

# Organic Production in Grower Group

Summary from:

## SRS Organic Standard

Version 01.01  
from 29.05.2018

Based on

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007, as amended  
COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008, as amended

### Certification as grower group

Grower group certification refers to the certification of a **group of growers whose farms are uniform in most ways, and who are organized under one management and marketing system.**

The preconditions for group certification to be fulfilled are as follows:

- the group may be organized and affiliated to an operator having certification agreement with SRS. The individual growers have agreements with the group which shall include a declaration of commitment for obeying the production rules and the acceptance of control measures, as well as consenting to both internal and external inspections;
- generally, only small farmers are covered by group certification. Larger farms, processor and traders might be a part of the group but have to be inspected annually by SRS. The farms shall be in geographical proximity;
- the crops and farming practices of the growers must be uniform and reflect a consistent process or methodology, using the same inputs;
- participation in the group is limited to growers who sell all their organic production through the group. All growers shall utilize centralized processing, distribution, and marketing facilities of the system;

## Internal Control System (ICS)

The grower groups must establish and implement an Internal Control System (ICS) serving as a documented **internal quality system including supervision and documentation of production practices and inputs used at each grower's operation to insure compliance with the specific organic standard.**

The ICS shall fulfil at least following requirements:

- the ICS keeps appropriate documentation, including internal rules and procedures, a description of the farms and the facilities, production management practices, the contractual arrangement with each individual member and internal inspection reports;
- internal inspectors are designated by the group and carry out internal controls. They must receive suitable training. The internal quality system sets out rules to avoid or limit potential conflicts of interest of the internal inspectors;
- the internal inspectors carry out at least one annual inspection visit to each individual farmer including visits to fields and facilities, the results are documented in the internal control reports;
- the internal control system shall include the application of sanctions to individual members who do not comply with the production standards. It shall inform the external inspection body of the irregularities and non-compliances found, as well as of the corrective actions imposed with agreed time for completion.

## Control of Grower Group

In case of grower group certification, a **substantial part of the inspection work is carried out by the internal inspectors in the framework of the internal control system** set up by the group. SRS verifies and evaluates the effectiveness of the internal control system.

In addition to the general control requirements of an organic operation the operator shall provide following documents to SRS:

- updated grower list, maps of fields, collection points, storages of products and input;
- internal control system description, list of internal inspectors, the contracts with farmers, farmers' internal control system files, sanction system;
- documentation evidence on field management and post-harvest handling;
- records on harvest, stock, product flow, transport, separation, traceability.

Each year SRS will define a risk-orientated sample of farms subject to annual inspections. A part of the farms inspected by SRS in previous year will be re-inspected in the consecutive year. Larger farms, processors and traders shall be inspected annually by SRS.