**Input Evaluation Procedure SOP-IN-01-Eng**

**Purpose:**

To provide the basic information necessary to understand the process of evaluation of inputs for use in organic agriculture offered by Primus Auditing Ops to its clients, under the organic standards: National Organic Program (NOP/USDA), European Organic Regulation (UE 889/2008), Japanese Organic Standards (JAS/MAFF), Organic Products Law of Mexico (LPO) and Costa Rican National Regulation DE 29782.

**Definition:**

The inputs evaluation consists of reviewing and evaluating the composition and manufacturing process of the final product and, if applicable, of the raw materials used to produce it. The evaluation is based on the lists of raw materials and/or substances allowed by organic regulations and/or standards: National Organic Program (NOP/USDA), European Organic Regulation (UE 889/2008), Japanese Organic Standards (JAS/MAFF), Organic Products Law of Mexico (LPO) and National Regulation of Costa Rica DE 29782.

The document described here is a reference that will provide confidence in the input evaluation process offered by Primus Auditing Ops. The entire process is managed under the principles of impartiality and confidentiality of information; principles under which all internal and subcontracted staff of Primus Auditing Ops are conducted.

**Scope:**

This procedure applies to Primus Auditing Ops' clients, to clients of trading houses whose inputs are endorsed by Primus, to consumers and the general public. As well involved staff: technical evaluator, input evaluation program coordinators, PAO Operations Manager, and Quality Control Manager.

**Responsibility and authority:**

All inputs evaluations are conducted aiming to obtain an Endorsement (document of compliance) for a company/organization/ trading houses they will be subject to the policies and procedures of Input Evaluation Program. Likewise, to all provisions of the organic standards under which it is evaluated.

All Primus Auditing Ops employees have the obligation to report to senior management any irregularities or misuse related to the Endorsement (document of compliance) issued and indicate in what, where or how misuse was detected.

It is the responsibility of the evaluators, coordination, operations management and other staff, to verify during the evaluations and information reviews the use of the Endorsement (document of compliance), as well as the use of the logo and to inform the office in a timely manner of any anomaly detected that has not been reported by the client or company.

The evaluators are responsible for analyzing all the information provided by the client and determining if additional information, analysis, sampling, on-site inspections are required.

The staff of the PAO Input Evaluation Department, competent and trained in the corresponding topics, will be responsible for carrying out on-site inspections and issuing the required reports.

**Description of activities**

This procedure is a guide that seeks to ensure that the process of initial evaluation and/or renewal of inputs for used in organic agriculture is carried out in an efficient and orderly manner. It begins with the submission of general information about the service to determine its applicability. Subsequently, the corresponding forms are filled out, the necessary technical information is sent and the evaluation is carried out. If deemed necessary, an inspection of the processing/production site of the input must be carried out. The process concludes with an evaluation decision, which may be positive or negative, and the issuance of the endorsement (document of conformity) if the input is approved.

During or after the evaluation, inspections of the processing/production site of the input, requests for additional information, laboratory analysis or other approved mechanisms may be required to verify the regulations.

All of the agency's actions are governed by the principles of objectivity, impartiality and confidentiality.

The clients of the Input Evaluation Program have a choice of using the organic logo that Primus Auditing Ops has assigned for this purpose, on the label of the input, as well as on websites or documentary information that the client requires to promote it. In order to do so, the client must previously sign the corresponding contract.

**Input Evaluation Process Stages**

1. **Service Request**

When the client and Primus Auditing Ops Costa Rica communicate and interest in the service is determined, digitally is sent the Cert-IN-01 form that must be completed and detailed with all the necessary information to proceed. Once the client fills out the document, it must be send signed by the legal representative to PAO.

1. **Service Quote**

With the information from the Cert-IN-01 application form, the quotation is prepared and sent. The quotation is calculated according to the number of inputs and in accordance with the input evaluation cost table established by PAO. If the client agrees with the cost of the service and approves the quotation, it is sent back to the Agency via e-mail, signed by the legal representative.

1. **Service Agreement and Contract for use of the organic seal or logo**

The Services Agreement Cert-IN-02, is a document in which Primus Auditing Ops Costa Rica and the client (registrant), commit to act in good faith, adhering to the corresponding regulatory requirements for the execution of the process. In this agreement Primus commits to keep confidentiality, impartiality and the inexistence of conflicts of interest before, during and after the evaluation process. In addition, it assures that the information will NOT be used for other purposes or disclosed to third parties. It also states that any false, incomplete or erroneous information provided by the applicant, releases the Agency from any responsibility regarding the service provided and the implications of the decisions made.

The Contract regarding the use of the organic logo Cert-IN-03, is a document to be signed by the legal representative of the applicant company, in which he/she accepts the rules established by the Agency to be able to use the organic logo for this purpose.

1. **Billing**

The Certifying Agency prepares and sends the invoice for the full cost of the service. To begging the evaluation process, the applicant must pay 50% of the total cost, the remainder is paid once the evaluation is completed and before issuing the final version of the Endorsement (document of conformity). The client may decide to make only one payment covering 100% of the service. For billing, the Cert-IN-04-Input evaluation cost table will be used as a reference.

1. **Input Evaluation**

The technical person assigned by PAO to carry out the evaluation will verify the information and documentation provided by the client, including: Cert-IN-01-Input Evaluation Request Form, Cert-IN-06-GMO-sludge-radiation free letter form, commercial label, technical data sheet, safety data sheet, chemical/biological analysis, detailed information on raw materials and extraction/processing processes; in order to determine if it complies with the organic regulations requested. The deadline established for this activity is 7 calendar days.

If all the information sent by the operator is complete and no additional information is required, the evaluator will complete the input evaluation process result-Cert-IN-09 and send it to the department coordinator.

If it is necessary to request additional information from the client, the evaluator must complete the document Cert-IN-08-Information request input evaluation and send it to the department coordinator to be forwarded to the client.

The client must submit the information requested in the Cert-IN-08, within 15 days in order to continue with the evaluation process; the department coordinator will be in charge of receiving it and sending it to the evaluator.

The evaluator will issue as many versions as necessary of the information request (Cert-IN-08), considering the additional information provided by the client.

Once all the requested information is submitted and verified, the evaluator will determine the closure of the evaluation and complete the document Cert-IN-09-Results input evaluation process and send it to the department coordinator.

The document with the result of the evaluation is sent to the applicant in pdf version (excluding section 4), this must be forwarded to the Agency, with the signature of the legal representative of the applicant company.

During the evaluation or even after the evaluation process, the agency may request the applicant company for samples of the final product, samples of the raw material(s) that make up the final product and inspections of the production site of the input. In both cases the client must assume the costs and travel expenses.

The authorized use for each product will depend on the guidelines and definitions presented in each regulation, norm or standard, the general classification will be as fertilizers or pesticides in pre-harvest and/or specific uses in post-harvest. According to the composition of each product, it will be specified/sub-classified within the evaluation.

The applicant company must inform the Certification Body of any change in composition, manufacturing process, conditions of use, general information about the company and/or product data. In case of changes in the terms of use, modifications of composition and/or manufacturing process, the applicant company must have the review and re-evaluation by the Certification Body.

1. **Decision Letter and Compatibility Document**

If the results of the evaluation indicate that the input complies with the organic standards, a compatibility document "Confirmation of Equivalence of products for use in organic agriculture" will be issued. If the results are negative, only the evaluation document will be delivered.

The documents Cert-IN-10-Decision Letter and Cert-IN-11-Compatibility Document, in draft version, will be sent to the client for review. The applicant is responsible for reviewing all the information described in these documents for compliance and notifying the Agency if any corrections are required.

Once the client confirms to the Agency that the documents are in conformity, the cancellation of 100% of the cost of the service is verified with the accounting department and the official versions signed by the PAO Operations Director are issued and sent to the client.

The Compatibility Document, is valid for one year (from the date of issue).

After the year of validity, the Compatibility Document must be renewed by the registrant. For this purpose, the Agency will contact the client at least one month in advance to remind him/her to carry out this process and the registrant will have a maximum of one month after the expiration date to renew it with the Certification Body; in case the registrant is not interested in renewing it, he/she must send the communication to PAO. In cases where the renewal process is not carried out within the established period, the evaluation will be considered as an initial process and not as a renewal.

In the event that the Certification Body identifies and confirms a non-compliance by the registrant and/or manufacturer company, the "Confirmation of Equivalence of products for use in organic agriculture" Compatibility Document will be cancelled and/or annulled immediately and the respective communication will be made.

1. **Inclusion in the official list of approved inputs**

All inputs that are approved by PAO for use in Organic Agriculture will be included in the Cert-IN-15-List of inputs approved by Primus Auditing Ops, which will be published periodically in different electronic media (official website, facebook page or other social networks).

1. **Additional Services**
	1. Pre evaluation

Applicant companies should opt for the pre-evaluation service, which consists of submitting the input formulation to a preliminary review, in order to determine whether the raw materials, inerts and manufacturing processes comply with organic standards and, if not, to have the possibility of making changes.

To do so, points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 established in this document must be followed.

The information sent by the applicant company will be reviewed. If no additional information is required, the evaluator will complete the document Cert-IN-09-Results input evaluation process and send it to the department coordinator.

The document with the result of the evaluation is sent to the applicant in pdf version (excluding section 4), this must be forwarded to the Agency, with the signature of the legal representative of the applicant company.

* 1. Re evaluation

Clients of the Input Evaluation Program may request the re-evaluation service when they need to make any changes in raw materials, inerts and/or manufacturing processes in inputs already evaluated that have a Confirmation of Equivalence.

To do so, they must follow points 1,2,4,5 and 6 established in this document.

If no additional information is required, the evaluator will complete the document Cert-IN-09-Results input evaluation process and send it to the department coordinator

The document with the result of the evaluation is sent to the applicant in pdf version (excluding section 4), this must be forwarded to the Agency, with the signature of the legal representative of the applicant company.

If necessary, and in accordance with the results of the re-evaluation, the Cert-IN-10- Decision Letter and Cert-IN-11-Compatibility Document will be updated.

* 1. Inclusion of brands and/or presentations.

In case of products with identical composition to one that already has a Confirmation of Equivalence, but that differ in the registered trademark, the new trademark(s) requested by the registrant may be included.

To do so, they must follow points 1,2,4,5 and 6 established in this document.

The information sent by the applicant company will be reviewed and if it is complete, the document Cert-IN-09-Results input evaluation process will be updated, as well as the documents Cert-IN-10-Decision Letter and Cert-IN-11-Compatibility Document**.**

**Related Documents**

1. Cert-IN-01-Eng-Request Input Evaluation
2. Cert-IN-02-Eng-Service Agreement for Organic Input Evaluation
3. Cert-IN-03-Eng-Agreement for use PAO Organic Logo
4. Cert-IN-04-Eng-Input Evaluation Fees
5. Cert-IN-05-Eng-Quotation Input Review
6. Cert-IN-06-Eng-GMO-sewage-radiation free Letter Format
7. Cert-IN-07-Eng-No Modification Declaration Format (renewal process)
8. Cert-IN-08-Eng-Information Request-Input Evaluation
9. Cert-IN-09-Eng-Results Input evaluation process.
10. Cert-IN-10-Decision Letter
11. Cert-IN-11-Eng-Compatibility Document
12. Cert-IN-15-Eng-List of Inputs approved