

	<b>Procedure for Certification</b>	<b>Doc. No.</b>	OP-06
		<b>Issue Date</b>	10/08/2022
		<b>Version</b>	1.0

**Purpose** - To establish and maintain a system, which ensures that the procedure for certification is known to all clients interested and is undertaken in a uniform impartial way.

**Scope** - The procedure applies to all clients who would like to have certification from Arrow Certification Services within the scope of certification of Arrow Certification Services.

### Responsibility

- a) The Executive Director has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this procedure.
- b) All managers, inspectors, reviewers, certifiers, accounts department has the responsibility for the compliance of this procedure.

### Certification Procedure

**1. Pre-Certification Requirement:** Client interested in obtaining certification under various scheme, shall have established a documented quality system complying with the requirements of current version of the standard and the applicable product standards.

**2. Communication with Arrow Certification Services:**

Interested client (farmers / Grower groups / processors / traders / wild harvest / input manufacturers) can contact through any means for an application package and a with minimum details, which must include,

- a. Name and address of the interested party.
- b. Scope requested for
- c. The crops/products grown/made/processed/ traded/manufactured.
- d. Total area of the farm in hectare/ capacity as applicable
- e. Exact location of the operations
- f. No. of workers
- g. Number and area of the members in case of grower group certification

**3. Sends Application package and Quotation:**

Arrow Certification Services staff send application package and quotation for certification to the client by email or speed post or client collect from Arrow Certification Services head office.

**4. Received Filled Application Package:**

The duly filled application along with applicable fee, quality system documentation and certification agreement needs to be submitted to Arrow Certification Services by post/courier/hand or Email (For Email applications signatures will be collected once comes for the inspection, Scan signature or copy of the signed pages is also acceptable) along with advance for inspection and certification by **NEFT / Demand Draft / Cheque** payable to **Arrow Certification Services (Cheques subject to realization)**. **Cash is not acceptable as a certification fee in any case. In case the quotation is already send as per the details received over the phone or other alternatives.** Copy of the certification agreement will be given to the client. In case the quotation is not send the Application Package is reviewed by the competent inspector and if it qualifies to proceed for certification process, then offer/quotation is prepared and will be informed to client. If the offer is acceptable the certification agreement is executed and registration process proceeds.

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## 5. Application Review:

The application package will be reviewed. Arrow Certification Services reviews the submitted documentation against the requirements of the scheme applied and prepares a report detailing its findings. The deficiencies, if any, will have to be corrected prior to assessment, since this documentation will form a part of assessment criteria during assessment. The review of application can be assigned to any inspector who can do inspection for that scope.

## 6. Registration of Client:

On receiving the filled in application packet, or application, certification agreement and the advance (Exemption of advance fee payment can be granted by Executive Director), the client details uploaded on portal and will be issued with a registration number within a month (subjected to submission of complete information and documents) and will be communicated to the applicant. The Registration proceeds only after the Review of Application Package.

## 7. Planning of Inspection:

The onsite inspection of the client is schedule by Inspection Manager/Sr. Inspector. Before planning inspection Manager or Inspector has consider the observation of initial reviewer and critical control points identified.

In consultation with the operator and considering the requirements of normative documents, Arrow Certification Services fixes the inspection / audit dates and send the audit plan to the operator.

**Note: Arrow Certification Services Reserves the right that along with the inspector auditor coming for the inspection/ audit there may be observers, verifying auditors or any other relevant persons from accreditation bodies and other relevant authorities. In no way inspection will be carried out before the registration process is completed. (Exception in case of CB transfer) The producer should maintain evidence for compliance of requirement of applied standards and standards. Non availability of evidence may result in certification not possible until the evidence is provided for the compliance.**

The client seeking certification will have to be in possession of and full fill the requirements indicated in relevant standards as applicable: **(These are the Reference/Normative documents and are the guide)**

Any updates in the normative documents will be communicated to clients through letter/ email by Arrow Certification Services.

## 8. Onsite Inspection:

**Stage I - Assessment visit:** Following documentation review, Stage 1 assessment is carried out at the client's premises to gain first-hand information about the applicant's processes, size, complexity, applicability of regulatory requirements and applicant's readiness for Stage II assessment. The weaknesses and / or issues identified and reported during Stage I assessment must be corrected before proceeding further.

The duration of Stage I assessment is normally one or two days. The findings of Stage I assessment are documented in a Stage I assessment report and used for planning detailed assessment known as Stage II assessment.

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**Stage II - Assessment visit:** The Stage II - Assessment visit is a detailed on-site assessment that takes place at the applicant's locations(s) and determines conformance to the relevant standard and the effectiveness of the quality system. The Stage II assessment also specifically pursue in detail the weaknesses and issues identified during Stage I assessment. Non-conformances, if any, found during the Stage II assessment process, are reported to client objectively. At the end of the assessment, a report of Stage II assessment is prepared and handed over to applicant in original for taking corrective actions.

Arrow Certification Services inspector conducts physical inspection of operator once a year to verify that the operator complies with the relevant standards. During inspection, risk assessment of operation is done as per **Procedure for Risk Assessment** and record the risk assessment findings in prescribed formats for risk assessment.

Inspector accomplishes inspection and all non-conformities/non-compliances listed in a report. A copy of the **Non-compliance and Opportunity for Improvement Report**, which is duly signed, by the inspector and the operator. The noncompliance report copy is handed over to the operator. The non-conformances detected can be closed by providing the proof by way of documents, records, photos, etc. or if requirement is there for a further visit by the Arrow Certification Services inspector to the site which will be chargeable as per the scale of fees for the man days needed for follow up inspections.

Arrow Certification Services inspector must inspect the processing or subcontracted unit annually engaged with operator as per applicable standard requirement.

#### 9. Receiving of Remaining Fees:

Arrow Certification Services sends the final invoice. Operator has to pay the balance of the final invoice within a month after inspection.

- 10. Corrective action:** The applicant will be required to take corrective action for any non-conformances reported during the Stage II assessment before initiating the process of granting certification. The evidences of corrective actions shall be submitted to assessment team leader, for review and acceptance, within the committed time frame.

If the non-conformities are not closed within the stipulated time of one month or less based on the severity of the non-compliance appropriate sanctions according to **Sanction Catalogue** will be initiated. In case of certified client suspension will result and in case of new client's initial inspection will follow.

Arrow Certification Services verifies the action taken on the non-conformities, which may include a surveillance visit of the operation. In case of non-fulfillment of conditions, the sanctioning system will be invoked.

- 11.** Arrow Certification Services shall conduct the annual surveillance inspection in consultation with the client the same will be conducted and will be subsequently charged. These inspections are other than annual inspection and may be conducted unannounced and additional.

#### 12. Final Review:

The file will be forwarded for review and certification only after the fulfillment of all necessary inspections, closing of non-conformities and settlement of outstanding dues.

The Certification Manager will allocate reviewer/certifiers for review and certification. If the review on the checklist and the report and the associated corrective action give the impression

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that the operation is in compliance with the requirements of standard and relevant audit criteria. Subsequently, reviewer has to recommend for certification decision to the certification committee. The certification committee or maybe a single person/reviewer who has not done the inspection and complied with the requirement shall take certification decision.

### 13. Issue of Scope Certificate:

Arrow Certification Services will issue a certificate of registration to the applicant once the corrective action has been accepted. The certificate carries a validity of one/three years from the date of issue subject to satisfactory findings during surveillances and relevant standard requirements.

The certified client's are committed through signing of certification agreement to comply with the certification body's requirements.

The 100% payment of inspection and certification fee itself will not ipso facto entitle grant of the scope certificate to the operator if it is not complying with the relevant standard requirement.

The certificate is not transferable, even on change of ownership initial inspection is needed and continuation of status will be decided by the Arrow Certification Services. In case of any sanction, suspension withdrawal of certificate the information will be given to the affected parties.

***Note: If the client is operating with any other Certification Body the information will be given to that Certification Body too. The information will be communicated to the accreditation body within 30 days.***

The certificate will be issued to the registered operator either by Post/Hand and proof for the same will be retained. Any differences noticed has to be brought to the notice of Arrow Certification Services within 7 days of Certificate generation. If the difference is because of the failure from Arrow Certification Services side the amended certificate will be issued within 14 days without any charges, if the failure is because of the error in data provided by the operators. The Amended certificate will be issued within 28 days and will be chargeable as per the **Scale of Fees** subjected to correction done.

In case the non-conformances cannot be closed by the operator due reason beyond the control of client a letter of noncompliance may be given to the operator, this will be issued only on written request from client. The Letter of Non-compliance is not meant to replace or avoid sanctioning of the client.

The Scheme Owner Logo / Arrow Certification Services logo cannot be used unless the operator is granted with license to Use certification mark.

Other than the above-mentioned Non-compliance, letter Arrow Certification Services will not issue any communication other than certificate to or about operator to demonstrate status unless it refers to sanctions.

### 14. Use of Certification Mark & Arrow Certification Services Logo:

The Scheme Owner Logo / Arrow Certification Services logo cannot be used unless the operator is granted with license to Use certification mark.

**Once the certificate is received and if any balance of the final invoice has to be paid to Arrow Certification Services then it has to be paid within one month, nonpayment of the**

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**outstanding may lead to suspension withdrawal of certificate without further notice. The suspensions will not be withdrawn until the fees are received by Arrow Certification Services.**

- 15. Annual Renewal / Surveillance Audit:** During the certificate validity period, surveillance assessments are carried out once a year from the date of certification in the period of the certificate validity. The Certification Body also reserves the right to order unplanned and / or additional surveillances in case of complaints and high risk. In case of failure to accept surveillance, major nonconformities, failure to take timely corrective actions or failure to fulfill financial obligations may lead to suspension of the certificate.

Failure to take effective timely actions for revoking suspension may lead to withdrawal of certificate.

Arrow Certification Services will normally follow up with registered operator for the surveillance and send application form before the next renewal 3 months before the expiry of certificates on request from client and the procedures # 3 to 13 will apply. And will reconfirm the registration of producer and the proposed products for the relevant scope before the expiry of certificate provided the client submit the application form and make advance payment. But it lies as the responsibility of the client that the renewal applications are submitted 3 months before the expiry of certificates.

Once the filled in application form reaches the Arrow Certification Services office, a proforma invoice/invoice for the same is prepared and sent to the client. Inspections are scheduled by Inspection Manager once 50% advance is received.

The client must inform Arrow Certification Services of any changes that have occurred after last inspection and also, an update on the correction of minor non compliances previously identified by Arrow Certification Services as requiring correction for continued certification and any other information if required by Arrow Certification Services must be submitted by the client.

The follow-up inspection/subsequent inspection has to be carried out while the standing crop/product processing is there; it should be avoided during the off season when no activities are going on.

Each year, before the renewal inspections, the client shall notify Arrow Certification Services of its schedule of production of crop products/product processing, giving a breakdown by parcel.

#### **16. Additional Inspections:**

Other than the mandatory annual inspections required for certification, Arrow Certification Services will conduct further at least 10% additional random inspections for each scope certification of total number of operators annually wherever applicable, e.g. if major changes in the production occurred, on suspicion, as a randomly conducted spot check or risk of previous noncompliance or in any other cases where further inspections are necessary to have sufficient proof that the operation is working according to the standards and directives. The additional inspection is always based on severity of risk identified during the inspection and always in addition to unannounced inspection. The selection of clients is based on risk

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assessment and identified level of risk (high, medium and low). The inspections are allotted by Inspection Manager as per the instructions from Certification Manager/Quality Manager/ED and are undertaken as usual procedures.

#### 17. Unannounced Inspection:

As per scheme requirement will be conducted by Arrow Certification Services unannounced inspection of 10% of the operators will be conducted by Arrow Certification Services. Arrow Certification Services will inform the certificate holder in advance of the intended visit. This notification will normally not exceed 48 hours. In the exceptional case where it is impossible for the certificate holder to accept the proposed date (due to medical or other justifiable reasons), the certificate holder will receive one more chance to be informed of an unannounced inspection or audit. The certificate holder shall receive a written warning if the first proposed date has not been accepted. The client will receive another 48-hours notification of a visit. If the visit cannot take place because of non-justifiable reasons, a suspension of all products will be issued.

#### 18. Termination, Reduction, Suspension or Withdraw:

When rebuttal is unsuccessful, or correction of the non-compliance is not completed within the prescribed time period given by Arrow Certification Services, a written notification of proposed suspension or revocation of certification of the entire operation or a portion of the operation, as applicable to the non-compliance, sent to the client.

When correction of a noncompliance is not possible, the notification of noncompliance and the proposed suspension or revocation of certification may be combined in one notification. The notification of proposed suspension or revocation of certification includes:

- The reasons for the proposed suspension or revocation;
- The proposed effective date of such suspension or revocation;
- The impact of a suspension or revocation on future eligibility for certification; and
- The right to request mediation or to file an appeal.

#### Suspension or Revocation

If the certified operation fails to correct the non-compliance to resolve the issue through rebuttal or mediation, or to file an appeal of the proposed suspension of certification, the client sent a written notification of suspension or revocation to Arrow Certification Services within 10 days of decision.

The Arrow Certification Services must not send a notification of suspension or revocation to a certified client that has requested mediation or filed appeal, while final resolution of either is pending.

#### 19. Request for Reinstatement:

The suspended client may request reinstatement of its certification to Arrow Certification Services. The reinstatement request must include evidence showing that all the non-compliances have been corrected and should include copies of the original Notices of Noncompliance.

The Certification Manager is responsible for handling of reinstatement request. The Certification Manager reviews the reinstatement request and non-compliances corrective action submitted by client. If non-compliance corrective action is compliance with relevant Standard, the Arrow Certification Services will plan the on-site inspection within three months

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receiving of reinstatement request. At the time of on-site inspection, inspector verifies the effectiveness of corrective action taken by client. After completion of on-site inspection, inspector is prepared the inspection report and submitted to the Inspection Manager along with supporting documents and proof of corrective action taken.

The Inspection Manager checks the inspection report, supporting documents and reinstatement corrective action. After that file is submit to the Certification Manager.

The Certification Manager check the inspection report, supporting documents and proof of reinstatement corrective action and allot to the reviewer for final review.

The reviewer, review the inspection report, supporting documents and proof of reinstatement corrective action collected by inspector during on-site inspection. If, inspection report, supporting documents and proof of reinstatement corrective action is compliance with relevant Standard, concern client file is submitting for final decision with recommendation or if not compliance with standard requirement, deny the reinstatement request with recommendation.

If the onsite inspection and review shows that the client had corrected all previously cited non-compliances and was otherwise in full compliance with the standards. If the client's reinstatement request includes documented evidence of full compliance, then the Arrow Certification Services will approve reinstatement. If not, then the Arrow Certification Services will deny the reinstatement request and the suspension will remain effective.

If the Arrow Certification Services approves the reinstatement, it will notify the operator and Accreditation Body that the operation is compliance with relevant Standard. The Arrow Certification Services will then issue a new certificate to the operation.

After approval of reinstatement request, the Arrow Certification Services should made all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, and authorization for use of logo/marks, to ensure all appropriate indications, exist that the product continues to be certified.

If decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, the Arrow Certification Services make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of logo/marks, in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client and clearly specified in certification documentation and public information.

A certified operation or a responsible person connected with an operation whose certification has been revoked will be ineligible to receive certification for a period of 5 years following the date of such revocation or suspension.

## **20. Changes affecting certification:**

When the certification scheme introduces new or revised requirements that affect the client Arrow Certification Services shall ensure these changes are communicated to all clients. Arrow Certification Services will also consider other changes affecting certification, including changes initiated by the client and shall verify the implementation of the changes by its clients and shall take actions required by the scheme for this one or all of the following may be undertaken.

The actions to implement changes affecting certification shall include, if required, the following:

Evaluation; review; decision; Issuance of revised formal certification documentation to extend or reduce the scope of certification; issuance of certification documentation of revised surveillance activities (if surveillance is part of the certification scheme).

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## 21. Complaints:

When the client disagrees with the evaluation/assessment given he or she must declare in writing the reasons for disapproval to Arrow Certification Services at the earliest convenience. The complaint shall be submitted immediately after receiving the decision and no later than 30 working days after receiving the decision. The complaint shall be submitted in writing through email or writing a letter to Certification Manager. The Complainant may be called to present the issue to the Executive Director if needed.

Based on nature of complaint, Certification Manager shall review the complaint and decide that whether complaint to be accepted or rejected due to insufficient substantiated or incomplete complaint. If it is rejected, will inform the complainant of the same. The accepted request shall enter into the complaint register and receipt of a complaint send by email or written a formal letter to the complainant.

Subsequently, Certification Manager shall appoint staff committee or single employee to investigate the complaint or independent committee / person other than the employees involved in inspection and certification decision made. The investigating staff or committee is accountable for safeguarding the impartiality and conflict of interest. All the personnel engaged in the complaint handling process shall other than the person involved in inspection and certification decision or person having a conflict with client. Upon request, Certification Manager will gather and provide necessary information, assessment report, decision, corrections, and corrective actions where applicable.

All the subsequent actions and recommendations are submitted to the Executive Director for final decision. The outcome will be informed to the complainant in writing (via email/letter) within 30 (thirty) days after receiving a complaint. If the complainant agrees with the outcome at this stage, then the complaint does not process to further stages. All complaints including actions taken, will be tracked, and recorded by Arrow Certification Services.

If necessary, Arrow Certification Services will take appropriate correction and corrective actions.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then he or she may file an Appeal against decision made to the Executive Director within 30 days of decision.

## 22. Appeals:

Arrow Certification Services is committed to provide services with 100% client's satisfaction. There is a possibility that certification services provided to the clients and its certification decision are not meet out the client's satisfaction. In those cases, the client could make an appeal against that decision.

The client's is dissatisfied with decision will submit the formal appeal to Arrow Certification Services within 30 (thirty) days of decision issued. The appellant will submit their appeal against decision by email or write a letter to Executive Director or Certification Committee. The appeal shall enter into appeal register and receipt of an appeal send by email or written a formal letter to the appellant.

Based on nature of appeal, Executive Director or Certification Committee shall review the request and decided that whether appeal will be accepted or rejected. If it is rejected, will inform the appellant of the same. The appellant may be called to present the issue to Executive Director /appeal committee if needed.

Subsequently, Executive Director will appoint an investigation committee (three members) or single person which is in charge of the appeal process and is accountable for safeguarding the impartiality with respect to the appeal and operations of the organization. All the personnel engaged in the appeal handling process is other than the person involved in inspection and

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certification decision or person having a conflict with appellant. Upon request of investigation committee or single person, the Executive Director will provide all the necessary information, including the reasons for all significant decision, actions, and the selection of persons responsible for particular activities, to ensure Arrow Certification Services to ensure proper and impartial decision.

All the recommendations and actions including any correction and corrective action taken, will inform to the Appeal Committee and recorded by Arrow Certification Services. The outcomes of resolution of appeal will inform to the appellant in writing within 30 (thirty) days after receipt of the appeal.

If necessary, Arrow Certification Services will take appropriate correction and corrective actions.

The Appeal Committee is independent of management in their recommendations except as required by international or national law. If the recommendation is not respected by the Arrow Certification Services management, the Appeal Committee shall take appropriate measures, which include informing the Accreditation Body or other accreditation body.

If the appellant is disagreed with the decision made, appellant may be re-appeal to appeal committee or Executive Director within 30 days of appeal decision.

Any appeal which is related to financial or legal settlement not to be considered as complaints or appeals.

*Note:*

Any information regarding inspection & certification, compliant and appeal can be made in writing, please write to Executive Director [info@arrowcerts.com](mailto:info@arrowcerts.com)

All the information is kept confidential.

\* All legal disputes, complaint is subject to Dubai, UAE jurisdiction only.

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