

Asian Productivity Organization

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PROJECT NOTIFICATION ADDENDUM

2 April 2012

1. **Project Code** 12-AG-29-GE-TRC-B/C
2. **Title** Training Course on Organic Product Certification and Auditing
3. **Duration** 11–16 June 2012 (six days)
4. **Venue** Colombo, Sri Lanka
5. **Addendum No.** 1
6. **Reference** APO Project Notification 12-AG-29-GE-TRC-B/C dated 20 February 2012

7. Details

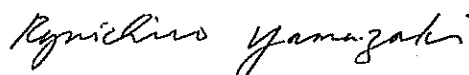
7.1 Change in Item No. 3 “Duration”

At the request of the implementing organizations, the project has been rescheduled to **18 to 23 June 2012** due to unavoidable circumstances.

7.2 Change in Item No. 8 “Closing Date for Nominations” and No. 14 (f) “Nomination Deadline”

NPOs are requested to confirm by **13 April 2012** whether the already submitted nominees are available for the new timing given above. If the submitted nominees are not available, please submit new nominations along with nomination documents by **13 April 2012**. If NPOs have not submitted nominations previously, they are requested to send nomination(s) along with nomination documents by **13 April 2012**.

Unless otherwise modified by the APO in writing, the provisions of the Project Notification dated 20 February 2012 pertaining to this training course remain valid.



Ryuichiro Yamazaki
Secretary-General

Asian Productivity Organization

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PROJECT NOTIFICATION

20 February 2012

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2. **Title** Training Course on Organic Product Certification and Auditing
3. **Duration** 11–16 June 2012 (six days)
4. **Venue** Colombo, Sri Lanka
5. **Implementing Organizations**

Ministry of Agriculture
Govijana Mandiraya
No. 80/5
Rajamalwatte Mawatha
Battaramulla, Sri Lanka

National Productivity Secretariat (NPS)
No. 249, Stanly Thilakarathne Mawatha
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka
Phone: 94-11-2812-163/0
Fax: 94-11-2812-162
6. **Number of Overseas Participants** Up to 18 qualified participants from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam
(see 12. Qualifications of Participants)
7. **Number of Local Participants** Up to six qualified participants
(see 12. Qualifications of Participants)
8. **Closing Date for Nominations** 6 April 2012

9. Objectives

- 1) To enhance participants' understanding of organic standards and certification programs; and
- 2) To enable participants to acquire the knowledge and skills to interpret and audit according to the Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards (COROS), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)'s Standard Requirements.

10. Background

The global market for certified organic agrifood products is expanding fast, resulting in greater opportunities for Asian producers. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the authenticity of the organic products they buy. Therefore, producers need a way of assuring consumers that a product has been grown using organic methods. Organic certification could help protect both consumers and genuine organic producers alike from false claims and misleading labeling of products.

Organic certification is a certification process for producers of organic food and other agricultural products. It is undertaken based on established regulatory and audit systems that provide operating guidelines and rules, called organic standards, for the producers, handlers, processors, retailers, wholesalers, and exporters of organic products. It is central to organic agrifood network governance and shaping product specifications, production parameters, and enterprise participation. Today's market demands third-party certification for sales transactions, and it is required by the regulations of many governments for any kind of an "organic" claim on a product label.

A third party inspects and evaluates producers, processors, and handlers to determine whether they conform to organic standards. Since a large number of standards have proliferated all over the world led by public and private initiatives, certification must be in line with internationally accepted standards and regulations such as COROS, IFOAM's Standard Requirements.

However, the verification and auditing of an organic standard are difficult. There have been well-documented problems with previous standards and the associated inspection and audit practices. There have often been wide variations in the qualifications, experience, and competence of inspectors and auditors. There is thus a need to train inspectors and auditors in organic certification and auditing. This training course is organized as a follow-up to the Workshop on Development of Standard and Certification Systems for Organic Agricultural Products, held in New Delhi, India, in 2011.

11. Scope and Methodology

The project will be implemented in two phases.

Phase 1: Training Course on Organic Product Certification and Auditing

a) Scope

This course focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of organic standards through implementation of COROS, IFOAM's Standard Requirements, in the context of a farm/an organization's management arrangements, applicable legislative framework, and significant hazards in its operational processes. Tentatively, topic coverage will include:

- 1) Organic agriculture: principles and practices;
- 3) Organic certification: organic quality assurance;
- 4) Organic certification: organic standards;
- 5) Organic certification: maintaining organic integrity;
- 6) Organic certification process;
- 7) Organic auditing; and
- 8) Planning, conducting, and reporting on an organic audit.

b) Methodology

The course will follow a modular approach. The training modules will consist of interactive lectures, case studies, and group exercises. Participants will also have an opportunity for field studies in the host country. At the end of the course, an examination will be administered to gauge participants' knowledge of the topics covered during the course.

The trainers will employ accelerated learning techniques with syndicated exercises, discussions, case studies, presentations that reflect certification and audit situations, and formal examination. The course is an intensive one and will be conducted from 08:30 to 06:00. Some reading assignments and individual exercises may also be given. Full attendance during the course is mandatory. All selected participants are required to stay for the evening work involved whenever necessary. Participants are subject to continuous assessment throughout the course.

Phase 2: Follow-up National Programs

The multicountry training course (phase 1) will be followed up by national training courses on the subject in up to two participating countries, which will be selected based on expressed need, the performance of participants in phase I, willingness and competency of participants to assist the NPO in organizing the national follow-up program, and enthusiasm of the host NPO. For national programs, a separate Project Implementation Plan will be issued later in consultation with the concerned NPOs/implementing organizations.

12. Qualifications of Participants

This course is designed for experienced organic professionals who possess adequate knowledge and understanding of the organic standard requirements and are interested in pursuing a career as an organic inspector/auditor or those who wish to enhance professional understanding of organic quality assurance. The participants are expected to make visible efforts for utilizing and disseminating the knowledge and skills learned from the training course. They should possess the following qualifications:

- (a) Age: Preferably between 30 and 50 years.
- (b) Education: University degree or equivalent qualification from a recognized institution.
- (c) Present:
 - Position Management personnel working in organizations related to the organic food chain; entrepreneurs/producers, managers, and officers of SMEs involved in production, postharvest handling, processing, and marketing of organic agrifood products or personnel in charge of organic standard implementation; organic standards inspectors/auditors; and trainers/consultants of NPOs or other institutes directly involved in organic inspection and auditing.
- (d) Experience: Experienced organic professionals who possess adequate knowledge and understanding of organic standard requirements
- (e) Language
 - Proficiency: All proceedings of the training course are conducted in English, and participants are frequently required to make oral and written presentations. They should be proficient in both spoken and written English. Those who are not proficient in English need not apply.
- (f) Health: Physically and mentally fit to attend an intensive training course requiring participants to complete a number of individual and group activities and strenuous fieldwork (it is therefore recommended that member countries refrain from nominating candidates likely to suffer from physical and mental strain).
- (g) Attendance: Participants must attend all six days of the training course to qualify for the certificate of attendance.

13. Financial Arrangements

a) To be borne by the APO

- i) All assignment costs of overseas resource persons.
- ii) Round-trip economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participant's place of work and Colombo for participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal and for participants from SMEs and nonprofit organizations from other APO member countries. As far as practicable, all participants should purchase discounted tickets. Please note that the arrangements for the purchase of air tickets should be in accordance with the "Guide on Purchases of Air Tickets for APO Participants," which will be sent to the selected participants and is available on the APO website and from APO Liaison Officers in member countries.

b) To be borne by participants or participating countries

i) For participants from profit-making organizations, except SMEs, from APO member countries other than Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal.

- 1) Round-trip international airfare between the member country and Colombo.
- 2) Participating country expenses of US\$50 per participant, payable to the APO in convertible currency.

ii) For all participants

- 1) *Participants' insurance premiums:* All participants should be fully insured against accident and illness (including hospitalization and death) for a principal sum equivalent to US\$10,000.00 for the entire duration of the project and travel and must submit to the APO Secretariat a copy of the comprehensive travel insurance certificate before participation.

Such insurance should be valid in Sri Lanka. This insurance requirement is **in addition** to existing government insurance coverage in some member countries. If any participant is unable to insure himself/herself as stipulated above, he/she should secure this insurance in the host country at the commencement of the project and pay the premium himself/herself, if necessary, from the per diem allowance provided. Neither the APO nor the implementing organizations will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.

- 2) All expenses related to visa fees and airport taxes.
- 3) Any expenses incurred by participants for stopovers on the way to and from the project venue as well as for extra stay at the project venue before and/or after the official project period on account of early arrival or late departure, for example, due to either limited available flights or any other reason whatsoever.

c) To be borne by the host country (Sri Lanka)

- i) Per diem allowances and hotel accommodation for up to 18 overseas participants for up to seven days at the rate to be specified later.
- ii) All local implementation costs.

14. Actions by Member Countries

Nominations

- (a) Each member country is requested to nominate two or more candidates for selection in the order of preference. Please ensure that candidates nominated meet the qualifications specified above (12).

- (b) Please note that when a candidate is nominated it does not follow that she/he is considered selected. Selection is at the discretion of the Screening Committee. A basic criterion for selection is the homogeneity of the participants in terms of qualifications and work experience. Nonelection therefore does not mean that the candidates concerned are not competent. Sometimes candidates are not selected because they are overqualified for the given project.
- (c) APO Liaison Officers/NPOs are reminded to make clear in their search for the most appropriate participants that only the APO Liaison Officer/NPO in their country may send nominations to the APO Secretariat. This should eliminate the mistake of various government/public institutions making nominations directly to the APO Secretariat.

Required Documents

- (d) Each nomination should be accompanied by the documents listed below. A nomination lacking any of these documents may not be considered:
 - i) Two copies of the candidate's biodata on the **APO biodata form** together with passport-sized photograph. The biodata form can be downloaded from the APO website. Downloading information is also available from www.apo-tokyo.org. We encourage submitting the biodata form to the APO Secretariat in electronic form as an attachment to a cover e-mail message from the APO Director, Alternate Director, or Liaison Officer. The nomination documents should be sent to the **Agriculture Department**, APO Secretariat (e-mail: agr@apo-tokyo.org, fax: 81-3-5226-3954).
 - ii) **The APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form.** Every candidate must complete and submit a copy of the APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form with his/her biodata at the time of nomination. Please note that self-declaration is sufficient for candidates without any of health conditions or illnesses enumerated on the reverse side of the medical form. However, for all others, medical certification by a recognized physician on the reverse side of the medical form is required.
- (e) For reasons of expediency or because of time constraints due to approaching nomination deadlines, member countries sometimes send their candidates' biodata forms and medical certificates by fax to the APO Secretariat. While this action is very much appreciated, member countries are requested to mail the originals of the documents to the APO Secretariat as well. They are needed for making clear, clean copies for the host country, especially with regard to the candidates' photos. If the documents are submitted electronically as mentioned in (d)-i), there is no need to send the original by postal mail. If a digital photograph of a nominee is not attached to the electronic biodata form, a hard-copy photograph should be sent to the APO Secretariat by postal mail. Please specify the candidate's name and the project code on the reverse side of the photograph.

Nomination Deadline

- (f) Member countries are requested to abide by the ***nomination deadline of 6 April 2012.***

The APO Secretariat may not consider late nominations as they have in the past resulted in considerable difficulties to the implementing organization in its preparatory work for the project.

- (g) For member countries where nominations are required to be approved by higher government authorities and hence require a longer time, the APO Liaison Officers/NPOs are urged to send in the names of nominees on or before the deadline, indicating that government approval will follow.

Others

- (h) The most qualified participant(s) from each member country will be chosen and notified through the APO Liaison Officer/NPO. Should some candidates fail to qualify or be unable to participate after selection, or should some member countries fail to nominate any candidate, their slots may be filled by alternates from the same or another member country on a merit basis.
- (i) Member countries are requested to inform the selected participants that they are not to bring family members or to engage in any private business activities during the entire duration of the project. Further, if they become unable to attend the program, they should be requested to inform the APO promptly of their inability to participate and the reason for last-minute withdrawal through the APO Liaison Officer/NPO in member countries.
- (j) Each selected candidate is required to arrive at the venue one day before the start of the official project. Also, all candidates are expected to return home upon completion of the official project because they are visiting the host country for the specific purpose of attending this APO project.

15. Other Conditions

Other conditions for participation are given in the *APO Guide for Participants*, which is available from APO Liaison Officers/NPOs in member countries and on the APO homepage (URL: www.apo-tokyo.org), and will be sent to the selected participants.



Ryuichiro Yamazaki
Secretary-General