligation which the producer shall undertake, but can also be made by GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat directly to the CB's involved.
   c. The communication between CB's shall include all relevant details, but the sanction issued shall be valid and all relevant CB's shall observe this.

i) ACT shall establish and implement procedures for collecting data updates (application form) of the accepted producers, such as production site or product area change. The procedure is as follows
   a. An application form will be required to be filled in three months prior to the inspection date that will stipulate all relevant changes.
   b. Any changes from the previous application will be picked up when the information of the producer is captured in the Client Database (F61.V6).
   c. The Client Database (F61.V6) is updated accordingly and the inspector is notified of any changes.
   d. The GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems shall be updated with the relevant changes as stipulated in the application form.

1.3. Registration Data Requirements:

ACT shall:

a) Record during registration all information that is requested in "GLOBALG.A.P. registration data requirements".
b) Keep the GLOBALG.A.P. IT Systems updated accordingly, as described in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database wiki (wiki.globalgap.org). This information shall be updated regularly whenever there is a change. It shall be updated at the latest with the re-acceptance of products for the next certificate cycle and/or the re-certification

1.4. Data Access Rules

a) ACT shall inform the producer about and explain the 'Data Access Rules' as found in

the GLOBALG.A.P. document 'Data Access Rules' which is available at the following link: https://www.globalgap.org/documents.

b) ACT shall inform the producer and explain any changes to the 'Data Access Rules' document when applicable.
c) Data access rules shall be defined and signed by the producer or producer group during registration with ACT. 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. certification body)
d) *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 and the public) to access different levels of data.
e) 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 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.
f) FoodPLUS GmbH/The GLOBALG.A.P. will keep the applicant's/producer's certification history in its Database for a minimum of 5 years

2.0. Certification Process

2.1. General

a) All production sites where products registered for certification are produced shall be audited before the certificate may be issued. In this case, even if the CB may internally only 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.
b) A full CB written report shall be produced which summarizes the audit activity taken, provides objective evidence and information on how the producer complies with the requirements of the standard, and, where applicable, lists any non-compliances and/or non-conformities identified.
c) The individual producer representative shall sign or confirm the CB audit outcome (including at least the duration, date, name of CB auditor, scope, audit sites, facilities, result in % of compliance for the different levels of P&Cs) during the closing meeting. A documented or electronic confirmation by the producer is accepted as equivalent to the producer's signature. In case of a digital signature, it shall be genuine and a valid one.
d) Compliance is indicated with a "Yes" for compliant, "No" for not compliant, and N/A for non-applicable. P&Cs indicated as a "No N/A" cannot be answered as "not applicable". In exceptions in which the P&C is not applicable, the answer shall be given as "Yes" with a clear justification.
e) Comments shall be recorded according to the audit methodology, when available, to

enable the audit trail to be reviewed after the event and shall include details of evidences checked during the CB audit. If there is no guideline for audit methodology published, it is obligatory to give comments for all complied, non-complaint, and not applicable Major Musts, as well as non-compliant and non-applicable Minor Musts audited. This is applicable for CB audits and internal audits. In case of self-assessments, it is obligatory to provide comments for all non-complaint, and not applicable Major and Minor musts only.

f) The CB audit report shall contain the following:
   a. All data fields as marked required in the AOH
   b. Scope: company, site, PHU, product information according to GG registration data requirements
   c. Calculation of total applicable major, minor and recommendation P&Cs and the % of compliance achieved for each level
   d. List of non-compliances, non-conformances and follow up actions agreed with producer. This includes the relevant P&C, the finding details based on objective evidence, deadline for corrective action, description of corrective action agreed with producer, reference to objective evidence of implementation of correction, evaluation result of corrective action (open/closed) and relevant dates of these actions.
   e. Conclusions of compliance or not
   f. Reviewer(s) name (can also be recorded in another document defined in the CB procedures or in the CB certification management software).
   g. Stage of the CB audit report – e.g. preliminary or final (CB may further define different CB audit report stages).

g) Where available, CB shall use the audit report template used by the GG IT Systems

h) The CB audit report shall form basis by which the decision can be made on awarding the certificate.

i) The person who makes the certification decision or at least one member of the CCM shall comply to CB QMS auditor qualifications or CB farm auditor qualifications and additionally with CB QMS auditor technical skills and qualifications.

j) The date of the certification decision may be recorded in other places/the system of the CB, not necessarily in the CB audit report, but shall be recorded in the GG IT systems.

k) Copies of CB report, objective evidence of implementation of corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall only be provided to the regulatory authorities when requested, as per applicable national legislation. They shall also be provided by default to the GG Secretariat and on request to the AB. Any additional release shall only be provided if the producer allows access by written authorization.
IFA Version 6 GFS: Copies of the CB audit report, objective evidence of implementation of corrective actions, and/or the fully completed audit checklist shall be provided to the regulatory authorities when requested, as per applicable national legislation. It shall also be provided by default to the GG Secretariat and on request to the AB and to GFSI. Any additional release shall only be provided if the producer allows access by written authorization.

l) The CB report and the completed audit checklist distributed externally, must be protected or otherwise controlled to prevent unauthorized modification or tampering prior to distribution.
m) The fully completed checklist shall include all applicable P&Cs, requested comments, findings, objective evidence of implementation of corrections.
n) Where the country of destination includes the USA/Canada, the CB shall provide the final CB audit report including the completed audit checklist to the producer, at the latest by the time of certification decision.
o) Additionally, if any producer requests it, the CB shall provide the full CB audit report including the completed audit checklist, within 5 working days after certification decision. It is not obligatory for the CB to send out a report before it went through internal technical review. If the automatically generated CB report is available from the GG IT systems, this report shall be used.
p) When GG requires it, the CB report and completed checklist shall be uploaded into the GG IT systems.
q) The CB shall have processes in place to address situations when translations of the reports are requested.

2.2. Producer Non-conformances and Sanctions

a) All corrections and corrective actions shall be assessed; with clarification provided to show whether the action(s) taken and evidence provided are sufficient to close the non-conformances.
b) Evidence of the resolution of non-conformances can be provided in the form of documentary evidence and/or photographic evidence as appropriate. Evidences shall be filed and shall be made available to GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat on request.
c) There may be occasions where demonstration of the resolution of a non-conformance can only be confirmed by a further site visit or remotely, using ICT. Where this is required, a charge may apply.
d) Verification of the corrective action plan and the implementation of the corrective actions shall be carried out by the same CB auditor that conducted the audit, or else by another CB auditor qualified for the respective scope and/or standard.
e) Satisfactory corrective actions shall be completed to achieve the approval level on a member/site level *before* a certificate can be issued to the producer group/multisite producer.
f) Lifting of a sanction: a sanction does not end with a certificate validity expiry but stays with the legal entity until such time that the non-conformance is closed.

2.3. Certificate Requirements

a) After a positive certification decision, ACT shall issue a certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems.
b) The certificate may not only be issued based on the information available at the time in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems for that unique GGN.

c) A list of all producers, production sites, and PHUs to which the certificate relates shall be issued in an annex referred to in the certificate. ACT shall this list up-to-date.
d) ACT shall 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".

2.4. Certificate Validity Extension

a) The certificate may be extended beyond the usual 12 months for a maximum period of 4 months but only if there is a valid reason, which shall be recorded.
IFA Version 6 GFS: The certificate validity may be extended beyond the usual 12 months for a max of 4 months but only if there is a valid reason, which shall be recorded. The following are only reasons that are considered valid:
   a. CB wants to schedule the on-site visit after the certificate has expired in order to observe certain parts of the production process because that part has not been seen in previous CB audit, because it is considered to be high risk process in terms of product safety or because it involves a newly added product or process.
   b. The CB needs to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
   c. The CB was not able to conduct the on-site CB audit or the producer was not able to receive the CB audit due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. natural disaster, epidemic etc.).
b) ACT shall always have a signed, complete application form and a signed certification contract for the following certification before an extension is granted.
Note: if ACT or the producer wants to extend a certificate's validity, ACT shall have a written confirmation by the producer for the extension and clearly communicate that this action means ACT cannot be changed for the upcoming certificate.
c) Once the extension begins, the full GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fee for the next certificate shall be paid by the producer to ACT that issued the current valid certificate.
d) The producer shall be reaudited during that extension period.
e) The producer cannot change CBs for the certificate subsequent to the one for which the extension is granted.
f) If the certificate has been expired for longer than 12 months, ACT shall apply the rules for initial CB audit.

3.0. Transfer Between Certification Bodies

3.1. General

a) Only producers in the GG database may change CB. All producers may resolve any outstanding sanctions before being able to transfer. In case a sanctioned producer wants to change CB and the certification cycle has already expired, as an exception, the outgoing CB can lift the non-conformances of an expired certificate without having received evidences of corrective actions. But, in the case, the outgoing CB shall

ensure that the accepting CB is fully aware of the cause of the non-conformances.

b) During registration of each new producer, the CB shall request information regarding previous GGNs. The accepting CB shall keep the existing GGN of the transferred producer. Double registration is not allowed (i.e. producer can only have one GGN). If the producer declares the information regarding its previous GGN during registration and double registration occurs, the CB shall pay a fine of 200 euros.

c) The accepting CB shall close the registration process, including entering into a sublicense and certification agreement with the producer before accepting the transfer. The transfer of producers between CBs can take place when a producer's certificate has expired and also if there is no binding service contract between producer and outgoing CB.

d) The producer shall apply for certification with a new CB for the next cycle.

e) The outgoing CB may shorten the validity of the issued certificate to facilitate transfer but always in agreement with the producer and in co-ordination with the accepting CB in order to avoid gaps in certification.

f) If the signing of the GG Sublicense and Certification agreement and CB audit date are *after* the outgoing CBs certificate expiry date, there will be a period when the producer does not have a valid certificate.

g) If, however, the signing of the Sublicense and perhaps also the CB audit date are *before* the outgoing CB certificate expiry, the certification decision can only take effect as soon as the previous certificate expires.

h) The outgoing CB remains responsible until its certificate expires. The producer may sign a GG Sublicense with the accepting CB while under contract with the outgoing CB. The GG Sublicense is binding for the accepting CB only once the outgoing CB has released the producer's GGN in the GG IT Systems.

i) If during the validity of the certificate issued by the outgoing CB, the accepting CB detects non-conformances that are not closed after 28 days, the accepting CB shall inform the outgoing CB about the non-conformances detected so that it can take appropriate follow-up actions.

j) If the certification decision is made *after* the outgoing certificate has expired, even if the "Dates of Acceptance" and audit were before the expiration date, there will be a period when the producer will not have a valid certificate.

k) In case of transfer, the registration of products in the GG IT Systems may not be finalized before the CB audit and the certification decision may not be taken within 28 days of the CB audit/closure of the non-conformance.

3.2. Transfer during Certificate Validity Extension

a) If there was a validity extension, the producer shall not change CBs for 12 months after the original certificate validity date.

b) If the CB audit by the accepting CB was performed during the certificate validity extension period (extension by outgoing CB) and the accepting CB did not ask for termination from the outgoing CB before the accepting audit, then the producer shall not change CBs and must stay with the outgoing CB for the upcoming 12 months after

original certificate validity date.

c) Extension to b) is granted only if the outgoing CB explicitly asks for termination of the extension and authorizes The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to transfer the unique GGN to the accepting CB. The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will process only those transfer requests coming from the outgoing CB that extended the certificate validity. It is entirely the decision of the outgoing CB to release a client under a valid contract.

d) If transfer is granted, the certificate validity issued by the accepting CB shall be 12 months minus the extension period given by the outgoing CB. The accepting CB shall ask the outgoing CB or the producer for the previous certificate in order to know the original validity date.

3.3. Transfer from ACT to another CB (incoming CB)

a) In the case that an existing ACT client chooses to transfer to another CB, the existing ACT client is required to send an email or other form of electronic confirmation to ACT that they are requesting the transfer as well as the reason for such transfer.

b) This communication between the existing client and ACT will be recorded in their client file. The client file will be stored for a period of 3 years before being deemed obsolete.

c) An email to the incoming CB will be notified and the producer will be deregistered off the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.

3.4. Transfer from another CB (outgoing CB) to ACT

a) In the case an existing GLOBALG.A.P. client wants to transfer from another CB (outgoing CB) to ACT, the client needs to follow the procedure for an initial client (i.e., register with ACT and sign contracts with ACT).

b) The client will be searched on the GLOBALG.A.P. database to confirm the status (i.e., valid certificate, expired certificate, suspended etc.) and the electronic GLOBALG.A.P. certificate is saved in the new client file.

c) In the case the client is suspended or has open non-conformances, no transfer will be done.

d) An audit date will be scheduled with the client and once the audit has been completed, the GGN for that client will be requested for transfer from the outgoing CB.

e) Email communication with the outgoing CB for transfer will be recorded and kept in the client file electronically.

4.0. Communication With Producers/Clients

a) ACT shall be responsible for communicating to all its GLOBALG.A.P. registered clients all relevant updates as well as the date of first application and the grace period of any new GLOBALG.A.P. versions of normative documents.

5.0. **Receipt and review of Evaluation report**

a) Inspection team submit the Inspection documents and reports to the Quality Manager upon completion of Inspection.

b) All such documents are reviewed by Quality Manager for the completeness of the documents as well as signature of the Inspection team.

c) Quality Manager, if not involved in the inspection process of the client, reviews the filled inspection checklist and records and suportive documents submitted by Inspectors (Inspection personnel). If the Quality Manager was involved in the inspection process the Scheme Manager is responsible to review the filled inspection checklist / records and suportive documents submitted by Inspectors.

d) If required, the Quality Manager may consult Nominated Representative and Technical Experts for such review.

e) Based on review of evaluation records, decision for the issue of certificate for the product is taken subject to closure of the non–conformities / observations issued during the evaluation.

6.0. **Granting of certificate for the product**

a) Upon receipt of corrective actions from the client against the non–conformities / observations, the same have been verified by inspection team. Based on the recommendation of the inspection team for the closure of the non–conformities / observations. The inspection report along with the corrective actions and recommendation of inspection team is put in the certification committee for its review.

b) Meeting of certification committee is held as needed and chaired either by the Quality Manager or the Scheme Manager (person not involved in the inspection process). During the meeting all the inspection records are verified and upon successful verification the certification committee recommend to ACT that the client is certified. The decision for granting the certificate lies with the Quality Manager or the Scheme Manager (person not involved in the inspection process).

c) The chair compiles the meeting agenda (F32) prior to the certification committee meeting and takes the attendance (F33) during the meeting.

d) Members are requested to complete F39: Confidentiality, Impartiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement whereby they agree to the safeguarding mechanism of ACT at the start of every Certification Committee Meeting.

e) The certification committee use the requirements of the General Permit Condition (QP13.gg) and GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement as criteria to base their recommendation to ACT.

f) Each of the certification committee members complete the Certification Committee Review Checklist (CC01.V6) and the chair summarise the outcome in the minutes of the meeting (F31).

g) Based on the recommendation of the certification committee, the chair decides either to grant certification or not grant certification. This decision should be based on the majority vote of the certification committee upon approval of the client being certified the Quality Manager prepare certification documents with all the relevant information related to the product and client.

h) Regardless of the chair's decision, the client will be informed by means of an email from ACT (@africancertification.co.za).

i) Upon completion of the certification documents it is given to the Nominated Representative for the approval by means of signing.

j) Product certificate (All the content as mentioned in clause no. 7.7 of Quality Manual) is issued to the client after approval of the Nominated Representative.

k) The use of promotional material including the certificate shall be reviewed during Inspection visits. The website shall be reviewed after the grant, suspension or withdrawal of certificates.

7.0 Maintaining certificate for the product

a) For maintaining the certification for the product, the annual subsequent inspection is conducted as per the details given in the QP09 for the periodic inspection.

b) The subsequent inspection follows the procedure stated in QP09 Inspection Procedure.

8.0 Termination (cancellation), reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

a) If non-conformances are detected, ACT shall apply a sanction (i.e. warning, suspension or cancellation) as indicated in this section below.

b) If there is a clear link between a producer and public health outbreak by a reputablengovernmental regulatory authority, suspension of the certification shall be imposed while a review of the producer's certification is performed.

c) Producers are not allowed to change certification bodies until the non-conformance that led to the specific sanction is closed satisfactorily.

d) *Only* the certification body or the producer group that has issued the sanction is entitled to lift it, provided there is sufficient and timely evidence of corrective action (i.e. either through a follow-up visit or other written or visual evidence).

e) In the event that a producer is certified for both IFA and a FSS, sanctions will apply similtaneously to both IFA and FSS if the reason for the sanction is a non-conformity against requirements of the FSS certification.

Procedure for Certificate issue, suspension and withdrawal

Warning:

a) 12.2.1 A warning is issued for all types of non-conformances detected such as non-conformance with CPCC, GR, or contractual requirements.

b) 12.2.2 If a non-conformance is detected during the audit/inspection, the producer will be issued a warning when the inspection is finalized. This is a provisional report that could be over ridden by ACT's certification authority (certification committee).

Initial Inspection:

- If an indiciual producer or a producer group does not comply with 100% of Major Mustsn and 95% of Minor Musts control points within 28 days after an initial inspection, the status "open non-conformance" is set in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.
- If the cause of the warning is not resolved within three monthsm, a complete inspection shall be performed before a certificate can be issued.

Subsequent Inspection:

- Non-conformances shall be closed within 28 calendar days
- In the event of non-conformances with contractual requirements, General Regulations or a Major Must, ACT shall decide what period is given to the producer for closing the non-conformance before suspending the certificate. This period may 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. the sale of non-certified products as certified) is present. This will be communicated via an official warning letter.

Product Suspension

a) If the cause of the warning is not resolved within the defined period (max. of 28 days), a suspension shall be imposed by ACT or the producer group on a member immediately.
b) ACT can lift suspensions imposed on producers and producer groups issued by them.
c) Producer groups can lift product suspension on their accepted producer memebrs issued by them.
d) A suspension can be applied to one, several or all of the products covered by the certificate.
e) A product can be partially suspended for an individual producer (single or multisite) – i.e. the entire product shall be suspended.
f) When the suspension is applied, ACT or the producer group shall set the period allowed for correction (not longer than 12 months).
g) 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.

h) If a producer notifies ACT that the non-conformance is resolved before the defined period, the respective sanction can be lifted after evaluation of evidence provided by the producer. This evaluation may take place on- or off-site. If it is done through on-site inspection, whether announced or unannounced, it may be a full inspection or evaluating the submitted evidence only.
i) If the cause of thje suspension is not resolved within the defined period, a cancellation is imposed.
j) The suspension remains as long as ACT or the producer group does not lift the sanction or impose a cancellation.

Self-Declared Product Suspension

a) A producer or producer group may voluntarily ask the respective certification body (i.e. ACT) for a suspension of one, several or all of the products covered by the certificate (unless ACT or another certification body have already imposed a sanction).
    a. This can occur if the producer experiences difficulty with compliance to the standard and needs time to close any non-conformances.
b) This suspension will not delay the renewal date, nor will it allow the producer to avoid paying registration and other applicable fees.
c) The deadline for closing non-conformances is set by the declaring producer/producer group which shall be agreed upon with ACT.
d) 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 the rectifying non-conformance is set by the declaring producer, which shall be agreed upon with the respective producer group QMS.
e) In the GLOBALG.A.P. Database the product status ‘self-declared suspension’ shall be set for the respective products.

Cancellation

A cancellation of the contract shall be issued where:

a. ACT finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust to comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements
   OR
b. A producer/producer group cannnot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective action before the suspension period set by ACT/producer group has elapsed.

A cancellation of the 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.

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

Notification and Appeals

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

9.0 GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate, Certification Cycle and Change in Legal Entity

a) The GLOBALG.A.P. certificate can only be issued to the applicant legal entity.
b) The name of the trader could optionally be mentioned on the certificate only with the following disclaimer: 'Can be exclusively traded through XYZ'.
c) A certificate is not transferable from one legal entity to another when production sites change legal entity. In this case, a complete inspection following the rules for subsequent inspections is required. The new legal entity shall receive a new GGN.
d) The certification cycle is 12 months subject to any sanctions and extensions in accordance with the scope described.
e) It is possible to issue a FSS V5 certificate based on the results of the IFA Version 5 inspection.

Certification

a) The paper certificate issued by ACT shall conform to the available templates specified by GLOBALG.A.P.
b) The paper certificate shall match the information available in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database for that unique GGN at the time of issuing.
c) The scope of certification shall be clearly defined in the certificate.
d) Date of certification decision: date when ACT makes the certification decision after all non-conformances are closed.
e) Certificates are valid from:
    a. Initial certification – the initial date of validity is the date on which ACT makes the certification decision.
    b. Subsequent certification – the 'valid from' date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the 'valid from' date on the original certificate. When the certification decision is made after expiration of the previous certificate. In this case, the 'valid from' date shall coincide with the date of the certification decision.
    c. If a new product is added during the validity of the certificate, the certification cycle (valid from – valid to) is kept as it was. If ACT want to indiacte that the newly added products are certified and added later than the original 'valid from', there is a possibility to add the individual 'valid from' of each product on the paper certificate. This is voluntary and additional information. For example, the certificate is valid from 1 January 2016 including oranges. Tomatoes may be

marked with 'valid from 1 January 2016' remains. Tomatoes may be marked with 'valid from 1 March 2016' on the paper certificate.

f) Certificates are valid to:
   a. Initial certification – date valid from plus one year minus one day. ACT may shorten the certification cycle and the validity but cannot prolong it.
   b. Subsequent certification – the validity date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the 'valid to' date on the original certificate. For example, 7 February 2017, 7 Fenruary 2018 etc.

g) If a producer is certified for different products by different certification bodies, certificates may have different certification cycles.

h) In the event that a producer has obtained a combined certification from the IFA Standard Version 5 and FSS Version 5, the 'valid to' dates of the certificates shall correspond.

Extension of Certificate Validity

The validity may be extended beyond the 12 months for a mazimum of four months. Only if there is a valid reason can the valid date be extended by four months and this needs to be recorded.

The following are reasons for extending the validity date:

a. ACT wants to schedule the on-site inspection/audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process because it has not been seen in previous inspections/audits, or because it is considered 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.
b. ACT needs to be able to extend some certificates because of resource constraints.
c. ACT was not able to conduct the on-site inspection/audit and/or the producer was not able to receive ACT's inspection audit due to circumstances beyond its control (force majeure). For example, natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic, unavailability of the producer due to medical reasons.

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

The following is applicable for the extension of a certificate:

a. The full registration fee shall be paid for the next cycle.
b. The producer shall be re-inspected during that extension period.
c. The producer cannot change certification bodies in the cycle subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted
d. If a certificate that was not extended and not 're-accepted' expires and the subsequent inspection (to be performed by the same certification body) 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, ACT shall apply the rules for initial inspection if the certificate expired for more than 12 months.

Maintenance of GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate:

The registration of the producer and the proposed products for the relevant scopes shall be confirmed with ACT annually before the expiry date, following all conditions explained under 4.2 and 4.3 of General Regulations Part I.

Consulting:

Auditors/inspectors are not allowed to consult ACT clients.

10.0 Certification Decision

a) ACT shall make the certification decision within a maximum of 28 calendar days after the closure of any outstanding non-conformances by the producer. In the case where no non-conformances have been detected by the auditor/inspector, ACT shall make the decision no later than 28 days after the end of the audit/inspection.

b) Any complaints or appeals against ACT by the producer shall follow ACT's complaints and appeal procedure (refer to QP07) which will be communicated to the client. In the case that ACT does not respond to the complaint or appeal adequately, the complaint can be addressed to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat using the GLOBALG.A.P. Incident/Complaint Form which are available on the GLOBALG.A.P. website (www.globalgap.org).

c) It is possible to issue a Food Safety Standard (FSS) certificate based on the results of a corresponding IFA Standard version inspection if the producer complies with 100% of all applicable Major Musts and 95% of all applicable Minor Musts of the FSS.

d) In the case of an observer or another auditor/inspector witnessing, this observer/witness cannot be the certification committee member for that specific client. The certification committee member shall be completely impartial from the inspection and will not have participated in the inspection at all.

11.0 Refusing Certification

i. Refusal of the certification can be done in the following circumstances;

- Client fails to submit the corrective actions within the allowed time frame from the date of evaluation,
- Corrective actions submitted by the client are not satisfactory considering the

non–conformities / observations,

- Client fails to pay the required fees in the given time frame,
- Client does not want to have certificate after completion of the assessment,
- Objective evidence submitted during the evaluation found fake.

ii. All the above reason will lead to refusal of product certification even after completion of the evaluation. Quality Manager will takes decision on the refusal of certificate based on the above circumstances.

iii. Details of refusal of the certificate are given to the client in the writing and show cause notice is submitted to the client for such incidence.

iv. Client is requested to reply in writing against the show cause notice.

v. The details of refusal of certificate are maintained in the client file and then file is closed.

vi. Quality Manager maintains the list of refusal of the certificates.

7.0 Reference

5.1	QP13.gg	General Permit Conditions
5.2	QP09	Inspection Procedure
5.3	GR	GLOBALG.A.P. General Rules for Certification Bodies

8.0 Forms

8.1	F26.gg	Sample Certificate
8.2	F31	Meeting Minutes
8.3	F32	Meeting Agenda
8.4	F33	Attendance register
8.5	F39	Confidentiality, Impartiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement
8.6	CC01.V6	Certification Committee Review Checklist