Section 1

QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.A.P.) Certification Scheme

Introduction

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1. Background

1.1. Agriculture continues to be the bed rock of South Asian rural economy, in respect of employment as also contribution to national GDP. In some countries though Agriculture's share in GDP may be diminishing in terms of its share in GDP, in terms of employment and centrality in rural economies, farm and non-farm sector, premised on basic farming as also engaging the large majority of small and marginal farming households, agriculture's role in the SAARC Member States is projected to remain the key to driving overall national economic growth and well- being of its people.

1.2. Agriculture is mainstay of many Asian economies including India and more so the bed rock of South Asian rural economy. While agriculture contributes to national GDP registering diminishing in terms of its share in GDP, it still engages a large majority of small and marginal farming households thereby retains its centrality in in terms of employment and centrality in rural economies.

1.3. This phenomenon acknowledges that agriculture remains the key to driving overall national economic growth and well-being of its people.

1.4. While agriculture is the basic strength of many of the countries its vast potential has not been fully exploited. This market potential of agriculture both in the region and globally can only be realized by reforming agriculture and making its produce internationally competitive in terms of quality and food safety.

1.5. The above premise is validated by various international agencies. World Bank reported that in SAARC countries agriculture employs about 60% of the labour force and contributes 22% of the regional GDP (World Bank, 2011). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that the largest concentration of the world's poor, around 40%, lives in South Asia (Srinivasan, 2012), while World Bank figures show that 76% of them live in the rural areas, contributing at least 65% of the agricultural labour force (World Bank, 2011).

1.6. The principal reason for high incidence of poverty in the region is the low per capita income and inequitable distribution of income. Among the contributing factors in these agrarian based economies is the lack of requisite know-how for institutionalizing hygiene and food safety mechanisms in agriculture (SAARC, 2004) which is a critical pre-requisite to link agriculture with enhancement of trade in the region.

1.7. It has been further observed that the solution needs to address the small holders who form the majority of farmers in the region. The objective of any quality intervention needs to include small groups and introduce food safety and hygiene in their farming systems.

1.8. Many retailers and food service buyers now are increasingly demanding GAP certified material as a prerequisite for procurement.

2. THE NEED

2.1. India's agriculture sector and other related stakeholders viz., the retailers and the buyers recognize that if farmers in the region opt for hygiene and food safety in their production system through Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), they will enjoy access to guaranteed new markets, have reliable quality inputs, will increase farm value and increase farmer's skill in farming operations in domestic as well as in the global markets.

2.2. With the opening up of the world market, there is a flow of trade in agricultural products in wide range of agriculture produce such as fruits and vegetables sector, livestock, dairy, tea and coffee etc. It is, therefore, necessary to define certain

minimum standards with a well-defined certification and accreditation mechanism for the ultimate implementation of GAP to facilitate national and international trade in farm produce.

2.3. Introducing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in India will ensure the following benefits:

2.3.1. Adoption of GAP helps promote sustainable agriculture and contributes to meeting national and international environment and social development objectives.

2.3.2. Appropriate adoption and monitoring of GAP help in improving the safety and quality of food and other agricultural products. It is expected to help in increased compliance to national and international regulations, standards and guidelines regarding use of permitted pesticides, maximum levels of contaminants (including pesticides, veterinary drugs and mycotoxins) as well as other chemical, microbiological and physical contamination hazards.

2.4. Additionally, from global experiences it is safely concluded, that apart from other benefits, one of the main benefits of adoption of GAP would be production of safe food. GAP is expected to help in production of safe food at primary production level by eliminating chances of entering of contaminants like pesticide residues, veterinary (antibiotic) drug residues, metallic residues, aflatoxin residues, microbiological contaminants from entering the food chain at primary production level.

2.5. The reduction of contaminants entering the food chain eliminates harmful processes in the food chain as bio-magnification and bio-concentration (accumulation of toxic chemicals in food chains) which is detriment to both human health and environment.

2.6. To enable farm produce to be internationally competitive, incorporating the concept of globally accepted Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is imperative to innovative farming practices. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), as defined by FAO, are a “Collection of principles to apply for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and healthy food and non-food agricultural products, while taking into account economic, social and environmental sustainability.

2.7. In view of the above, there needs to be a Scheme that designs requirements of GAP addressing the entire production base including the small and marginal farms and the larger farms.

3. THE SOLUTION

3.1. Introduction of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in agrarian economies shall bring in culture of food safety, enhanced produce quality, optimization of human and natural resources in agriculture. This is turn will result in better price realization of their produce which in turn will secure and strengthen livelihoods of the small and marginal farmers.

3.2. The local retailers and global buyers recognize that if farmers in the region opt for hygiene and food safety in their production system through Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), they will enjoy access to guaranteed new markets, have reliable quality inputs, will increase farm value and increase farmer’s skill in farming operations.

3.3. Quality Council of India (QCI) felt now to be an opportune time to launch Good Agricultural Practices for India - IndG.A.P. as the Governments and the agro- processing industry now acknowledge agriculture to be a growth driver. It would also help in better implementation of the food regulations in India by making available appropriate quality raw material to the food processing industry.

3.4. The focus of IndG.A.P. is to address not only the quality and quantity of the produce obtained from a unit area but focuses on various aspects of food safety, pre-and post-harvest practices including workers health and safety to ensure sustained supply of produce of the desirable quality.

3.5. While the scope of IndG.A.P. covers all agriculture farm produce, it is structured in a manner to address the small and marginal farmers by developing certification criteria suiting their needs.

3.6. The IndG.A.P. Scheme comprises of various documents prescribing the Governing Structure for the scheme, certification criteria detailing the for on-farm production of all farm produce, certification process, requirements for certification bodies, and rules for use of certification mark to align the scheme as per ISO 17065, the international standard for product/process certification requirements complete with certification and accreditation framework.

4. SCHEME DOCUMENTS

4.1. QCI has designed the IndG.A.P. scheme comprising the following documents:

PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section I: ID: 01: Introduction
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section II: PR: 01: Governing Structure
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section III: SD: 01: Certification Criteria
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section III: FR: 01: Annexure 3A - IndG.A.P. Control Points & Compliance Criteria (CPCC) Checklist
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section III: GL: 01: Annexure 3B – Glossary
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section III: SD: 02: Annexure 3C – S2S Rules
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section III: PR: 02: Annexure 3D – Decision Tree for Irrigation Water Analysis
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section IV: PR: 03: Certification Process
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section IVA: PR: 04: Certification Process - Group Certification
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section V: SD: 03: Requirements for Certification Bodies
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section V: FR: 02: Annexure 5A – Agreement for approved CBs and SO
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VI: PR: 05: Rules for Use of Certification Mark
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VI: FR: 03: Annexure 6A - IndG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VI: FR: 04: Annexure 6B – Certificate Template Option 1
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VI: FR: 05: Annexure 6B – Certificate Template Option 2
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VII: PR: 06: Provisional Approval System for Certification Bodies
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section VIII: FR: 06: QMS Checklist
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section IX: FR: 07: Application Form for Certification Bodies (CBs)
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section X: FR: 08: CRM-cum-Assessment Report for Provisional Approval of CBs
PADD: IndG.A.P.: Section XI: PR: 07: IndG.A.P. Certification Scheme - Procedure for Document and Record Control
PADD: IndG.A.P.: PL: 01: Transition Policy for IndG.A.P. Certification Scheme

4.2. In order to align the Scheme to other national and international requirements, various national and international standards such as GLOBALG.A.P., best practices, prevalent industry standards and related ISO standards and guides have been referred to.

5. ACRONYMS

AB: Accreditation body
BMCL: Benchmarking checklist
CB: Certification body/Crops Base in IFA
CBC: Certification Body Committee
CRN: Client Registration Number
CC: Compliance Criterion
CFM: Compound Feed Manufacturing
CIPRO: Certification Integrity Program
CL: Checklist
CoC: Chain of Custody
CP: Control point
CPCC: Control Points and Compliance Criteria
EA: European co-operation for Accreditation
FSS: Food Safety Standard
GAP: Good Agricultural Practices
GFSI: Global Food Safety Initiative
HACCP: Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
IAF: International Accreditation Forum
IFA: Integrated Farm Assurance
IndG.A.P. – India Good Agricultural Practices
IPRO: Integrity Program
MLA: Multilateral Agreement
NIG: National Interpretation Guideline
NTWG: National Technical Working Group
QMS: Quality management system
PHU: Product handling unit
PPM: Plant Propagation Material
PSS: Produce Safety Standard
UIN: Unique Identification Number
TC: Technical Committee

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