ARSO CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

ACAP 1-3

Third Edition 2025

Conformity assessment — Part 3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies

Reference No. ACAP 1-3:2025(E)
ICS 03.200/97.220.10

Table of contents

Foreword

The African Regional Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) is an African Intergovernmental organization made of Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU). One of the fundamental mandates of ARSO is the establishment of a conformity assessment system to promote the quality of African goods and services as a means of facilitating intra-African trade as well as accessing global markets.

The ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) is supported by a coherent set of documents which are developed under the auspices of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO CACO) which comprises experts from Member States. Member States participate in the committee on a voluntary basis and the documents developed follow the principles and procedures for the development of African Standards outlined in the African Standards Harmonization Model (ASHAM) with the exception of the stages and voting thresholds. Being conformity assessment instruments, ACAP documents are subject to dynamic adaptations which must timeously respond to changes in the conformity assessment fields.

ACAP documents will be revised on a flexible basis to fit in with changes in global conformity assessment systems.

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Introduction

This document specifies requirements, the observance of which is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate certification schemes in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of certified products, processes and services on a national and international basis and so furthering international trade.

This document describes the procedure for the approval of National and International third party Certification Bodies (CB from now on) willing to be recognized as certifiers for the ACAP.

It summarizes the requirements which must be met by a CB, to be engaged in the evaluation and certification process for the ACAP and award of the ACAP Mark.

The ARSO Secretariat will grant approval or disapproval for the CB to become recognized CB for ACAP, based on accreditation

This document includes the rules to be complied with by National and International third party Certification Bodies seeking accreditation under ACAP.

There are some basic principles that represent a “Must” in the development of the ACAP, in order to make a product identified with the ACAP Mark more “Robust” and acknowledgeable by the interested parties:

(a) The level of control exercised by ARSO on the ACAP Certification system in order to guarantee the effectiveness and integrity of the system

(b) Independence of the Certification Bodies involved in the process and the transparency of the whole system.

(c) Clear Rules in order to guarantee and assess the competence of the CBs to carry out evaluation

(d) Definition of auditing criteria and qualification of the auditors (training/background).

(e) Technical support for capacity building within all the involved parties

(f) The Supply chain coverage and Traceability requirements: the possibility to track the ACAP Mark along the supply chain and how to do that

Interested parties can expect or require the certification body to meet all the requirements of the ACAP, as well as those of the specific ACAP certification schemes.

Parties that may have an interest in certification include, but are not limited to:

- the clients of the certification bodies;
- the customers of the organizations whose products, processes or services are certified;
- governmental authorities;
- non-governmental organizations; and
- Consumers and other members of the public.

Conformity Assessment — Part 3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies

1 Scope

This document specifies the process of application and approval of certification bodies to the ACAP certification schemes

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ACAP 1-1, Conformity assessment — Part 1: General requirements for the certification systems

ACAP 1-2, *Conformity assessment— Part 2: Specific requirements for ACAP certification schemes*

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17011, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*

ISO 9000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

ISO 9001, *Quality management systems — Requirements*

ISO 10002, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations*

ISO/IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements*

ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this document the terms and definitions in ACAP 1-1 apply.

4 Certification body approval process

In order to become a recognized CB for the ACAP, a series of requirements must be fulfilled for approval and confirmed in time for approval maintenance.

4.1 Entry requirements

In order to be allowed to start an application to become a CB recognized for ACAP, the following basic requirements are necessary:

(a) The CB shall be a Legal Entity registered with the scope certification.

(b) The CB shall be already operating and accredited according to ISO/IEC 17065.

(c) In case of CB accredited according to ISO/IEC 17065, the accreditation body to which the CB applies shall be a signatory of the AFRAC MRA.

(d) In case the CB is not accredited:

(i) it shall operate according to ISO/IEC 17065 and have applied for accreditation from an accreditation Body signatory of the AFRAC MRA. ARSO Secretariat shall grant the CB a provisional-license for a period of not more than two years during which period, the CB shall have been accredited.
(ii) Periodic updates shall be provided to ARSO secretariat on the progress of the accreditation process by both the CB and AB.

(iii) If by end of the two years the CB is not accredited, it shall cease operating under the ACAP scheme and notify its clients. The CB license shall be transferred to another licensed accredited Certification Body.

4.2 ACAP provisional entry requirements

4.2.1 Application and review

The CB shall complete the steps listed below before entering the phase of final approval.

(a) The applicant CB shall register in the ACAP database as an applicant CB in order to receive all the information and documentation required for the application.

(b) The application shall be very clear about the ACAP Certification Scheme selected for the approval (eg: Scheme A1 Crops) through Annex B and provide evidence as required.

Once the preliminary application is completed with all required information and documentation, it shall be sent to ACAP Administrator for review and approval.

4.2.2 ACAP CBs approval and licensing

In case of positive review of the application and after paying the prescribed fees, the applicant CB shall be approved and sign a license agreement for the provision of certification activities on behalf of ARSO. The ACAP-CB license agreement (see Annex A) is the Certification and Mark Agreement that establishes the rights and obligations of ARSO and the approved CB.

Annex A
(Normative)

ARSO-CB LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN ARSO AND CERTIFICATION BODIES FOR CERTIFICATION UNDER THE ARSO CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (ACAP)

This agreement is made as of …… (Date) between the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), having its principal office at Nairobi, Kenya, and ……. (Name of the Certification body) hereinafter referred to as the certification body whose expression shall include its successors and assignees, and having its principal office at _____ (address).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) is an intergovernmental organization established by the former Organization of African Union (OAU), currently African Union (AU)) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 1977 whose mandate includes ; establish/harmonize African regional standards for all products of interest to intra-African trade and operate a regional certification marking scheme with a view to certifying the quality of and promoting African products and services.

1.2 A Certification Body (CB) is an independent and impartial organization possessing the necessary competence to carry out the certification of products, processes and services to the relevant harmonized sustainability standards and under relevant scheme of ACAP. For the purpose of the ACAP, the CB can either be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065 or demonstrate to be in the process of accreditation.

1.3 This Agreement sets out the relationship between ARSO/Scheme Owner and the approved Certification Bodies (CBs) and the conditions to be met by the CBs in the operation of ACAP certification.

1.4 Both ARSO and CBs are expected to abide by letter, spirit and intent of this Agreement.

2. OBLIGATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

2.1 Approved Certification Bodies shall fulfil the requirement of ACAP 1-1, ACAP 1-2 and ACAP 1-3 and others applicable requirements.

2.2 Identify and assign responsible persons for the management of the ACAP Scheme within the CB.

2.3 Maintain its accreditation in the scope of ACAP certification

2.4 Where the scheme requires evaluation through testing, inspection or auditing, the CB shall use accredited testing, inspection or auditing organisations. These organisations shall be accredited by accreditation bodies covered under the AFRAC MRA, ILAC MRA/IAF MLA.

2.7 Carry out audits of operators against appropriate ACAP scheme and scope and confirm fulfilment of requirements prior to certification.

2.8 Apply the certification criteria consistently and utilise competent staff and subcontractors to provide service to operators.

2.9 Once satisfied that the operator fulfils the requirements, the CB will issue certification documentation indicating the scope of certification.

2.10 The certificate issued is valid to 3 years from the date of certification decision, subject to, and on condition that the operator complies with the terms set out in this agreement.

2.11 The CB will allow the operator to use the certification marks issued by the scheme owner, in a manner provided in the rules on use of marks and based on the sublicence agreement.

2.12 The CB will carry out periodic surveillance audits on certified operators annually and recertification audit prior to expiry of the certificate.

2.13 If a certificate expires while an audit is on-going the CB has a grace period of not more than two (2) months within which to conclude and make a decision. Any time beyond two (2) months renders the recertification null and void.

2.14 If an operator fails to comply with the certification agreement, the CB shall suspend or withdraw certification or impose other sanctions as appropriate and notify ARSO.

2.15 The CB reserves the right to reject an application or terminate an audit where there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour or the operator intentionally provides false information.

2.16 The CB undertakes to withdraw all materials referring to its licensure to ACAP upon the license being revoked by ARSO or upon suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

2.17 The CB undertakes to provide ARSO wil all the required information and access required to assist in investigation and resolution of any complaints related to the ACAP Scheme.

2.18 Notify ARSO of the details of any enforcement action taken by regulatory authorities against the CB in relation to certified ACAP scheme.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF ARSO

3.1 Update the CB of the certification requirements and standards related to the certification schemes.

3.2 Timely Communication on any changes to ACAP

3.3 Provide the CB with an opportunity to investigate complaints prior to ARSO carrying out its own investigations.

4. VALIDITY OF LICENCE AGREEMENT

This license will be valid for three (3) years for accredited CBs and two (2) years for those CB's in the process of accreditation unless otherwise terminated in accordance with the terms herein.

4.1 ARSO will indicate how continued conformity with the relevant standard(s) and ACAP rules will be monitored in order that the certification body may maintain the approved status.

4.2 Additionally, ARSO reserves the right to :

4.2.1 Withdraw approval if a Certification Body:

(a) Loses accreditation or fails to achieve accredited status within the provisional license period;

(b) Being a company, enters into liquidation, whether compulsory or voluntary (but not necessarily including liquidation for the purposes of reconstruction), or has a receiver for its business appointed;

(c) Fails in any respects to comply with the laws of the land;

(d) Fails to comply with the conditions specified in the approval procedure as from ACAP Rules.

4.2.2 To object to, suspend and / or withdraw the use of ACAP Certification Mark(s).

4.3 An annual licensing fee (which includes registration and certification) will be charged upon application and maintenance of licensure. Additionally, royalties for use of the ACAP scheme and marks will be paid proportionately on the volume of business.

4.4 Certification Bodies who are affiliated to ARSO members will only pay royalties proportionately on the volume of business.

4.5 ARSO non-members CBs will pay annual licensing fee (which includes registration and certification) stated in the fee table approved by the ARSO Council.

4.6 All information gained by ARSO and its staff directly dealing with certification bodies other than information already in the public domain will be treated as confidential and will not, subject to the law of the land, be divulged without prior written consent of the certification body.

5. CONDITIONS TO BE MET BY CERTIFICATION BODIES

5.1 The Certification Body shall offer ARSO's representatives, access to documents and data and co-operation as necessary to enable ARSO to verify conformity with this Agreement and the relevant requirements of the standard(s) and ACAP Rules.

5.2 The certification body shall:

(a) Comply with the terms of this Agreement at all times;

(b) Only claim that it is licensed in respect of those activities which are included in the approved certification scope;

(c) Use ACAP Marks only on those certificates (and other documents, where applicable) which fall within the scopes approved by ARSO. The accredited certification body shall only use the appropriate mark or make reference to ARSO approval in the manner prescribed by ACAP Rules part I;

(d) Make it clear in all contracts with its clients and in guidance documents that approval issued by it in no way implies that any product, service is approved under ACAP;

(e) Upon withdrawal of the license, the CB shall discontinue forthwith its use of any reference to the license, withdraw all advertising matter which contains any reference thereto.

(f) Provide, on demand, or during audits all records/information relating to complaints, appeals and disputes related to certification

(g) Inform ARSO, at the time of application and subsequently whenever there are changes, about the countries into which ACAP certificates are issued directly by the Certification Body or through sub-contractors

(h) Inform ARSO, at the time of application and subsequently whenever there are changes, about the countries in which the Certification Body operates from local offices and the legal relationship of such offices with the Certification Body

5.3 The Certification Body shall inform ARSO of any changes within its organization which bear on the Certification Body's conformity with this Agreement and the relevant standard(s) or otherwise affecting, or potentially affecting, the Certification Body's capability or scope of certification, prior to implementing any such change.

5.4 The certification body shall inform ARSO of any changes in its:

a) Legal, commercial or organizational status,

b) Organization and management, for example key managerial staff

c) Policies or procedures, where appropriate

d) Location of its premises

e) Personnel, equipment, facilities, working environment or other resources, where significant.

f) Capability of certification or scope of certification activities, or conformance with the requirements of the approval

5.5 The Certification Body will be given due notice of any proposed changes relating to this Agreement. The certification body shall be given such reasonable time as is necessary to make any adjustments to its procedures under the proposed changes. The certification body shall notify ARSO regarding the completion of such changes within the time fixed for such adjustments.

5.6 Financial arrangements between a Certification Body and its client are not the responsibility of and are not subject to the control of ARSO.

5 APPEALS

5.1 Appeals will be considered only against a decision made by ARSO and based on the ACAP appeals procedure.

5.2 Only appeals in writing against a decision by ARSO will be processed in accordance with the ACAP Appeals Procedure.

6. COMPLAINTS

6.1 Any complaint against ARSO shall be addressed to the Secretary General in writing.

6.2 Complaints will be handled as per the ARSO Procedure for Complaints handling.

7. LIABILITY

No representation, promise or warranty, express or implied, is or will be made or given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information, review, audit, or advice supplied, made or given by ARSO (or any of its directors, employees or agents) in the course of providing services pursuant to this Agreement and no employee or agent of ARSO is authorised (nor shall any such person be deemed to have been given any such authority) to make or give any such representation, promise or warranty, and any such representation, promise or warranty purported to be so made or given shall not be relied upon by the accredited / recognized certification body.

8. FORCE MAJEURE

No failure or omission by either party to carry out or observe any of the stipulations, conditions or warranties to be performed shall give rise to any claim against such party or be deemed to be a breach of contract to the extent that such failure or omission rises from causes reasonably beyond the control of such party.

9 INDEMNITY

The certification body undertakes to indemnify ARSO against any losses suffered by or claims made against ARSO as a result of misuse by the certification body of any certification, licence or

mark granted by ARSO as a result of any breach by the certification body of the terms of this Agreement

10. LICENSE TO OPERATE AS A CERTIFICATION BODY FOR ACAP

By subscribing to this agreement, the CB confirms that:

10.1 That it does not require permission from another Body or Authority to offer ACAP certification and where this is necessary it will have sort that authority before entering into agreement with ARSO.

10.2 That it is licensed to offer certification of products and services applied for within the scope listed in this agreement.

10.3 ARSO hereby grants non-exclusive, non-transferable license to the CB to;

10.3.1 use the ARSO Mark(s) relevant to the scope of application;
10.3.2 enter into Sub-license and Certification Agreements with operators, enter operator information onto the ARSO database and conduct licensed services

11. LAW

This Agreement shall in all respects be construed and operate as an Agreement made in Nairobi, Kenya and in conformity with appropriate AU regulations.

12. ARBITRATION

All disputes, differences or questions at any time arising between the parties in respect to this agreement or as to any matter or thing arising out of this Agreement or in any way connected therewith (which cannot be settled by mutual agreement) shall be referred to the ACAP dispute Mediation Committee.

13. TERMINATION

13.1 This agreement shall continue in force unless and until terminated by either party by giving a written notice of 90 days (3 months).

13.2 Where notice of termination is given by a CB, the CB shall state the arrangements made on termination for the protection of its certified operators.

13.3 Notwithstanding the requirements of the notice period, this agreement shall automatically be terminated upon withdrawal of an approved CB from the ACAP Scheme.

13.4 Any termination on of the Agreement, however caused, shall be without prejudice to any rights or liabilities of the parties that have been accrued on or before the date of termination, but neither party shall have any rights to require performance of or liabilities to perform this agreement after such date. Upon termination of this agreement for any reason:

13.4.1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the agreement, the terms Confidentiality, Liability and Indemnity) shall continue to be in force in accordance with their terms; and;

13.4.2. All fees and charges accrued (but unpaid) pursuant to this agreement shall forthwith become due and payable.

14. SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT

The scope of the licensed services (Make Reference to ACAP 1-2)

Scheme Name	Subject Area	Sub-scheme	Standards

15. THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

For the Certification Body
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name: .....……
Address: .....

Signed: .....
Position: .....
Date: …….

Witness for the Certification Body
(BLOCK CAPITALS)
Name: .....……
Address: .....

Signed: .....
Position: .....

For ARSO
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name: .....
Address: .....

Signed: .....
Position: .....
Date: ……

Witness for ARSO
(BLOCK CAPITALS)
Name: .....
Address: .....

Signed: .....
Position: .....

Annex B
(Normative)

CB APPLICATION FORM

Thank you for your interest in applying for a Certification Body (CB) License for the ACAP Scheme(s). Kindly fill in the application form and submit together with the required documentation. For further information related to the licensing requirements, please contact the ARSO Secretariat.

CONTACT INFORMATION				
CB full name				
CB short name / Abbreviations (if applicable)				
Contact Person				
Designation of Contact Person				
Physical Address				
Postal Address				
Phone Number				
Email Address				
Website				
BACKGROUND INFORMATION				
Does your organisation hold an ACAP license agreement?	Yes ☐	Date Granted		
	No ☐	Scope		
In case you held a previous license agreement, please specify the following?	Previous License		Yes ☐	No ☐
	Date of Termination			
	Reason for Termination			
Current Accreditation Attach the Accreditation Certificate)	Scheme		Date Granted	Accreditation Body Name
	ISO/IEC 17065	☐		
	ISO/IEC 17021-1	☐		
	Oher (Specify)	☐		
If not accredited, specify the following?	Date of application for Accreditation			
	Accreditation Body Name			
Name of person responsible fr ACAP Implementation & Maintenance				
Please indicate indicate the regions in which the CB is currently active	North Africa			☐
	Southern Africa			☐
	East & central Africa			☐
	West Africa			☐
	Asia			☐
	Europe			☐
	Australia / NZ			☐
	North America (Canada / USA)			☐
	Latin /central/ South America			☐

SCOPE OF APPLICATION				
Which ACAP scheme are you applying to certify? (Make reference tp ACAP 1-2)	**Scheme**	**Subject Area**	**Sub-Scheme**	**Standards**
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED	Copy of Accreditation Certificate & Scope			☐

	Acknowledgement & acceptance of application for Accreditation	☐
APPLICATION SUBMISSION		
Name		
Title		
Date		

REVIEW STATUS (To be completed by ARSO Secretariat)	
Reviewed by:	
Approval Status	☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved
Notes / Comments	
Date	

Bibliography

ACAP 1-1, *Conformity assessment — Part 1: General requirements for the certification systems*

ACAP 1-2, *Conformity assessment — Part 2: Special requirements for the certification systems*

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17011, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.*

ISO 9000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

ISO 10002, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations.*

ISO/IEC 17021-2, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of environmental management systems.*

ISO/IEC 17021-3, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of quality management systems.*

ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*

ARSO CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

ACAP 1-1

Fourth Edition 2025

Conformity assessment — Part 1: General requirements for the ACAP certification Scheme

Reference No. ACAP 1-1:2025(E)
ICS 03.200/97.220.10

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Conformity assessment — Part 1: General requirements for ACAP Certification Scheme

1 Scope

This document describes the general structure of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP), its governance, functions and organization. It also describes the general rules to be followed by any party seeking to enter in the ACAP.

Details on ACAP, common provisions applicable for all certification schemes included in the ACAP and rules for administration, implementation, auditing, certification and maintenance of the ACAP are included.

2 Normative documents

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

2.1 Standards

SHP-01, principles and procedures for the for harmonisation of African Standards and other deliverables

IAF MD 25[1], *Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes*

IAF PL 3, *Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17007, *Conformity assessment — Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment*

ISO /IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirement*

ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*

ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*

2.2 ACAP normative documents

ACAP 1-2, *Conformity assessment — Part 1-2: Specific requirements for ACAP Certification Schemes*

ACAP 1-3, *Conformity assessment — Part 1-3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies*

[1] IAF MD 25:2023 Issue 1 Version 2, *Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes issued 13-06-2023*

ACAP 2, *Sustainable agriculture — Auditing and certification*

ACAP 3, *Sustainable capture fisheries — Auditing and certification*

ACAP 4, *Cosmetology and wellness certification framework*

ACAP 5-1, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-1: General requirements*

ACAP 5-2, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-2: Good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-3, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-3: Good agricultural practices (GAP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-4, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-4: Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

ACAP 5-5, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-5: Minimum requirements for registration of traditional medicines*

3 Terms and definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this document the terms and definitions in SHP-01, ISO 9000 and ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

3.1.1
conformity assessment system
set of rules and procedures for the management of similar or related conformity assessment schemes

Note 1 to entry: A conformity assessment system can be operated at an international, regional, national, sub national, or industry sector level [ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 4.8]

3.1.2
conformity assessment scheme (CAS)
conformity assessment programme
set of rules and procedures that describes the objects of conformity assessment, identifies the specified requirements and provides the methodology for performing conformity assessment.

Note 1 to entry: A conformity assessment scheme can be managed within a conformity assessment system.
Note 2 to entry: A conformity assessment scheme can be operated at an international, regional, national sub national, or industry sector level.
Note 3 to entry: A scheme can cover all or part of the conformity assessment functions [ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 4.9]

3.1.3
object of conformity assessment
object; entity to which specified requirements apply

EXAMPLE Product, process, service, system, installation, project, data, design, material, claim, person, body or organization, or any combination thereof

Note 1 to entry: The term “body” is used in this document to refer to conformity assessment bodies and accreditation bodies. The term “organization” is used in its general meaning and may include bodies according to the context. The more specific ISO/IEC Guide 2 definition of an organization as a body based on membership is not applicable to the field of conformity assessment.[ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 4.2]

3.1.4
Scheme Owner (SO)
Organization(s) responsible for developing and maintaining a CAS. The following are illustrative examples of SOs:
(a) Standardization bodies;
(b) CABs;
(c) Organizations that use services provided by CABs;

(d) Organizations that buy or sell products subject to conformity assessment activities;
(e) Manufacturers and their associations that have established their own CAS;
(f) Organizations set up specifically for that purpose; and
(g) Governmental Authorities including regulators and other governmental bodies.
[IAF MD 25]

3.1.5
SO Authorization of a CAB
SO authorization means that the SO accepts certificates, reports, statements or attestations issued by a CAB for the purposes of confirming that the object of the conformity assessment meets the requirements of its CAS.

NOTE SOs may use different wording to denote/state/describe authorization, such as approval, licensing, listing, recognition, designation, etc.

3.1.6
Scheme Specific Requirements for CABs
This refers to specific requirements for the CAB prescribed by the SO for operating under its CAS, in addition to the AB's rules and the applicable IAF Level 3, International Standard.

NOTE The structure of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PL 3, *Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*.

3.1.7
Scheme Specific Requirements for ABs
This refers to specific requirements for the ABs prescribed by the SO for undertaking accreditation activity related to the CAS in addition to, but not excluding, any IAF/Region's rules nor ISO/IEC 17011 requirements.

3.1.8
surveillance
systematic iteration of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity
[ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 8.1]

3.2 For purposes of this document, the following abbreviations apply:

AB	Accreditation Body
ACAP	ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme
AFSEC	African Electrotechnical Standards Commission
AFRAC	African Accreditation Cooperation
ECOMARK	African Eco-Labelling Mark
ARS	African Standard
ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation
ASM	Artisanal and small-scale mining
AU	African Union
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CACO	Conformity Assessment Committee
CAS	Conformity Assessment Scheme
CB	Certification Body
EMA	Eco Mark Africa
EOA	Ecological Organic Agriculture

FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GAP	Good agricultural practices
GCP	Good Collection Practices
GFGP	Good Financial Grant Practice
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electro-technical Commission
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
LSM	Large scale mining
NC	Nonconformity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSBs	National Standards Bodies
QMS	Quality Management System
SC	Subcommittees
SHP	principles and procedures for the for harmonisation of African Standards and other deliverables
SMC	Standards Management Committee
SO	Scheme Owner
RECs	Regional Economic Cooperations
TC	Technical Committee

4 Objectives of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP)

4.1 The objectives for the ACAP

(a) To provide for an African Certification System for goods and services produced in accordance with African Standards (ARS) issued by ARSO

(b) To improve the quality, safety and legality of goods and services in Africa

(c) To facilitate intra-African trade and global trade

(d) To establish a third-party conformity assessment programme to increase transparency and credibility of the stakeholders on products certified under ACAP

(e) To provide a forum for collaboration in certification activities in the African region with a view to affording mutual benefits to the participating members.

4.2 Actions taken by ARSO to achieve the objectives

(a) Development of a documented system that includes principles, rules, guides and directives for the operation of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme

(b) Definition of common criteria for the design of African Standards and for the implementation and management of the related certification schemes

(c) Assurance of application of uniform working methods and procedures in certification.

(d) Support in establishing and strengthening national capabilities for certification in African countries by providing training and technical support, including promotional and other support services.

5 Document control

(a) The latest versions of all normative documents can be downloaded free of charge from the website.

(b) Original documents are available in English, French and Portuguese. Once published, the ARSO documents become mandatory for the implementation of the ACAP.

(c) Changes to documents: Normative documents are identified with a unique document code and a version number and date.

(d) Updates can be made independently in the different documents, but a version change affects all normative documents.

(e) Updates are communicated to all parties involved in the ACAP.

(f) A summary of changes is indicated in the documents in case of changes done within the same version of the ARSO documentation.

6 Administrative Structure of ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme

The general structure of the ACAP is summarized in Figure 1.

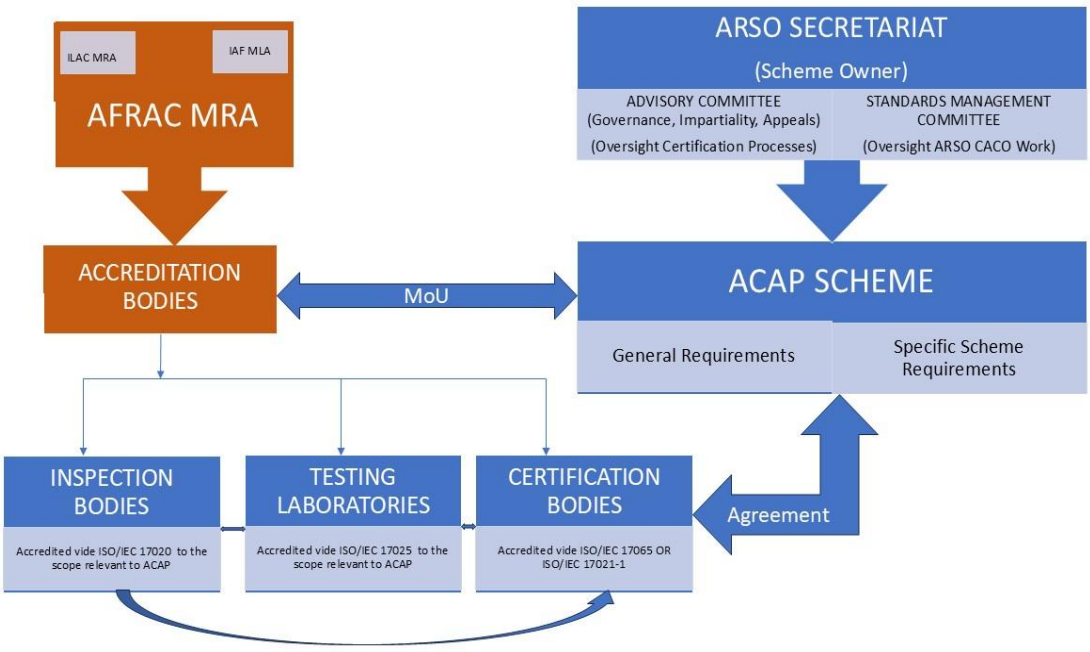


Figure 1 — The ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme Structure

6.1 ARSO Central Secretariat

The ARSO Secretariat, on behalf Member States, is the scheme owner of the collective schemes under the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme, termed under ISO/IEC 17067 as the system owner. Among the broad responsibilities of the ARSO Central Secretariat in relation to the ACAP system, the following is included in addition to those outlined in ISO/IEC 17067:

(a) Provide system management, governance, design, implementation and maintenance of the ACAP system and provide guidance when required.

(b) Take on full responsibility for the objectives, the content and the integrity of the certification schemes under the ACAP system.

(c) Maintain the database of the stakeholders and activities in the schemes with a view to providing credible information regarding certified products and systems.

(d) Facilitate the liaison of regional standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment activities.

(e) Publicize and promote the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme and its certification schemes to ensure that information about the scheme is made publicly available to ensure transparency, understanding and acceptance.

(f) Document the content of the certification schemes and set up a structure for the operation and management of the scheme.

(g) Maintain a compliment of persons competent in both technical and conformity assessment aspects to develop, maintain and review the certification system.

(h) Make a general description of the certification schemes publicly available without request. The scheme documents, including the criteria and process to be used in assessing conformity shall be publicly available.

(i) Make arrangements to protect the confidentiality of information provided by the parties involved in the scheme.

(j) Evaluate and manage the risks/liabilities arising from implementation of the ACAP system and ensure there is financial stability and resources required for it to fulfil its role in the operation of the schemes.

(k) Manage appeals and complaints within the ACAP through the Policy and Governance Working Group.

(l) Ensure that the scheme is regularly reviewed, including confirmation that it is fulfilling its objectives, in accordance with a process that includes stakeholders.

6.2 Advisory Committee

This will be the advisory body of the ACAP, which provides strategic advice on the development and operations of the ACAP system.

(a) Provide strategic oversight and guidance for ACAP;

(b) Provide the overall technical and strategic guidance and inputs to the implementation of the ACAP;

(c) Oversee the implementation of ARSO Council decisions and maintenance of rules for the technical work;

(d) Allocate of priorities, if necessary, to particular items of technical work;

(e) Ensure certification activities shall be undertaken impartially;

(f) Determine the eligibility of eco-labelling programmes under the ACAP;

(g) Constitute a conflict resolution and appeals committee to address matters arising out of the certification processes;

(h) Initiate networks and linkages with peer mechanism and partnerships;

(i) Advise on the ACAP equivalence;

(j) Advise the ARSO Council on the administrative and technical structures for the operationalization of the ACAP certification activities;

(k) Review the need for, and planning of, work in new fields of knowledge and technology;

(l) Consider matters of principle raised by certification bodies and stakeholders in respect of certification systems.

6.3 Standards Management Committee (SMC)

In relation to the ACAP, the SMC shall be responsible for:

(a) coordination of the technical work, including assignment of responsibility for the development of standards regarding subjects of interest to several TCs, particular standards relating to conformity assessment and those done by ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee;

(b) monitoring the correct application of the principles and procedures for the for harmonisation of African Standards and other deliverables (SHP-01) and taking appropriate action;

(c) reviewing the need for, and planning of, work in new fields of technology;

(d) advising on all matters concerning, the organization, the working procedures, coordination and planning of standards work including standstill obligations;

(e) maintenance of the SHP-01 procedures and other rules for the technical work;

(f) consideration of matters of due process raised by RECs, or Member States and ruling on appeals concerning decisions on new work item proposals, committee drafts, enquiry drafts and final draft African standards;

(g) monitoring and keeping under constant review the implementation of the standardization programmes;

(h) ensuring that the acceptance criteria for an ARS are met, and referring matters back to the responsible TC/SC when the criteria are not met;

(i) provision of guidance to TC secretariats and NSBs on procedural matters; and

(j) establishing joint technical committees between AFSEC and ARSO where the technical work of AFSEC and ARSO converge and overlap.

6.4 ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee

ARSO CACO is a policy and technical committee established by the ARSO Council to address matters of conformity assessment within the mandate of ARSO. With respect to the ACAP certification system, ARSO CACO has the following responsibilities:

(a) Ensure that there is sufficient evidence and justification for the establishment of certification schemes and that the standards and guidelines selected for the accreditation of respective conformity assessment bodies are appropriate and are maintained.

(b) Formulate the scopes of the certification schemes, including the type of products and services to be covered.

(c) Establish the requirements against which the products or services are evaluated, by reference to standards or other normative documents without ambiguity and made available to all interested parties;

(d) Be responsible for the validation of the ACAP certification schemes in accordance with IAF MD 25. The validation should be documented and include the following aspects:

  (i) A description of the purpose of the conformity assessment scheme (CAS);

  (ii) A description of the requirements of the CAS;

  (iii) An analysis of the appropriateness of the established requirements for fulfilling the defined purpose of the CAS;

  (iv) A description of the methods to be used for determining fulfilment of the requirements;

  (v) An analysis showing that the described methods to be used for determining fulfilment of the requirements are appropriate;

  (vi) The decision on the conformity assessment activity to be used (including identification of the applicable conformity assessment standard); and

  (vii) An analysis showing that the selected conformity assessment activity is appropriate.

(e) Elaborate other requirements to be met by the client, e.g. the operation of a management system or process control activities to assure the demonstration of fulfilment of specified requirements is valid for the ongoing production of certified products;

(f) Elaborate the requirements for certification bodies and other conformity assessment bodies involved in the certification process;

(g) the resources required for the operation of the scheme, including impartiality and competence of the personnel (internal and external), including the use of out-sourced services;

(h) how the results of audits and surveillance stages are to be reported and used by the certification body and the scheme owner;

(i) the question of how non-conformities with the certification requirements, which include product requirements, are to be dealt with and resolved;

(j) surveillance procedures, where surveillance is part of the scheme;

(k) content, conditions and responsibility for publication of the directory of certified products by the certification body or the scheme owner;

(l) the need for, and content of, contracts, e.g. between scheme owner and certification body, scheme owner and clients, certification body and clients: the rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the various parties should be defined in contracts;

(m) general conditions for granting, maintaining, continuing, extending the scope of, reducing the scope of, suspending and withdrawing certification: this includes requirements for discontinuation of advertising and return of certification documents and any other action if the certification is suspended, withdrawn or terminated;

(n) the way in which the clients' complaints records are to be handled;

(o) the way in which the clients make reference to the scheme in their publicity material;

(p) retention of records by scheme owner and certification bodies.

6.5 Operational management

The overall implementation and maintenance of ACAP is under the direct responsibility of the ARSO Central Secretariat.

For the purpose of operationalizing the ACAP system, ARSO Secretariat:

(a) shall work with accreditation bodies under the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) MRA;

(b) shall act as administrators of ACAP;

(c) shall license Conformity Assessment Bodies accredited by Accreditation Bodies under the AFRAC MRA

6.6 Relationship between ARSO, AB's and CABs

Further to the provisions of 6.5, ARSO, Accreditation Bodies and Conformity Assessment Bodies shall collaborate as follows:

(a) ARSO Secretariat, ABs and CABs shall establish a formal arrangement describing the relationship and the terms of cooperation between ARSO and the AB(s) in relation to CABs implementing ACAP schemes.

(b) In case of development or review of certification standards, the outputs from the respective TCs shall be notified to the ABs and CABs, where the standards impact compliance to African Standard design and applicability of the related certification schemes.

(c) ARSO shall establish a cooperation with the ABs under the AFRAC MRA and have a feedback mechanism to provide information on the performance of the CABs.

(d) ARSO shall carry out periodic review of the CAS taking into account the experience gained and the feedback received from parties interested in the CAS.

(e) ARSO shall monitor the development and review of the international standards and other normative documents which define the specified requirements used in each CAS. Where changes in the normative documents of the CAS occur, ARSO shall make the necessary changes in the CAS, and for managing the implementation of the changes (e.g. transition period) by the Conformity Assessment Bodies' clients and, where necessary, other parties interested in the CAS.

(f) Changes to the CAS that affect the output of the CAS shall be validated through ARSO CACO following the procedures established in SHP-01.

(h) ARSO requires that where mode of evaluation for certification is through testing, inspection or auditing, the CB shall use accredited testing, inspection or auditing organisations. These organisation shall be accredited by accreditation bodies covered under the ILAC MRA/IAF MLA.

8 ACAP certification schemes

The requirements for the ACAP Certification Schemes are detailed in the ACAP 1-2, Conformity assessment — Part 2: Specific requirements for the ACAP certification schemes.

9 Regional and International Recognition of ACAP

ARSO shall seek for endorsement of ACAP within the AFRAC MRA and where endorsed, shall require CABs operating under the scheme to fulfil requirements for Mutual Recognition Arrangement under AFRAC

10 Registration for certification in the ACAP

10.1 Preliminary entry requirements

In order to be allowed to start a certification process for one of the certification standards, some basic requirements must be complied with:

(a) The operator must be a Legal Entity registered for an activity related to the scope certification (where applicable).

(b) The operator must be legally responsible for the certified product during the production process and for all the time the product is covered by the scope of certification.

(c) The operator is responsible to choose an ARSO approved Certification Body (CB). The list of approved Certification Bodies is available on the ACAP website.

(d) The chosen CB is responsible for the registration of the operator in the ARSO Database.

(e) The operator must sign, with the selected CB, a certification agreement and commit to respect the rules for the ACAP. The contract between the operator / operator group manager and the CB, shall have 3 years validity because the certification program is based on continual improvement, demonstrating commitment to complete the entire certification cycle with the same CB, in order to assure continuity in the gradual growth of the certified system.

The operator that is willing to change CB during the 3 years cycle, will need to pay a penalty fee or provide the evidence of a valid justification for the change (ex: delivery, professionally or integrity problems of the CB).

All Company and Production data, required for registration in the ARSO Database must be duly provided to the selected ARSO approved Certification Body

10.2 Registration data

The application shall cover at least the information detailed in this chapter. By registering, the applicant commits to comply with the certification requirements at all times, the communication of data updates to the CB and the payment of the applicable fees established by ARSO Secretariat and by the CB.

Any objective evidence found that indicates that the applicant has been misusing the ACAP claim shall lead to the exclusion of the applicant from certification for 12 months after evidence of misuse. In addition, the applicant will be listed and the list shall be checked before registration in the database.

During registration applicants give written permission to ARSO Secretariat and the certification bodies to use the registration data for internal processes and sanctioning procedures.

The following information regarding the company (operator group, operator as individual certificate holder or operator member in an operator group) is necessary to include each operator in the ARSO Certification System.

10.2.1 Single operator data

(a) Company/Operator name

(b) Address: street address or information available to describe operator location. This includes Northern/Southern latitude and Eastern/Western longitude or other form of geospatial coordinate information with an accuracy level of +/-10 m.

(c) Postal address

(d) Postal code or zip code

(e) City

(f) State or province

(g) Country

(h) Name of Contact person

(i) Phone number (if available)

(j) E-mail address (if available)

(k) Legal registration by country if requested by National Interpretation Guidelines. This number is only used for internal verification to avoid double registration (e.g., tax number, VAT number, Operator number etc.)

10.2.2 Operator Group data (where certification scheme is applicable to group certification)

(a) Detailed on the group manager (ref to # 10.2.1 – a to k - operator data)

(b) Detail on each operator associated to group (ref to # 10.2.1 – a to h – operator data)

(c) Detail on group of operators: this information is better detailed in the document: ACAP 1-2

10.2.3 Production and production site

(a) Detail on production sites: this information is better detailed in the document: ACAP 1-2

(b) Product information: this information is better detailed in the document: ACAP 1-2

11 Certification bodies licensing

The procedures to be applied for the approval of national and international third-party conformity assessment bodies — certification bodies for delivery of the certification service, in order to guarantee the highest level of transparency and impartiality of the ACAP certification process, are described in ACAP 1-3.

12 Certification process

12.1 Preliminary activities

In order to achieve certification, an operator registered in the ACAP shall perform either a self-audit for single operators or internal audit for a group of operators prior to underging the certification audit by the chosen third-party certification body.

12.1.1 Self-audit and internal audit

(a) **Self-audit:** It is required for ACAP certification schemes with a suffix 1 e.g. A1 and D1. It can be carried out by the same operator and does not have specific requirements related to qualification and independence of the auditor.

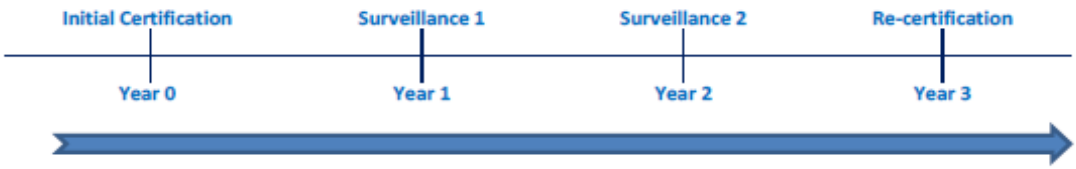
The self-audit must be completed and documented before the initial external certification audit and repeated at least once per year.

(b) **Internal audit:** It is required for ACAP certification schemes with a suffix 2 e.g. A2, D2 and others. It includes the internal audit of the QMS and the evaluation of the requirements of the specific standard. It requires specific qualification and independence of the internal auditors, as specified in the different certification scheme special rules.

The internal audit must be completed before the initial external audit and repeated at least once per year.

12.1.2 Certification Cycle

(a) All ACAP Certification Schemes are based on a 3 years cycle.



(b) All certification audits are announced and dates are agreed between the CB and the operator, within the timeframe allowed by the different certification schemes, unless.

(c) The ACAP Certification process starts when the ACAP approved CB is contacted by an operator willing to apply for ACAP certification. The process can be summarized in the following principal steps:

12.2 Application for ACAP certification

The application shall be made on a special form prepared by the CB and shall cover products from one production unit (ex: farm, factory) only.

This is a formal document that includes, as a minimum, the following information:

(a) Identification of the applicant: legal entity, address, contacts.

(b) Specification of the products scope of certification and the production processes

(c) Information on the production site and activities: site address, surface, number of full time and seasonal employees.

More detail is already provided in # 9 of the present document with regard to Registration.

12.3 Preliminary evaluation of application and approval by the certification body

An expression of interest shall be completed by the operator, and returned to the CB. This provides preliminary information on the operator and its capability to control the quality and continuing conformance of his products to the requirements of the relevant standards.

(a) It requests information concerning the operator's organization.

(b) It asks for specific details of the procedures/documentation that are used to control the quality system.

(c) It requires information on the organization of the operator. The expression of interest template shall be specifically developed by the CB according to specific certification schemes requirements, as described in ACAP 1-2.

12.4 Contract between Operator and CB

(a) **Certification Agreement**: The certification body shall have a legally enforceable agreement for the provision of certification activities to its clients. Certification agreements shall take into account the responsibilities and obligations of the certification body and operators. The certification agreement will specify the cost of certification for the 3 years cycle.

(b) **ACAP sub-licence Agreement**: This is a standard ARSO document, to be used between the CB and the operator and includes specific commitment to ARSO rules. It shall be signed at the same time as the Certification Body agreement

12.5 Document review and on-site audits

On receipt of the completed, Application Form and Questionnaire, signature of the agreements and payment of the appropriate fee, the Certification Body will confirm to the applicant the date of the document review and on-site audit, according to the rules set by the ACAP.

12.5.1 Documental review

All the documentation required by the Certification Scheme and the specific Standard must be available the day of the audit. This activity can be done on-site or remotely.

12.5.2 On-site announced audits

During these audits, the implementation of the requirements of the standard and internal procedures is checked for compliance. Production activities and Records are verified as evidence of implementation. The possibility for sampling of sites, products and processes is specified in the general rules of the specific Certification Scheme and Standard. The on-site announced audits include:

(a) Initial (First certification) audit,

(b) Surveillance audits

This is carried out to confirm the validity of the certificate, in the subsequent 2 years, within maximum 12 months from the date of the initial Certification, a new Certification must be carried out. Usually, the due date for the planning of the surveillance audit is corresponding to the date of the initial certification audit +1 year, but, according to the cycle of the different products included in the certification and to the seasons, the surveillance audits can be carried out in a timeframe of 5 months (3 months before and 2 months after surveillance due date).

(c) Re-certification audits

At the end of the certification cycle, a new re-certification audit is carried out. In this audit, the documentation review is carried out together with the re-certification audit. The re-certification due date shall be set in a timeframe from 4 to 2 months before the expiring date of the certificate. In case of different need, related to technical or seasonality variations, the re-certification audit can be moved up to 2 months after expiring of the certificate. In this case an extension of the validity shall be communicated to ARSO for approval and a new contract between the CB and the operator/operators group manager shall be signed before extension. When extension is completed, no change of CB is possible for the new certification cycle.

	Activity	Description	Apply for schemes	Frequency
1	Internal audit	Self-audit	Schemes A1 & D1,	Minimum annual
		Internal Audit and evaluation	Schemes A2, D2, B, C, E, F, G, H, J, K , L	Minimum annual
2	External audit evaluation (Initial Certification)	Document Review /Initial Visit	All Schemes	Once at initial certification
		Initial on-site evaluation	All Schemes	Once at initial certification
3	External Periodical Surveillance	On-site evaluation	All schemes	1st and 2n year of certification cycle. Annual
4	External Re-certification	On-site evaluation	All schemes	Once every 3 years

(d) Follow Up audits (where applicable, this audit can also be based on documentation review). The follow up audit is planned to verify the management of non-conformities raised during the previous audit and the corrective action implemented by the operator.

12.5.3 Extra-ordinary unannounced audits

Extraordinary unannounced audits can be planned in case of documented evidence, from the CB or other external parties, on possible situations of the certified operator that may have an impact on the certified status of the product. The Extraordinary audits may be authorized by the ARSO secretariat on case-by-case bases.

12.5.4 Audit timing

The time for planning the audit can have a critical impact effective for the effectiveness of the certification activity. It is related to the kind of product and industry in the scope of certification. Audit timing rules are specific for each certification scheme and are described in ACAP 1-2.

12.6 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

As an output form the audit activity, some deviations can be identified on compliance to specific requirements of the ACAP certification scheme and standard to be classified as “non-conformances”. Other types of non-compliances or deviations can be highlighted for continual improvement but without having an immediate impact on the final evaluation for certification

The level of non-conformity assigned by an auditor against a requirement of the Standard is an objective judgement with respect to severity and risk and is based on evidence collected and observations made during the audit.

12.6.1 Major non-conformance

There is a substantial failure to meet the requirements of any clause of the ARSO Standard or with the Operator's own internal procedures. The situation is identified which would, on the basis of available objective evidence, raise significant doubt as to the conformity of the certified product.

This kind of deviation results with the stop of the certification process and require for the operator to analyse the causes of the non-conformity, prepare a corrective actions action plan and implement corrective actions. Corrective actions need to be completed and verified and approved by the CB within the following timeframe:

12.6.1.1 Initial (First certification) audit

Document Review (where applicable): before initial on-site audit
On-site evaluation: within 90 days from the last day of the audit.

The exceeding of the 90 days without closing all Major NC raised during the initial audit (both documentation and on-site) will lead to the full repetition of the audits.

12.6.1.2 Surveillance and re-certification audits

On-site annual evaluation: 28 days from the last day of audit. Depending on the severity of the non-conformity, with respect to safety and legality of the product, the time can be reduced down to 0 days and lead to immediate suspension of the certificate.

The exceeding of the given time without closing all Major NC raised during the surveillance audit will lead to the full repetition of the audit.

12.6.2 Minor non-conformance

Where a clause has not been fully met but, on the basis of objective evidence, the conformity of the product is not in doubt.

A Minor non-conformance is allocated for an individual failure to meet the requirements of any clause of the African Standard or with the operator's own internal procedures, or if a series of minor but related discrepancies are observed, which together are judged to be acceptable, without constituting an overall failure in the area concerned.

This kind of deviation requires the operator to prepare a corrective actions action plan and implement corrective actions. Corrective actions need to be completed and verified and approved by the CB within the following timeframe:

(a) **Initial (First certification) audit.**

Document Review (where applicable): before initial on-site audit.

On-site evaluation: within 90 days from the last day of the audit.

The exceeding of the 90 days without closing all Minor NC raised during the initial audit (both documentation and on-site) will lead to the full repetition of the audit. Some tolerance about the closing of Minor NCs can be found for the different ACAP Certification Schemes and is specified in ACAP 1-2.

(b) Surveillance and re-certification audits

On-site annual evaluation: 28 days from the last day of audit.

The exceeding of the 28 days without closing all Minor NC raised during the initial audit (both documentation and on-site) will lead to the full repetition of the audit. Some tolerance about the closing of Minor NCs can be found for the different ACAP Certification Schemes and is specified in ACAP 1-2.

12.6.3 Observation

One or more partial deviations to fulfil requirements of the following types:

(a) Formalities / documentary: In the interpretation of a requirement of the Standard and / or in the formalization of records

(b) Operational: in the application of the requirements of the Standard and / or the documentation of the system;

(c) these should not, however, raise doubts about the real effectiveness of the system (the ability of the system to provide a product in compliance with the Control Points and relate Compliance Criteria) and will not have any influence on the proceeding of the certification process.

12.7 Follow up audit

In case of non-conformities raised during the certification activities, the operator will receive a given time for implementation of corrective actions. The time allowed for closure changes according to the Scheme of certification.

The follow up audit is planned to verify the management of non-conformities raised during the previous audit and the corrective action implemented by the operator.

Corrective actions can be evaluated on-site, by a physical audit, or in remotely by a desk audit of documentation evidences sent by the operator to the Auditor. The decision on how to carry out the follow up depends on the kind on NC raised, the number of Major NCs and also the possibility to effectively assess the corrective action remotely.

12.8 Release of a final report

After all the auditing activities have been completed and results from subsequent evaluation activities received, the auditor prepares a final report that shall include:

(a) Date of the audit and start and end time

(b) Audit team details

(c) Scope of the audit (certification scheme, standard, products, company and production site description)

(d) Short summary of activities carried out during the audit and products/processes audited

(e) List of findings, description and timeframe for corrective actions and final approval of the auditor.

(f) Declaration of confidentiality

(g) Other items specific for the certification scheme and specified in ACAP 1-2

The evidence of acceptance of the report contents by the applicant operator shall be available.

12.9 Technical review by the CB’s Certification Committee

All the documentation related to the application, including the complete final report and the certificate of analysis or inspection report of the products is verified and approved by the ARSO approved CB certification committee, before final approval of the certificate.

The CB has 30 days, after audit or follow up is completed, to complete the approval and release of the certificate and license for the use of the ACAP Mark.

12.10 Maintenance of the ACAP Certificate and ACAP Mark License

12.10.1 Periodical Surveillance audit

Rules for maintenance of the license are established by the Scheme of certification selected.

(a) Sampling of sites, products and processes

(b) Sampling of requirements to be audited during surveillance audits

(c) Time interval between audits

(d) Duration of the audits

12.11 Renewal of the ACAP Mark license

The ACAP Mark license has a validity of three years but it is reconfirmed according to results of the annual surveillance activities and subsequent recertification.

13 Qualification requirements of the Audit Teams and Evaluation Activities

13.1 Audit team

The Audit team shall be qualified for the specific certification scheme and product scope. General rules for the qualification of the audit team are specified in ACAP 1-3.

13.2 Evaluation Activities (Testing or Inspection)

(a) The laboratory or inspection activities used for testing or inspection of the products shall be accredited by Accreditation Bodies covered by AFRAC MRA.

(b) The CB shall be required to obtain test /inspection results from accredited laboratories / inspection bodies covered under the AFRAC MRA to the appropriate scope of testing / inspection.

(c) The laboratory / inspection body can be selected by both the CB and/or the operator.

14 Sampling and testing / inspection of products (where applicable)

14.1 Sampling and testing/inspection

Sampling is carried out by one of the CB’s qualified resources and analysed by an accredited laboratory / inspection body or can be carried out by a qualified person from the laboratory or inspection body, based an agreement between laboratory / inspection body and CB.

The methodology to be applied for sampling and testing / inspection is specified among the requirements of the different Certification Schemes and Standards. As a minimum the following criteria shall be included:

(a) quantity of sample

(b) moment and location of sampling

(c) criteria to be applied for sampling

(d) traceability of samples

(e) transportation, storage of samples

(f) sampling report contents

(g) parameters to be tested / inspected

(h) methods to be used for testing / inspectoion

(i) reporting criteria.

15 Sanctioning

A valid ACAP Certificate and ACAP Marks licenses can be sanctioned according to deviations detected by the CB during certification audits but, also, as a consequence of unsatisfactory result from testing / inspecton or complaint coming from other parties. According to the relevance of the deviation, a different level of sanctions may be applied

15.1 Warning

Major or Minor NC s detected during audits, to be closed within given time.

15.2 Suspension

The causes of a Warning are not resolved within given time.

Suspension can be applied for maximum 6 months or since the start of the next production season, in case of seasonal production and NCs that cannot be closed without having the production process in place.

The suspension is notified to the ARSO Secretariat without undue delay and is recorded in the ARSO database and is visible on the ARSO website

No claim on ACAP certification or use of the ACAP Marks can be done during the period of suspension

15.3 Withdrawal and Cancellation

The ACAP Certificate and the ACAP Marks license can be withdrawn by the CB in case:

(a) The causes of a Suspension are not removed within given time

(b) The operator is not able to manage the ACAP Certification anymore

(c) infringement of integrity

(d) Bankruptcy

The withdrawal is notified to the ARSO Secretariat without undue delay and is recorded in the ARSO database and is visible on the ARSO website. No claim on ACAP certification or use of the ACAP Mark can be done after withdrawal of the certification and cancellation of the ACAP Mark license from the ARSO database.

The operator cannot access the ARSO system again for the next 12 months after withdrawal is completed.

16 Complaints and appeal management

Complaints on certified operators shall be first managed, by the operator. The CB shall deal with the complaint when dissatisfied with the response from the operator.

CBs shall have a Complaint Procedure specific for management of the ACAP certified operator's complaint. This procedure shall be made available to all.

The operator shall be required to resolve the non-conformances or other issues raised by the CB. Where an adverse decision is made by the CB , the operator may appeal to the CB in writing, explaining the reasons for the appeal. The CB shall evoke its own appeals procedure in this regard.

If the appeal is not accepted and the non-conformances are not resolved within the permitted period, the CB shall evoke its own procedure and notify ARSO Secretariat.

If the complaints are connected to the organisation's dissatisfaction with the CB's administrative or technical performances and the organisation refuse to accept the decisions taken by the CB, the disputes can be addressed to the ARSO Secretariat using the ARSO Complaints Extranet, available on the ACSP. The ARSO Detailed procedure for conflict resolution can be found in Annex A of the present document.

17 Attestation of conformity: Certificate, ACAP Mark

The use of the ACAP certification marks is developed and provided for in detail in Annex B.

18 Maintenance and improvement of a scheme

18.1 Review of ACAP Certification System

ARSO has planned a process for reviewing the operation of the ACAP certification system, on a periodic basis of 5 years, or when required, in order to confirm its validity and to identify aspects requiring improvement, taking into account:

(a) Changes on applicable legislation

(b) Changes of international accreditation rules

(c) Feedback from stakeholders.

(d) Continual improvement of the certification system

(e) Changes, modification of the objective of the ACAP

(f) Other different reasons

ARSO has implemented a process for making the necessary changes in the ACAP scheme, and for managing the implementation of the changes (transition period) by the certification bodies, clients and, where necessary, other stakeholders.

The review process will follow the same procedure as for approval of new certification schemes and ARS standards.

18.2 Intermediate, minor review of ACAP Certification System

During the period of validity of the actual version of the ACAP certification system, smaller intermediate reviews may be required, to address unexpected needs.

In this case the edition of the ACAP system will not change but a review is considered (example ACAP 1-1:2017 Edition 1.0, after modification Edition 1.01).

Each document will have a specific section were the history of the reviews and the changes applied is recorded.

Annex A
(informative)

Procedure for conflict resolution

A.1 Scope and purpose

A.1.1 This document has been prepared to establish a conflict resolution mechanism within the parties involved in the ACAP. The ARSO conflict resolution procedures espouse procedural fairness and incorporate the following guidelines:

(a) A person or organisation, who is the subject of a complaint or a appeal, should be given adequate notice about the proceedings.

(b) A person making a decision should declare any personal interest they may have in the proceedings.

(c) A person who makes a decision should be unbiased and act in good faith. He/she therefore cannot be one of the parties in the case, or have an interest in the outcome.

(d) Proceedings should be conducted so they are fair to all the parties.

(e) Each party to a proceeding is entitled to ask questions and contradict the evidence of the opposing party.

(f) A decision-maker should take into account relevant considerations and mitigating circumstances, and ignore irrelevant considerations.

NOTE The ARSO conflict resolution procedures are not intended to substitute or override the legal rights of any party to use the appropriate judicial system.

A.1.2 The procedures shall be applied by the Mediation Board to resolve conflicts where an amicable process and the administrative efforts of the ACAP approved CB not able to resolve the conflicts.

A.2 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

A.2.1
appellant
individual or organization filing an appeal

A.2.2
complainant
person or organization filing a complaint

A.2.3
dispute
any dispute falling within the meaning of dispute as set out in Section A.5 read together with section A.6.1 and constitutes the following aspects:

A.2.3.1
appeal
request by a party subject to a decision for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the ACAP approved CB with regard to the ACAP Certification and/or ACAP Accreditation System (adapted from ISO/IEC 17011)

A.2.3.2
(informal) complaint
initial expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization, to ARSO, relating to the activities of the ACAP Certification and/or ACAP Accreditation System (adapted from ISO/IEC 17011)

A.2.3.3
formal complaint
formal expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization, to ARSO, relating to the activities of the ACAP Certification and/or ACAP Accreditation System (adapted from ISO/IEC 17011)

A.3 General

All ACAP parties are encouraged to seek amicable settlement in any dispute, in the spirit of mutual trust and continual improvement that underlies the participatory decision-making process of the ACAP. Failing such an amicable settlement, the ACAP Mediation Board will be the accepted authority to deal with disputes and grievances.

All members of the ACAP are requested to accept the authority of the Mediation Board. This acceptance will be a binding compromise for all members.

The mediation will result in a ruling, settlement of which will be either an obligation to undertake a specific commitment, an obligation to forego specific behaviour or an obligation to alter specific behaviour.

The mediation process shall be based on open access, transparency, and respect for sensitive information, credibility, efficiency and innovative solution-oriented thinking.

The ARSO Secretariat will be responsible for evaluating the performance of the Mediation Board.

A.4 Mediation Board

A.4.1 Establishment of Mediation Board

A Mediation Board is hereby established as an organ of ARSO to mediate conflicts which cannot be settled administratively by the ACAP parties, relating to any of the following:

(a) the interpretation of the objectives of ACAP;

(b) the interpretation of the ACAP’s rules;

(c) failure to abide with the objectives of ACAP;

(d) breaches of ACAP’s rules;

The Mediation Board will settle disputes arising from the interpretation of or failure to respect the ACAP objectives and rules. The Mediation Board will not mediate in any other dispute outside the scope of the ACAP RULE.

A.4.2 Composition of the Mediation Board

The Mediation Board shall constitute three members elected from within the members of the ARSO Executive Board for a term of two years.

A member of the Mediation Board shall serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms of two years each.

A.4.3 Mediation Board Chair

The Executive Board shall appoint the Chairperson of the Mediation Board from amongst the Mediation Board members for a term of two years.

The Chairperson of Mediation Board receives all complaints that cannot be settled administratively by the ARSO Secretariat or the other organs of ACAP, through secretary of the Mediation Board.

A.4.4 Mediation Board Secretary

The Executive Manager shall be the secretary to the Mediation Board. Where the Executive Manager is a party to the dispute, the Executive Board will nominate a member of the Executive Board who is not a member of the Mediation Board to serve as the Secretary of the Mediation Board.

The Secretary will not have a voice or vote in the Mediation Board but will assist with factual information and perform all necessary formalities such as correspondence, depositing the ruling and informing parties concerned of all relevant circumstances.

Upon request by the Mediation Board, the Secretary may also seek advice from external experts such as lawyers and standards professionals to provide expertise on the dispute.

A.5 Mediation Rules

A.5.1 Types of disputes

A.5.1.1 Disputes shall be categorized as follows:

(a) Technical non-compliance disputes.

These are disputes that relate to direct breaches of ACAP rules. These are instances where an ACAP party or is said to be in breach of clearly measurable obligations under ACAP rules.

(b) Non-compliance with principles disputes

These are disputes that relate to the failure to comply with the spirit of the ACAP that is based on good governance and the principle of collective responsibility for the achievement of the ACAP objectives.

A.5.1.2 The Mediation Board is responsible for such

(a) disputes among ACAP organ members

(b) disputes between individual organ members and any of the ACAP organs

(c) disputes among ACAP organs

(d) disputes between the ARSO Secretariat and the other ACAP organs or its members.

A.5.2 Declaration of disputes

All disputes shall be referred to the Mediation Board and shall, for this purpose, be addressed to the secretary to the Mediation Board. Disputes may be referred to the Mediation Board by any of the following:

(a) any member of an ACAP party;

(b) any ACAP party;

(c) the ARSO Secretariat

A.5.3 Mediation of disputes

In all incidences, the ARSO Secretariat is the first party to be informed of a complaint.

The ARSO Secretariat will have 30 calendar days from the date it is first notified of a dispute to try and reach an amicable settlement. A dispute shall only be formally lodged after all settlement efforts by the ARSO Secretariat have been exhausted. In its mediation efforts the ARSO Secretariat may consult as it deems necessary, however, without disclosing the names of the parties.

Once the Secretariat decides that amicable settlement is not possible or the 30 calendar days are elapsed without a formal settlement, the Secretariat will notify the Mediation Board that a dispute has arisen and will provide any written submissions plus all exchanges and other information generated as part of the Secretariat's settlement efforts.

The Secretary of the Mediation Board, upon consultation with the Chairperson, decides on the basis of the documentation provided on the admissibility of any dispute. In case of contestation or doubt, the Chairperson of the Mediation Board will be asked to make the final ruling on the admissibility of the dispute.

If the dispute is admissible, the Secretary shall within a period of 10 working days, forward the claim to the Chairperson of the Mediation Board.

In all incidences, the Chairperson of the Mediation Board will have 45 calendar days from the date of notification to a dispute to try and reach an amicable settlement.

If the Chairperson of the Mediation Board concludes that amicable settlement in a dispute is not achievable, s/he will call in the other members of the Mediation Board.

The three Mediation Board members will decide by majority vote on a ruling, taking into consideration the legal observations of a legal advisor commissioned by the Mediation Board and the factual advice of the Secretary of the Mediation Board.

The Ruling will result either in an obligation to undertake a specific performance, an obligation to forego specific behaviour, an obligation to alter specific behaviour, if such is appropriate according to the mediators, or any combination thereof.

A.5.4 Hearing of non-compliance disputes

The claimant in a dispute will apply for mediation by filing a complaint in writing to the Secretary of the Mediation Board. English and French will be the official languages to be used in the proceedings. Qualified, licensed translators shall translate all documents to other AUC languages on a need basis.

The complaint will contain a factual description of the dispute and a request for a possible solution to the dispute. The Secretary will forward this complaint to the other party, or in case the ARSO Secretariat is party to the dispute, to the Chairperson of the ARSO Executive Board, within 10 working days after having received the complaint.

The Secretary will then forward the complaint to the Chairperson of the Mediation Board, within a period of 10 working days. The Chairperson of the Mediation Board will approach parties for an amicable settlement.

If the Chairperson of the Mediation Board decides that an amicable settlement cannot be achieved, the defending party has 20 calendar days to formulate and submit a written reply and defence against the complaint. The defence will be forwarded to the Secretary, who will inform the claimant of the defence, no later than 5 working days from the date of receipt.

If the ARSO Secretariat itself is the defending party, such a reply will be the responsibility of the ARSO Executive Board.

The Secretary, after ensuring that all relevant documents and information are available will then set a date and time for the Mediation Board meeting. The Board will meet at the premises of the ARSO Secretariat. Parties may be present in person or can have themselves represented. In case one of the parties or both are not present nor represented at the actual session, the verdict may be given based on written information as presented by the parties.

The Mediation Board may decide that there is need for a second session in case further information has to be provided either by one of the parties or the Secretary or by third persons.

Witnesses may be requested to testify. Stakeholders may report their views if assessed as appropriate by the Board.

The Mediation Board members will decide by consensus upon the Ruling, taking into consideration the legal observations of an assisting lawyer and the factual advice of the Secretary to the Mediation Board. Simple majority voting will only be done if consensus becomes elusive.

A.6 Findings

The Mediation Board may call for evidence as its members, or a legal advisor commissioned by the Mediation Board, consider necessary and the parties shall be obliged to provide it.

Refusal to provide the requested evidence shall lead to a ruling in favour of the other party to the dispute. All evidence will be shared with all the parties to a dispute.

If the Mediation Board considers any evidence inadequate or doubtful, or any of the parties to the dispute contests the truthfulness of any evidence, a legal counsel commissioned by the Mediation Board will provide a binding opinion on whether to accept or reject the evidence.

A.7 Decisions of the Mediation Board

The Mediation Board will give a Ruling within four weeks after completion of the hearing of the dispute. The Mediation Board’s ruling shall be final and shall not be subject to any appeal.

Once the Mediation Board has completed its work, each case will eventually result in a final report to the ARSO Executive Board that has to balance transparency with confidentiality.

A.8 Non-compliance and exclusion

In case of non-compliance with an ACAP Rule within a period of 3 months, the ARSO Executive Board may exclude the party in default from further membership in the ACAP independently of other possible legal action.

If a member conflicts with the ACAP objectives or is ignoring its duties as a member of the ACAP, the Mediation Board may recommend exclusion from the ACAP.

A member of one of the ACAP parties who is facing exclusion shall receive a written warning by the Executive Board before being excluded from ACAP.

The exclusion takes effect if the member does not demonstrate compliance with all duties and responsibilities as listed in the Mediation Board's recommendation and the warning in a given time frame.

The Executive Board through the ARSO Secretariat will inform the member of its exclusion in a written document latest 10 working days after the decision. The exclusion takes effect with the submission of the written document.

The member may refuse the exclusion in a written manner 10 days after having received the document. If so, the Executive Board will decide on a case-by-case basis in its next meeting. At least two thirds of the Executive Board has to confirm the exclusion of the respective member.

Annex B
(Normative)

Use of ACAP Marks (ARSO Mark and ECO Mark Africa)

B.1 Forewords

ARSO, is the owner of the ACAP which leads to the licensing for use of the ACAP Marks being the ARSO Mark and African Eco-labelling Mark (ECO Mark Africa) which are third-party marks of conformity, and is responsible for protecting the marks legally against unauthorized use.

ARSO is the owner of all the marks including the ARSO Mark and the ECO Mark Africa, prepared by ARSO in relation to the specific ACAP Schemes.

B.2 General requirements

In order to guarantee the correct use and management of the ARSO Mark and ECO Mark, the ARSO Secretariat has established:

(a) rules for governing the use of the third-party mark of conformity

(b) measures to minimize misunderstandings and lack of clarity regarding the third-party mark of conformity that could lead to a reduction in its effectiveness,

(c) rules to ensure that the third-party mark of conformity and any accompanying information are not misleading and take action against their use in a misleading way,

(d) measures to protect and monitor the use of the third-party mark of conformity,

(e) actions to resolve misuses of the third-party mark of conformity, including withdrawal of the mark or appropriate legal action

(f) Action on and keep a record of all complaints relating to the use of the third-party mark of conformity.

B.3 ARSO Sublicense Binding Agreement

The ACAP Operator sub-licence Agreement, signed between the operators willing to certify according to one ACAP standard and to use the ARSO Mark or ECO Mark, includes rules on the use of the Marks and clear acceptance of the rules in this Annex

This standard Contract is the first step to enter the ACAP and it is mandatory to be signed with the Certification Body before starting the certification process. It includes commitment of the operator to comply with the ACAP rules.

The sub-licence agreement contains provisions to assure that the licensee follows the rules for the use of the ARSO Mark or ECO Mark, according to the present document.

A breach of the agreement may result into the withdrawal of the ACAP certificate and licence for the use of Mark.

B.4 Design of the third-party ACAP Marks of conformity

The ARSO Mark and ECO Marks are designed in order to identify the main issuer of the mark and the aspects covered by the mark.

Because a third-party mark of conformity shall be traceable back to the specified requirements to which the object of conformity assessment conforms, they are graphically composed by merging the main original mark, with a specific indication/symbol identifying the scope of certified for the product:

(a) Crops Certification

(b) Livestock Certification

(c) Fish from Aquaculture Certification

(d) Food Processing Industry Product certification

(e) Certified Product traceability along the supply chain

(f) Fish from wild catch

(g) Wild Medical plants from sustainable harvested.

The third-party ARSO marks of conformity have been designed as to minimize the risk of counterfeiting or confusing with other forms and to avoid incidental or volunteer misuse.

B.5 Information on the ARSO Marks

More detailed information about the meaning; the use and identification of the ARSO Marks are providing, on request. Specific responses to questions or concerns from interested parties regarding the third party mark of conformity shall be provided.

The updated list of ACAP and ECO standards and Scopes of Certification (objects of conformity assessment) included in the ARSO third-party mark of conformity are listed in the ACAP Approved Standards List, that is updated by ARSO and available on the ARSO website.

B.6 ARSO Marks Licence

Once the operator has completed the certification process, he/she will receive a formal licence for the use of the ARSO Mark on the product, and any documentation and communication related to the certified product.

The licenced operator shall:

(a) Keep under control the use of the ARSO third-party mark of conformity,

(b) Implement effective and timing corrective actions in case of non-conformity,

(c) Keep records of complaints relating to the use of the ARSO mark of conformity and make these available to ARSO.

(d) Monitor the use of The ARSO marks of conformity

B.7 Use of the mark

(a) The ACAP third-party marks of conformity can be used only after completing a product conformity assessment and the release of the related ARSO certificate of conformity.

(b) The ARSO mark shall be applied directly on each product, or, where not possible, applied on the package of each smallest Traceable or Consumer Unit.

(c) Exception to rule in (b) is where the physical size of the product does not permit direct labelling or when the application is not appropriate for the type of product. In this case the ARSO mark can be used on the accompanying documentation clearly linked to the product.

(d) If the ARSO mark of conformity only relates to certain parts of a product, the operator shall clearly specify on the label and on documentation related to the product, what part/ ingredient of the product is ARSO certified and use the Mark related to the certified part/ ingredient.

(e) The ARSO Certification Mark shall be used on the product without distortion of the configuration of the mark and in a proportion that may be found visible and suitable for affixation on the product.

(f) A reference to the ARSO mark of conformity may also be used on documents, promotional material, etc.

(g) Only Operators that have been certified according to an ACAP certification scheme and Standard and received a form licence for the use of the ARSO mark related to the scope of certification can use the ARSO mark on the product, on the product documentation or on any other communication materials.

(h) The use of the ARSO mark along the certified product supply chain till the final point of sales to the consumers is possible only if all the companies involved in the supply chain are ACAP certified.

(i) Specific detail on documentation of the ARSO Marks management can be found in the special rules related to the certification schemes.

B.8 Sanctions applied to use of the Mark

(a) The confirmed incorrect or misleading use of the ARSO mark or of the ARSO conformity claim will lead to immediate actions and will be managed by ARSO according to provisions explained on Chapter 15 of the present document.

(b) According to the severity of the misuse done, if the sanction applied is a Suspension or a Withdrawal of the licence, the sanction will be published on the ARSO website.

(c) Legal actions can be considered in case of demonstrated serious damage affecting the all ARSO integrity and reputation. This clause also applies in situations of misuse by a party not under contract with ARSO or approved ACAP CB for the use of the ARSO mark of conformity.

(d) The sanctioned Party has to establish a corrective action plan in respect of each misuse of the ARSO mark of conformity.

B.9 Surveillance

The ARSO Secretariat will, as deemed necessary, exercise surveillance on products in respect of which the use of the ARSO Mark has been granted.

B.10 Fees

The fees to be charged for the use of the ARSO Mark shall be as provided in the ARSO Fees specific document, in the most updated version.

ARSO CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

ACAP 1-2

Third Edition 2025

Conformity assessment — Part 2: Specific requirements for the ACAP certification Schemes

Reference No. ACAP 1-2:2025(E)
ICS 03.200/97.220.10

Table of contents

Foreword

The African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) is an African Intergovernmental organization made of Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU). One of the fundamental mandates of ARSO is the establishment of a conformity assessment system to promote the quality of African goods and services as a means of facilitating intra-African trade as well as accessing global markets.

The ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) is supported by a coherent set of documents which are developed under the auspices of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO CACO) which comprises experts from Member States. Member States participate in the committee on a voluntary basis and the documents developed follow the principles and procedures for the for harmonisation of African Standards and other deliverables (SHP-01) with the exception of the stages and voting thresholds. Being conformity assessment instruments, ACAP documents are subject to dynamic adaptations which must timeously respond to changes in the conformity assessment fields.

ACAP documents will be revised on a flexible basis to fit in with changes in global conformity assessment systems.

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Introduction

This document describes the framework and structure of the African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP).

This framework shall be used in combination with requirements in ACAP 1-1 that define the general rules that apply for ACAP.

The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions which are mandatory for the different certification schemes.

Conformity assessment — Part 2: Specific requirements for the ACAP certification Scheme

1 Scope

More specific rules for certification schemes implementation and design of African Standards are specified in this normative document.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

2.1 Standards

SHP-01, principles and procedures for the for harmonisation of African Standards and other deliverables

IAF MD 25[1], *Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes*

IAF PL 3, *Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17007, *Conformity assessment — Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment*

ISO /IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirement*

ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*

ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*

2.2 ACAP Normative Documents

ACAP 1-1, *Conformity assessment — Part 1: General requirements for the certification systems*

ACAP 1-3, *Conformity assessment — Part 3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies*

ACAP 2, *Sustainable agriculture — Assessment and certification*

ACAP 3, *Sustainable capture fisheries — Assessment and certification*

ACAP 4, *Cosmetology and wellness certification framework*

[1] IAF MD 25:2023 Issue 1 Version 2, *Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes issued 13-06-2023*

ACAP 5-1, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-1: General requirements*

ACAP 5-2, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-2: Good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-3, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-3: Good agricultural practices (GAP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-4, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-4: Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

ACAP 5-5, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-5: Minimum requirements for registration of traditional medicines*

3 Terms and definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this document the terms and definitions in ACAP 1-1 apply.

3.2 For purposes of this document, the abbreviations in ACAP 1-1 apply.

4 The ARSO certification schemes

Certification schemes in ACAP use defined rules, procedures and management, which are unique to the scheme while others define certification systems applicable to a number of schemes. The general structure of ACAP certification schemes is as described below and their details are given in Annex A to Annex L.

ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP): Certification Schemes

Scheme name	*Subject area*	*Scheme scope/Sub-scheme*	*Standards applicable*
ACAP Certification Scheme A: Primary production (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)	Agricultural Crops	ACAP Certification Scheme A1: Single Farmers	ARS 461 ARS 886 ARS 1100 ARS 1101 ARS 1102 ARS 1103 ARS 1104 ARS 1105 ARS 1106 ARS 1107 ARS 1108 ARS 1109 ARS 1401 ARS 1403 ARS 1419
	Livestock and dairy		
	Aquaculture		
	Apiculture		
	Agricultural crops	ACAP Certification Scheme A2: Groups of Farmers	
	Livestock and dairy		
	Aquaculture		
	Apiculture		
ACAP Certification Scheme B: Food processing	Processing and handling/ packing of food and fresh produce		ARSO approved certification standards for food handling and processing
ACAP Certification Scheme C: Chain of custody	Traceability of ACAP certified products in the food supply chain		ARSO approved certification standard for chain of custody
ACAP Certification Scheme D: Sustainability and eco-labelling	ACAP Certification Scheme D1: Single legal entity		ARS/AES 1 ARS/AES 2 ARS/AES 3 ARS/AES 5 ARS/AES 6
	ACAP Certification Scheme D2: Groups or multisite operation		

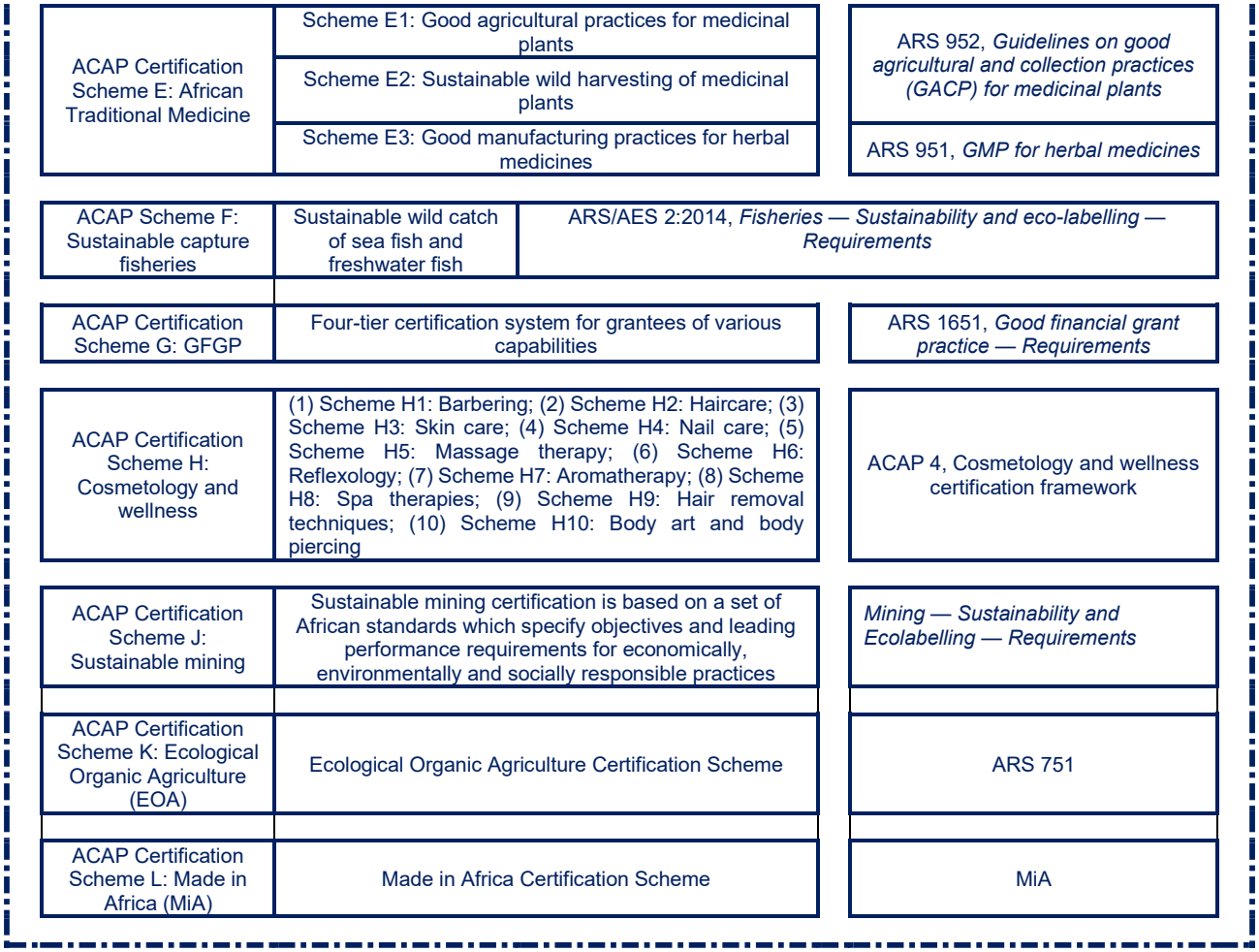


Figure 2 — African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP) Certification Schemes

5 Basic requirements for standards in ACAP certification schemes

In order to meet the objective of ACAP, the transparency, robustness and consistency of the certification process and the related schemes of certification is a critical factor to be taken into consideration.

A product certification scheme is composed by a set of rules, procedures and management for carrying out certification, related to specified products, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply.

A product certification scheme may use defined rules, procedures and management, which could be unique to the scheme or could be defined in a product certification system applicable to a number of schemes. It is always necessary to have a product certification scheme, but only necessary to separately define a product certification system if the same rules, procedures and management are to be used for more than one scheme. This is the case of the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme, where more certification schemes are included and more African Standards are linked to the same certification scheme.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between product certification system, product certification schemes and African Standards.

5.1 Scheme A: Primary production (crops, livestock, aquaculture)

The scope of this certification scheme is to provide criteria for the design of Product Certification Standards to be used for Auditing of compliance and certification in the primary production sector. The standards can include

(a) Crops production including medicinal plants — example: fruit and vegetables for fresh or industrial use; industrial crops such grains, pulses, coffee, tea, cocoa, *Aloe vera*, Artemisia, etc. Where applicable, also on-farm postharvest activities are included.

(b) Livestock farming — example: cattle, pigs, poultry, milk production, eggs production, etc. Where applicable, slaughtering and on-farm product handling activities are included

(c) Fish farming — example: finfish, crustaceans, molluscs from aquaculture sources. Where applicable, slaughtering and on-farm product handling activities are included

(d) Bee farming: good practices in apiculture

5.1.1 Scheme A1: Primary production for single farmers

This certification scheme is applicable to Single Farmers willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme A.

The main certification criteria are related to quality, safety and legality of the products to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of production processes

(ii) Auditing of implementation of good agricultural and hygiene practices.

(iii) Testing of products,

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme A.

5.1.2 Scheme A2: Primary production for group of farmers

This certification scheme is applicable to groups of small farmers willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme A and managed by a centralized QMS, where the QMS owner is also the owner of the certificate.

The main certification criteria are related to quality, safety and legality of the products to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of QMS implementation

(ii) Auditing of production process

(iii) Auditing of implementation of good agricultural and hygiene practices

(iv) Testing of products

The implementation of a QMS at group level allows sampling while giving confidence on the general level of compliance of the all group.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme A and integrates the general rules for Scheme A1 with regard to the management of certification for groups of farmers and implementation of the QMS.

Annex A provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.2 Scheme B: Processing of food

This certification scheme is applicable to food processing companies and fresh primary products handling units (eg. Fruit and vegetables pack houses, milk collection plants, fresh meat preparation and storage, etc.), willing to certify their products according to criteria related to established criteria of quality safety and legality.

The standards included in this scheme of certification have a strong focus on the quality, safety and legality of the products by mean of implementation of a Food Safety Management System (FSMS).

Where appropriate, sampling and testing activities to check measurable parameters are used for compliance.

The main certification criteria are related to quality, safety and legality of the products to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of FSMS implementation

(ii) Auditing of production process,

(iii) Auditing of implementation of HACCP plan,

(iv) Auditing of pre-requisite programs.

(v) Testing of products

Annex B provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.3 Scheme C: Chain of custody

This certification scheme applies for any party seeking certification for ARSO chain of custody standard.

The ARSO chain of custody standard is designed to assure the identity and quality of the ARSO certified products along the supply chain, by implementing segregation and traceability.

It is linked to the African Standard applied for certification of the traced product.

It is applicable to all companies in the supply chain (ex: processing, packaging, logistics, brokers, etc.) willing to identify their products with the ARSO Mark.

In order to be able to transfer the ARSO certification claim along the supply chain, all steps where the certified product is processed, packed, labelled, stored and distributed need to be ARSO certified.

The Auditing of compliance for this scheme involves the auditing of the traceability and segregation system implemented by the company. Periodical sampling and testing of the product (on-site or from the point of sales) to check that the products fulfil the specified requirements specified by the original ARSO standard of certification may be applied according to the product and step of the chain.

The main certification criteria are related to traceability and identity confirmation of the products to be verified by:

(i) traceability

(ii) segregation

(iii) labelling

(iv) Testing of products (when appropriate)

Annex C provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.4 Scheme D: Sustainability and eco-labelling

This certification Scheme applies for any party seeking certification of the requirements for the sustainable production, processing and trading of agricultural products, including wild harvesting and wild catch, food, beverages and non-food products. The standard applies to all production, processing and trading within the ACAP field of application.

The standard is based on the main principles of sustainability and can be certified alone or, when available, in combination with the ARSO product certification standard applicable for the production in the scope. The principles included in the Sustainability Standards are listed below.

According to the kind of production activity carried out by the Company, some principles may not be applicable.

African Standards suitable for sustainability and eco-labelling include:

(1) ARS/AES 1. *Agriculture — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

(2) ARS/AES 2, *Fisheries — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

(3) ARS/AES 3, *Forestry — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

(4) ARS/AES 5, *Aquaculture — African Catfish — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

(5) ARS/AES 6, *Aquaculture — Tilapia — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

(6) ARS 952, *African Traditional Medicine — Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*

(7) ARS 1000-1, *Sustainable cocoa — Part 1: Requirements for Cocoa Farmer as Entity/Farmer Group/Cooperative Management System and Performance*

(8) ARS 1000-2, *Sustainable cocoa — Part 2: Requirements for Cocoa Quality and Traceability*

(9) ARS 1000-3, *Sustainable cocoa — Part 3: Requirements for Cocoa Certification Scheme*

(10) ARS 1100, *Production and handling of food crops — Good agricultural practices*

(11) ARS 1101, *Production and handling of maize (corn) grains — Good agricultural practices*

(12) ARS 1102, *Production and handling of rice — Good agricultural practices*

(13) ARS 1103, *Production and handling of cassava — Good agricultural practices*

(14) ARS 1104, *Dairy production farms — Good agricultural practices*

(15) ARS 1105, *Poultry production farms — Good agricultural practices*

(16) ARS 1106, *Tilapia production aquaculture farms — Good aquaculture practices*

(17) ARS 1107, *Freshwater aquatic animal production farms — Good aquaculture practices*

(18) ARS 1108, *Beef cattle production farms — Good agricultural practices*

(19) ARS 1109, *Production and handling of fruits and vegetables — Good agricultural practices*

5.4.1 Scheme D1: Single site farms/companies

This certification scheme is applicable to Single site Farms/Companies, willing to certify their products according to the ARSO standards included in Scheme D.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the sustainability criteria applied to the production process of products to be verified by auditing of implementation of sustainable practices.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme D.

5.4.2 Scheme D2: Group of farmers or multisite production operations

This certification scheme is applicable to group of Farmers or multisite production operations willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme D and managed by a centralized QMS, where the QMS owner is also the owner of the certificate.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the sustainability criteria applied to the production process of products to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of implementation of sustainable practices.

(ii) Auditing of QMS implementation

The implementation of a QMS at group or multisite level, allows sampling while giving confidence on the general level of compliance of the all group.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme D and integrates the general rules for scheme D2 with regard to the management of certification for groups of farmers or multisite and implementation of the QMS.

Annex D provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.5 Scheme E: African traditional medicine

The scope of this certification scheme is to provide criteria for the design of Product Certification Standards to be used for auditing of compliance and certification in the sector of the African traditional medicine. The Standards included in this certification scheme have a strong focus on the product characteristics, the sustainable good practices involved for harvest of wild botanical species to be used for traditional medicine and the sustainable wild plant harvesting.

The standards includes the requirements for sustainable harvest of wild botanical species used in African traditional medicine

The cultivation of crops to be used for African traditional medicine, is included in certification schemes A1 and A2, for crops. The special rules applicable for Schemes A1 and A2 are applicable.

Where applicable, also on-farm post-harvest activities are included.

Annex E provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.6 Scheme F: Sustainable capture fisheries

This certification scheme is applicable to wild catch of fish and other sea water/ fresh water species. It can be operate by single fishery units of by a fishery fleet willing to certify their products according to the African Standards included in African Conformity Assessment Programme.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the sustainability criteria applied to the production process of products to be verified by:

— Auditing on of implementation of sustainable fishery practices.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme F.

Annex F provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.7 Scheme G: Good financial grant practice certification

The objective of this standard for Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) is to standardize, simplify and strengthen the financial governance of grant funding. For grantors, they can use the standard as a minimum requirement to their grantees. For grantees, they can claim compliance with this standard to support applications for grants from grantors. This standard is to establish a consistent approach to the management of grants throughout the grant life cycle, for the benefit of grantors and grantees.
Operating in compliance to the standard should:

(a) reduce the cost and administration time for both grantors and grantees;

(b) reduce the multitude of audits and financial evaluations that grantees have from different grantors;

(c) increase the confidence of grantors to fund directly to grantees;

(d) reduce the risk of corruption, bribery and fraud; and

(e) enable targeted financial capacity building by grantors

This standard is designed to codify and provide requirements on established good practice. It is a quality standard and not an accounting standard. The GFGP standard provides a common framework for how grantees shall financially manage grants. It provides details of the requirements, specifications and criteria to be applied, to implement good financial grant practice.

Grantors and grantees are very diverse in nature, and range from:

(a) very large to very small;

(b) straightforward to very complex;

(c) short to longer term in nature;

(d) operating in safe to risky environments;

(e) having different levels of risk they are willing to accept;

(f) government to private foundations and individual entities;

(g) national to regional to international in nature; and

(h) mature to new and emerging.

The standard is designed to be inclusive of all the above by having four tiers from bronze to platinum. Table 1 is illustrative only and gives some indication of the types of organizations that might fit into each tier.

The tiers are cumulative from bronze through to platinum. Therefore, for an organization to achieve silver compliance, it will be required to comply with all of the requirements within the bronze and silver tiers. For an organization to achieve gold compliance, the organization will be required to comply with all of the requirements within the bronze, silver and gold tiers. To achieve platinum compliance, the organization will be required to comply with all of the requirements in this standard.

The four tiers have been designed to encourage grantees to progressively strengthen their financial grant practices as their organization develops.

The four tiers also enable grantors to manage their exposure to risk as some grantors may choose to specify grantees comply with a certain tier, or parts of a tier, depending on the size or nature of the grants that they manage and are responsible for. Grantors may, after an aaudit, decide to award the grant, even if the grantee does not meet their requirements and may mitigate their risk by putting in place additional financial controls, or provide capacity strengthening funding to bring the grantee up to the required level.

This standard addresses the principles of good financial grant practice, which are:

(i) accountability;
(ii) stewardship;
(iii) compliance to standards;
(iv) transparency;
(v) viability;
(vi) integrity;
(vii) consistency and
(viii) efficiency and effectiveness

Table 1 — Organization activity indicative of GFGP tiers

Tier	Description – the organization is likely to:
Bronze	— only operates within a region in a Country be a sub-grantee of a gold level organization carrying out part of their grant activity; and/or — have few programmes and grantors.
Silver	— operate either regionally or over a number of regions within a country; — have more than a few programmes and/or complex programmes; — be a sub-grantee of a gold level organization carrying out part of their grant activity; and/or — be a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).
Gold	— be large with multiple complex programmes or with more complex programmes in which they are both grantees and grantors (i.e., manage sub-grants); — manage activities across international boundaries, receive funding from a variety of grantors and often sell services to raise more funding; and/or — be an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO), national NGO, research institution or university.
Platinum	— have a mission that requires longer term financial sustainability; and/or — be an INGO, NGO, established research institution, university, charity with the expectation of long term income (i.e., funding that covers a significant portion of its operational costs) that is regularly renewed by the same grantor or has its own income or investments.

In turn, these principles are supported by four key pillars of good financial management, which, if correctly applied, will provide the evidence to support compliance with good financial grant practice. These are:

(i) Internal controls

(ii) Record keeping

(iii) Planning

(iv) Monitoring

Further detail on both the principles of good financial grant practice and four key pillars of good financial management can be found in ARS 1651, *Good financial grant practice — Requirements*.

Annex G provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.8 Scheme H: Cosmetology and wellness

Certification Scheme H on cosmetology and wellness is detailed in ACAP 4, *Cosmetology and Wellness — Certification Framework*. This framework document provides guidance for the certification of facilities which provide cosmetology and wellness services and products including the following sub-schemes:

(a) Scheme H1: Barbering

(b) Scheme H2: Haircare

(c) Scheme H3: Skin care

(d) Scheme H4: Nail care

(e) Scheme H5: Massage therapies

(f) Scheme H6: Reflexology

(g) Scheme H7: Aromatherapy

(h) Scheme H8: Spa therapies

(i) Scheme H9: Hair removal techniques

(j) Scheme H10: Body art and body piercing

The framework document provides the essential requirements which should be considered in certifying facilities for cosmetology and wellness services and products as listed.

Annex H provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.9 Scheme J: Sustainable mining certification

Sustainable mining certification is based on a set of African standards which specify objectives and leading performance requirements for economically, environmentally and socially responsible practices. Scheme J serves as the basis of a voluntary system offering independent third-party audit and certification of economic, environmental and social performance measures at industrial-scale mine sites.

The expected impacts are:

(1) Promote a common vision of sustainability in the mining industry in Africa.

(2) Facilitate the implementation of a voluntary sustainable mining management scheme.

(3) Facilitate the integration of mining sustainability concepts in existing and future legislation in African countries.

(4) Improve trust relationship among all the stakeholders

(5) Improve the social acceptance of mining activities.

(6) Contribute to economic and social development of local communities.

(7) Improve the efficient use of natural resources.

(8) Improve restoration and rehabilitation of natural areas affected by mining activities.

(9) Promote the use of best available techniques.

(10) Contribute to the streamlining of permitting procedures.

(11) Help to formalize the set of data to be provided to the authorities for statistical or other regulatory purposes

The sustainable mining certification is based on the sustainability principles and criteria with the following broad objectives:

5.9.1 Institutional and positive legacy framework

(a) Policy and legal framework for large scale mining (LSM)
(b) Policy and legal framework for artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)
(c) Guidance on governance aspects
(d) Guidance on legal compliance
(e) Environmental and social impact, assessment and management
(f) Environment and social impact monitoring
(g) Protect, respect and remedy framework
(h) Complaints and grievance mechanisms, and access to remedy
(i) Planning and financing reclamation and closure

5.9.2 Economic guidelines

(a) Econometric assessment of mining developments
(b) Revenue, royalty and rent payments transparency
(c) Transparent marketing and fair pricing practices for ASM minerals
(d) Linkage framework for market access by ASM
(e) Local mineral beneficiation and mineral separation requirements
(f) Transparent mineral valuation framework

5.9.3 Social guidelines

(a) Community and stakeholder engagement
(b) Engagement with indigenous people
(c) Fair labour and working conditions
(d) Occupational health and safety
(e) Community health and safety
(f) Emergency preparedness and response
(g) Human rights due diligence and compliance
(h) Mining and conflict-affected or high-risk areas
(i) Security and human rights
(j) Artisanal and small-scale mining
(k) HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria
(l) Obtaining community support and delivering benefits
(m) Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)
(n) Cultural Heritage
(o) Resettlement

5.9.4 Environmental guidelines

(a) Water management
(b) Waste and materials management
(c) Air quality
(d) Noise and vibration
(e) Greenhouse gas emissions
(f) Protected areas
(g) Conservation and protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services
(h) Cyanide management
(i) Mercury management

(j) Environmental impacts of different mining processes
(k) End of life mine reclamation/closure requirements

Sub-Schemes in this category include those under development based on the following African standards:

(i) ARS 1340, *Production of natural stone for building — Sustainability assessment and certification*

(ii) ARS 1343, *Sustainable sand mining — Requirements and assessment guidelines*

Annex J provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.10 Scheme K: Ecological organic agriculture certification

This certification Scheme applies to any party seeking certification of the requirements for Ecological Organic Agriculture products, that includes livestock, Aquaculture, Agro-processing, Agro Forestry and forestry products, Leather and leather products, Textiles and textile products. The EOA applies to all production, processing, and trading within the ACAP field of application.

The EOA certification is based on ARS 751, *Organic products — Code of practice* as the core standard and the other sector-specific African Standards.

5.10.1 Scheme K1: Single site farms/companies

This certification scheme is applicable to Single site Farms/Companies, willing to certify their products according to the ARS standards included in Scheme K.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the relevant African EOA standard applied to the production process of products to be verified by auditing of implementation of the African EOA standard.

5.10.2 Scheme K2: Group of farmers/companies or multisite production operations

This certification scheme is applicable to group of Farmers/companies or multisite production operations willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme L and managed by a centralized Quality Management System (QMS), where the QMS owner is also the owner of the certificate.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the African EOA applied to the production process of products or services to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of implementation of the African EOA standard.

(ii) Auditing of QMS implementation

The implementation of a QMS at group or multisite level, allows sampling while giving confidence on the general level of compliance of the whole group.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African EOA Standards included in Scheme K and integrates the general rules for scheme K2 about the management of certification for groups of farmers or multisite and implementation of the QMS.

Annex K provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

5.11 Scheme L: Made in Africa certification

This certification Scheme applies to any party seeking certification of the requirements for the Made in Africa products, that includes Agro-processing, Forestry and forestry products, Mineral products, Chemicals and pharmaceuticals, Leather and leather products, Textiles and textile products, Machinery, tools and equipment, Construction materials, Petro-chemical products, rubber and plastics products, Tourism, hospitality and creative services, Knowledge based services and Logistics and transport. The award applies to all production, processing, and trading within the ACAP field of application.

The award is based on the main criteria for Made in Africa and can be certified alone or, when available, in combination with the ARSO product certification standard applicable for the production or service in the scope. The criteria included in the Made in Africa are listed below.

(i) Competitive business environment
(ii) Rules of origin
(iii) Intellectual property rights
(iv) Quality and regulatory infrastructure

According to the kind of production and /or service carried out by the Company, some criteria may not be applicable. Where a certain criterion is not applicable, the company will have to justify.

Various applicable standards are available freely in the ARSO catalogue and website.

5.11.1 Scheme L1: Single site farms/companies

This certification scheme is applicable to Single site Farms/Companies, willing to certify their products according to the ARSO standards included in Scheme L.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the Made in Africa criteria applied to the production process of products and services to be verified by auditing of implementation of the Made in Africa Criteria

5.11.2 Scheme L2: Group of farmers/companies or multisite production operations

This certification scheme is applicable to group of Farmers/companies or multisite production operations willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme L and managed by a centralized Quality Management System (QMS), where the QMS owner is also the owner of the certificate.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the Made in Africa criteria applied to the production process of products or services to be verified by:

(i) Auditing of implementation of the MiA criteria.

(ii) Auditing of QMS implementation

The implementation of a QMS at group or multisite level, allows sampling while giving confidence on the general level of compliance of the whole group.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme L and integrates the general rules for scheme L2 with regard to the management of certification for groups of farmers or multisite and implementation of the QMS.

Annex L provides detailed criteria to be applied for design and general rules for audit and certification.

Annex A
(normative)

Scheme A: Primary production (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

A.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific information are required for Certification Schemes A1 and A2.

A.1.1 Detail of certified production

A.1.1.1 Crops

(a) Name of crops (species)

(b) Area of production (ha)

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(e) On-farm postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

A.1.1.2 Livestock

(a) Name of species and breed

(b) Kind of production (ex: milk, meat, eggs, etc.)

(c) Number of individuals

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

A.1.1.3 Aquaculture

(a) Name of species

(b) Kind of production (ex: ova, seedlings, grown fish)

(c) Estimated number of individuals

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons, in case of grown fish)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

A.1.1.4 Apiculture

(a) Name of species

(b) Kind of production

(c) Estimated number of individuals

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (kg)

(f) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

A.1.1.5 Additional information for groups of farmers

(a) Name of crops/species grown by each farmer of the group, according to scope (A.1.1.1 to A.1.1.4)

(b) Area/ number of individuals

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and site location information)

A.2 ACAP Certification Scheme A: Scopes of certification

A.2.1 Products

Products included in the Scheme A come from primary production and, according to the nature of the farming activity can have different origin:

(a) Vegetable crops productions (ex: fruit, vegetables, herbs, roots, plants for medical use, flowers, etc.)

(b) Livestock production coming from different animal species (ex: meat, milk, wool, eggs)

(c) Aquaculture production coming from different aquaculture species (ex: fish for consumption, brood stock for reproduction, ova and seedlings for reproduction, ova for consumption, etc.)

(d) Apiculture products (ex: honey, beeswax, royal jelly, pollen, propolis, bee venom, etc.). The Nature and number of products certifiable in the ACAP system depend of the availability of specific standards for certification, designed and approved by ACAP. The certification scope may have different focus for different products, according to the scope and focus of the standard of reference.

A.2.2 Processes

A.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP Certification Scheme A requires that all the life/production cycle of the products (vegetal or animal) is carried out on-farm following the certification rules.

(b) Exceptions can be clarified in the specific standards for certification, also according to the phase of certification (initial, surveillance or re-certification) and to the duration of life/ production cycle of the plant of animal.

(c) All production processes carried out during the cycle of certification shall be carried out in agreement with the ACAP applicable certification rules, for the selected standard.

A.2.2.2 Harvesting process

(a) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of animal products is carried out by the same operator, the harvesting process shall be included in the scope of certification

(b) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of animal products is carried out under the responsibility of the buyer of the product (the operator does not own the product), the harvesting process shall be excluded from the scope of certification

(c) In case of exclusion of harvest, in order to be able to use the ARSO Mark along the supply chain, the buyer of the product shall be ARSO ACAP Certified according to one of the ACAP certification schemes applicable for the product.

Example: the buyer is a food manufacturer that buys apples to make apple juice. In this case he/she shall be certified according to the ACAP Certification Scheme B.

A.2.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same operator. (ex: storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing, bleeding, degutting, slicing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature.

(b) Food processing is not considered a post-harvest activity and it is covered under Certification Scheme B.

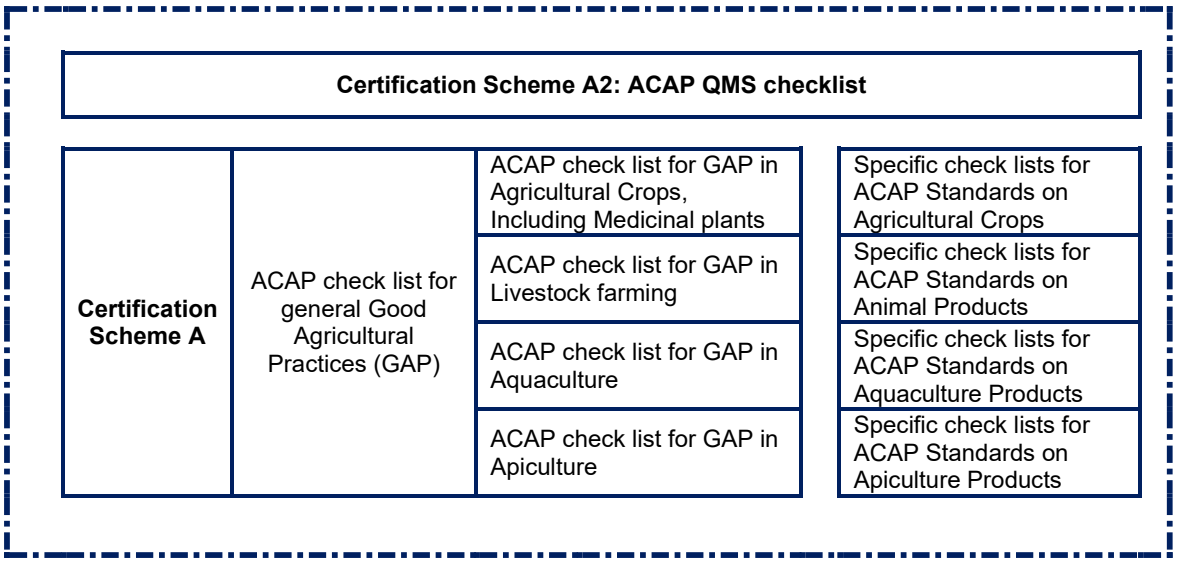
(c) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(d) Produce handling shall always be included as long as the product belongs to the operator during handling (by the operator or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

A.2.2.4 Sub-contractors and Process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes is under the responsibility of the certified operators. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ACAP Standards

(c) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.



A.3 ACAP Certification Scheme A: Specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme A") are specific for certification scheme A and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standards, technical normative documents to be certified within Scheme A

(b) ACAP check list for general Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

(c) ACAP check lists for GAP, specific for each sub-scope of scheme A (Crops, Livestock, Aquaculture, Apiculture)

(d) ACAP check lists that extrapolate the requirements in the ACAP Standards

(e) ACAP QMS check list for group or farmers in scheme A2

A.4 Quality management system for Scheme A2

The QMS designed for the ARSO ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of the ACAP certification.

The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the QMS are described in the ACAP QMS check list for group or farmers

A.5 Auditing Process

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification schemes A1 and A2.

A.5.1 Self-audit and Internal Audit.

A.5.1.1 Self-audit

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme A1.

During self-audit, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of the auditor.

A.5.1.2 Internal audit..

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme A2.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-audit of the QMS and auditingof the activity on farm, according to the specific African Standard.

(a) **Internal Auditor.** The internal auditor is qualified for both auditing of QMS of a group of Operators and for the eevaluation of the farm on-site.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Post-High school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices.

(b) **Internal verifier:** Can carry out only the internal technical on-site audit of production sites according to the requirements related to production. Can work in team with the internal Auditor fo rauditing of the operators of a group.

(i) High school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices.

(v) 1 audit as observer and 1audit as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

A.5.2 Independent external audits

A.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme A, the certification Body must be approved for the scope A1 or for single Operators certification or the all scope A for single and groups of operators. Approved CBs are listed in the ARSO website

A.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical evaluation of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme, the Laboratory shall be accredited to the scope of tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

A.5.2.3 Qualification of auditors

Also for external audits, two different kind of auditors are identified:

A.5.2.3.1 Evaluator for scope A

(a) **Task**

(i) Can only carry out the technical on-site evaluation of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(ii) Can work in team with the Auditor for auditing of the operators of a group.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) Post high school education including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

A.5.2.3.2 Auditor for scope A

(a) **Task**

(i) Can carry out Audits of the QMS and on-farm post-harvest activity (ex: packing of crops, slaughtering of first processing of animals and fish, handling of Apiculture products)

(ii) Can carry out the technical on-site evaluatiom of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(iii) In team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the use of chemical treatments on the products (ex: pesticides on crops, drugs and medications on livestock, fish and bees). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in nutrition sector (ex: fertilizers in crops, feed on livestock and fish). This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(vi) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vii) For QMS audits, the technical competence on production can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(viii) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as an auditor on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

A.5.2.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ACAP certification for the specific scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed by 2 phases:

A.5.2.4.1 Documental review

This phase is applicable only for Certification scheme A2 and regards the desk audits of the QMS documentation

A.5.2.4.2 Initial audits

It represents the audits carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site. In case of scheme A2, this audits shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

A.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance Audits

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audits in one certification cycle.

A.5.2.6 Re-certification audits

The re-certification audit is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

A.5.2.7 Audit timing: Initial certification audits

The audits shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and documental audits:

(a) **Crops**

Cultivation cycle is completed and harvest is in place the day of audits.

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must be harvesting the day of the audits.

Harvest can be assessed on at least one crop representative of the following groups: fruit perennials, open field vegetables, green-house vegetables, multiple harvest crops.

If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be in place the day of.

(b) **Livestock and fish**

Life/ production cycle is completed.

The final steps of production are completed (ex: slaughtering, milking, eggs picking, etc.)

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of the audit

Complete cycle can be assessed on at least one specie representative of a similar group of species.

(c) **Apiculture**

Life/ production cycle is completed.

The final steps of production are completed and shall be assessed.

In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of the audit

A.5.2.8 Sampling of farmers and production sites

In case of certification scheme A2, group of operators, a sample of the operators registered in the operators group will be verified. The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

A.5.2.8.1 Initial audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products included in the scope of certification and the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) All the products must be present on-site and at least half of the products must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of theaudit.

(d) In case of small groups of operators, at least one sample for each product in the scope of certification must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Operator can be sampled for more than one product

A.5.2.8.2 Surveillance audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for surveillance audit

(b) At least one of the products included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest or at end of cycle. If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) The products not in harvest or not present at the moment of the surveillance audit must be verified for compliance by evaluating evidences and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Operator can be sampled for more than one product.

A.5.2.8.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB Audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for first certification and re-certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products present the day of the audits and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the products present on-site must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of the audits.

(d) In case of small groups of operators, at least one sample for each product on-site must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Operator can be sampled for more than one product.

A.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Operator, among the ARSO qualified laboratory list, according to criteria such as kind of testing required, location, etc.

A.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm compliance, are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product-specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated of the ARSO Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-farm, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, according to specific Standards requirements.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

(e) Some additional criteria shall be considered, where appropriate:

(i) Chemicals known to be used on the products during the production period (ex: pesticides, antibiotics. Medicine). Records of the treatment shall be kept (ex: spray records; veterinary logs, etc.)

(ii) Chemicals not directly used on the products but with a potential of cross contamination with the product (ex: spray drift, heavy metals from heavy traffic, pollution coming from industry,

(iii) Industrial or different neighbouring farming that may have an influence on the safety of products

A.7 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

With regard to scheme A, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation of compliance.

A.7.1 Major Non-Conformance

(a) Initial (First certification)audit.

All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audits

All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

A.7.2 Minor Non-conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit.

It is allowed for the 20% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

The remaining 80% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audits

It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex B
(normative)

Scheme B: Processing and handling / packing of food and fresh produce

B.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, some specific details are required for Certification Scheme B.

B.1.1 Detail of certified production

B.1.1.1 Production site

(a) Name of production site

(b) Address of production site

(c) Area of production (m^2)

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(e) Number of employees

(f) Detailed description of products

(g) Detailed description of production processes

B.2 ACAP Certification Scheme B scopes of certification

B.2.1 Products

(a) Selected and packed fresh fruit and vegetables

(b) Selected and packed fresh animal products

(c) Processed food from different origin ad composition.

In order to meet the requirements of the ACAP supply chain, the ACAP products in Scheme B shall be made with raw materials certified according to an ACAP certification scheme, with exception of scheme C, chain of custody, that is focused only on assuring the traceability of the certified products along the supply chain.

If it is not possible to use all raw materials coming from ACAP certification, at least one of the main ingredients shall be certified. The certified ingredients shall be clearly identified and indicated in the label of the product, in the list of the ingredients and claims shall be made about the Percentage of ACAP certified ingredient present in the product.

The use of the ACAP mark shall be authorized on case-by-case bases upon decision of the ARSO Secretariat.

B.2.2 Processes

B.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP Certification Scheme A requires that all the production cycle of the products is carried out on-site following the ACAP certification rules.

(b) In case of processes or part of processes are carried out by external sub-contractors, the Operator shall carry out a supplier on-site audit, using the ACAP Certification Scheme B check list for the requirements that are applicable to the processes subcontracted.

(c) In case the sub-contractor is already certified for ACAP Certification Scheme B, the auditis not required but copy of a valid certificate shall be available.

(d) In case of doubts, the CB has the right to carry out audits at the sub-contractor site, upon previous agreement and planning of the activity.

B.2.2.2 Sub-contractors and process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes is under the responsibility of the certified operators. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ARS/AES Standards

(d) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.

B.3 ACAP Certification Scheme B: Specific normative documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme B") are specific for certification scheme B and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

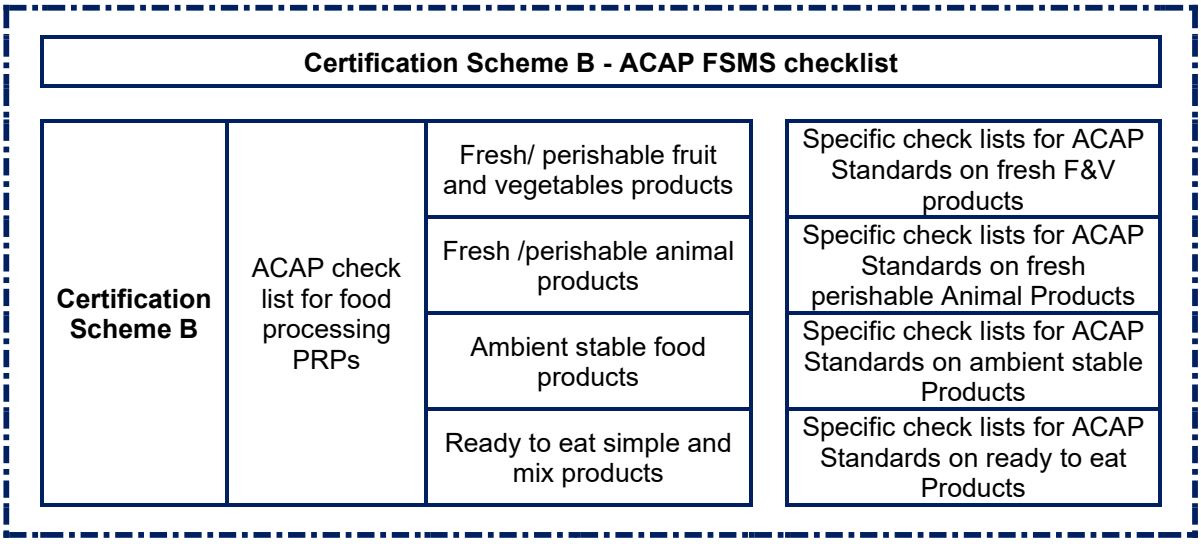
The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standards, technical normative documents to be certified within Scheme B

(b) ACAP check list for Food Safety Management System

(c) ACAP check lists for PRPs

(d) ACAP check lists elaborating the requirements in the African Standards included in Scheme B



B.4 Food safety management system for Scheme B

The FSMS designed for the ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of management of food safety.

The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the FSMS are described in the ACAP FSMA check list for food processing.

B.5 Audit process

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme B.

B.5.1 Self-audit and internal audit

B.5.1.1 Internal audit a

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme B

Internal auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both auditing of FSMS and for the technical evaluation of the food production on-site.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Post-high school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in food industry production. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified course in HACCP, food hygiene and good manufacturing practices.

B.5.2 Independent audits

B.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme B, the certification body must be approved for the Scope B. Approved CBs are listed in the ARSO website

B.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical evaluation of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme, the Laboratory shall be accredited to the scope of tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

B.5.2.3 Qualification of auditors

Also for external audits, two different kind of auditors are identified:

Auditor for scope B

(a) **Task**: Can carry out Audits of the FSMS and technical on-site audits of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the verifier:

(i) Post-high school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the Food Industry: demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in FSMS management. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(vi) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vii) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as auditor on a complete audit, witnessed by a qualified Auditor

B.5.2.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification Audit is composed by 2 phases:

(a) Documental review

This phase regards the desk audit of the FSMS documentation

(b) On-site Audit

It represents the audit carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site. This audit shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

B.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance audit

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audits in one certification cycle.

B.5.2.6 Re-certification audit

The re-certification audit is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

B.5.2.7 Audit timing: Initial certification audit

The audit shall be planned when the production process is in place at the moment of the auditing and evidences can be collected from both visual and documentation reviewl

B.5.2.8 Sampling of sites

In case of a food factory with a multisite operation, each site will be audited and no sampling of sites is allowed.

B.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Operator, among accredited laboratories. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accredition Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

B.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm compliance, are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product-specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated of the ARSO Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-site, during auditsor from the point of sales, according to rules of the different ACAP Standards.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be analysed by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

(e) Some additional criteria shall be considered, where appropriate:

— Additional legal parameters mandatory for the product in the country of production or export and not included in the ACAP standard.

B.7 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

With regard to scheme B, the following criteria Is applied

B.7.1 Major Non-Conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audits: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before notification for continued certification or release of the certificate

B.7.2 Minor Non-conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: All the Minor NC rose during Initial audit to be closed within the given time, before release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audit: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex C
(normative)

Scheme C: Traceability of ACAP certified products in the food supply chain

C.1 Registration data

C.1.1 Detail of certified production

C.1.1.1 Production site

(a) Name of production site

(b) Address of production site

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Detailed description of ACAP products object of traceability

(e) Description of smallest traceable unit

C.2 ACAP Certification Scheme C scopes of certification

This ACAP certification scheme is applicable in all the steps in the supply chain where product is handled, stored, transported, packed, labelled that cannot be included in primary production, produce handling and food manufacturing but where a loss of identity or loss of traceability of the certified product is possible.

In order to meet the requirements of the ACAP supply chain, the materials certified according to an ACAP certification scheme shall be clearly identified and segregate and must be traceable from raw material to final products, including intermediate products and re-work. The scope is to assure the identification and traceability of the certified products along the supply chain.

If it is not possible to use all raw materials coming from ACAP certification, at least one of the main ingredients shall be identified for traceability.

The certified ingredients shall be clearly identified and indicated in the label of the product, in the list of the ingredients and claims shall be made about product containing XXX ingredient ACAP certified.

C.2.1 Processes

C.2.1.1 Traceability and segregation

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP Certification Scheme C requires that all the production cycle of the products is carried out and documented in a way that all ACAP certified products are traceable from incoming of raw materials to final products.

(b) The ACAP certified materials and products must be clearly identified and segregated from not certified products. Visual identification and documented traceability is guaranteed during all production cycle.

(c) In case of processes or part of processes are carried out by external sub-contractors, the sub-contractor must be ACAP Certification Scheme C chain of custody, certified for the same product.

C.3 ACAP Certification Scheme C specific normative documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme C") are specific for certification scheme C and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.
The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Chain of Custody Standard, technical normative document to be certified within Scheme C.

(b) ACAP check lists that extrapolate the requirements in the ACAP scheme C Chain of Custody Standard

C.4 Food hygiene practices

The Chain of custody standard includes requirements on food hygiene good practices, to be verified together with the traceability system.

C.5 Audit process

C.5.1 Self-audit and Internal Audit

C.5.1.1 Internal audit

It is required for ACAP Certification Scheme C

Internal Auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both evaluation of PRPs and for the auditing of traceability system.

The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Documented qualified Course in HACCP, food hygiene and good manufacturing practices.

(ii) Demonstrated competence in GMP related to the specific industry including traceability system. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years.

C.5.2 Certification Audit

C.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme C, the certification body must be approved for the scope C. Approved CBs shall be listed in the ARSO website

C.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical evaluation of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme, the Laboratory shall be accredited to the scope of tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

C.5.2.3 Qualification of auditors

Also for external audits, two different kind of auditors are identified:

Auditor for Scope C

(a) **Task:** Can carry out Audits of the traceability system and on-site audits of production sites according to the requirements related to food hygiene and GMP related to the specific activity of the company.

(b) **Qualification:** The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) Post-High school degree.

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in the Agricultural or Food Industry: demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course on HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as auditor on a complete audit, witnessed by a qualified Auditor

C.5.2.4 Initial Certification Audit

The initial certification audit is carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification.

C.5.2.5 Initialaudit

It represents theaudit carried out by the CB for certification. It is carried out on-site.

C.5.2.6 Periodical Surveillance audit

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audits in one certification cycle.

C.5.2.7 Re-certification audits

The re-certification audit is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

C.5.2.8 audit timing

The audit shall be planned when the production process is in place at the moment of the audit and evidences can be collected from both visual and documentation review.

C.5.2.9 Sampling of sites

In case of a food factory with a multisite operation, each site will receive a complete audit and no sampling of sites is allowed.

C.6 Audit Results and evaluation of Compliance

With regard to ACAP Certification Scheme C, the following criteria are applied for the final audit of compliance.

C.6.1 Major Non-Conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and re-certification audits: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before notification of continued certification or release of the certificate

C.6.2 Minor Non-conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: All the Minor NC rose during Initial audit to be closed within the given time, before release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audits: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during these audits to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex D
(normative)

Scheme D: Sustainability certification programme

The Standards included in Scheme D provide requirements for the sustainable production, processing and trading of products. The standard applies to all production, processing and trading within the operator's sphere of influence.

These standards are flexible enough to be useful for operators of various sizes, processes, systems, products and countries of operation. In adhering to this standard, the operator shall deal only with those elements that are relevant to the operator's activities. If certain specific sustainability aspects are considered not relevant to the process, the operator shall justify how its operations do not contribute to the impact of the aspects concerned.

Local circumstances shall be considered when assessing the environmental, social or economic situation.

D.1 ACAP AES Certification Scheme D-Specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme D") are specific for certification scheme D and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP AES certification process.

African Standards suitable for ACAP AES certification include the following:

ARS/AES 1, *Agriculture — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 2, *Fisheries — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 3, *Forestry — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 4, *Tourism — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 5, *Aquaculture — African Catfish — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS/AES 6, *Aquaculture — Tilapia — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements*

ARS 952, *African Traditional Medicine — Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*

ARS 1100, *Production and handling of food crops — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1101, *Production and handling of maize (corn) grains — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1102, *Production and handling of rice — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1103, *Production and handling of cassava — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1104, *Dairy production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1105, *Poultry production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1106, *Tilapia production aquaculture farms — Good aquacultural practices*

ARS 1107, *Freshwater aquatic animal production farms — Good aquaculture practices*

ARS 1108, *Beef cattle production farms — Good agricultural practices*

ARS 1109, *Production and handling of fruits and vegetables — Good agricultural practices*

D.2 Registration data

D.2.1 Detail of certified production

This information gives more detail on the product(s) to be certified. This information must be updated if there are any changes detected during the external inspections.

D.2.1.1 Crops

(a) Name of crops (species)

(b) Area of production (ha)

(c) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(d) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(e) On-farm postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

D.2.1.1.1 Additional information for farmers registered in groups of farmers

The same information is required for each farmer included in the group

D.2.1.2 Livestock/ Aquaculture

(a) Name of species and breed

(b) Kind of production (example: livestock: milk, meat, eggs, etc. ex. Aquaculture: adult fish, ova, seedlings, etc.)

(c) Number of individuals (estimated where appropriate)

(d) Expected quantity of certified production (tons)

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and sites location information)

(f) On-farm slaughtering or processing unit information

D.2.1.2.1 Additional information for aqua farmers registered in groups of farmers

The same information is required for each aqua farmer included in the group

D.2.1.3 Capture fishery (wild catch)

(a) Name of fishery

(b) Name of target species

(c) Fishery type

(d) Bycatch type

(e) Location and extent of fishery

(f) methods used for the fishery operations

D.2.1.4 Forestry

(a) Name of production/ activity carried out in the forest

(b) extension of the area

(c) Identification of production sites

(d) Additional information as specified in the application form

D.2.1.5 Tourism

(a) Kind of activity/ service

(b) Details of location

(c) Additional information as specified in the application form

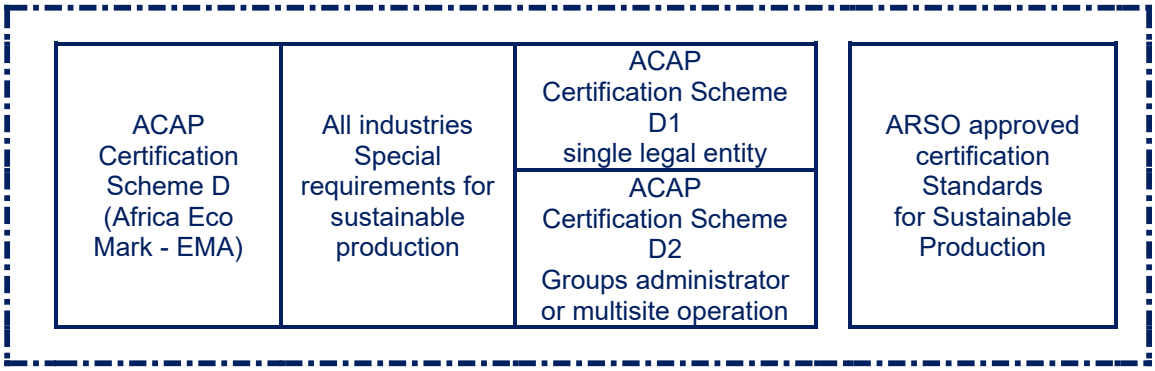
D.2.1.6 Other industries

(a) Name of products/services produces

(b) Production processes

(c) Identification of production sites

D.3 ACAP AES Certification Scheme D scopes of certification



D.3.1 Products

Products included in the scheme D may come from primary production of other food related activity and, according to the nature of the activity can have different kind pf productions:

(a) Vegetable Crops productions (ex: fruit, vegetables, herbs, roots, plants for medical use, flowers, etc.)

(b) Livestock production coming from different animal species (ex: meat, milk, wool, eggs)

(c) Aquaculture production coming from different aquaculture species (ex: fish for consumption, brood stock for reproduction, ova and seedlings for reproduction, ova for consumption, etc.)

(d) Fishery (wild catch).

(e) Food and food related products and services

(f) Forest products

(g) Tourism

The nature and number of products certifiable in the ACAP AES scheme depend of the availability of specific standards for certification, designed and approved by ARSO CACO. The certification scope may have different focus for different products, according to the scope and focus of the Standard of reference.

D.3.2 Processes

D.3.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP AES certification Scheme D requires that all the life/production cycle of the products is carried out on-site following the certification rules.

(b) Exceptions can be clarified in the specific Standards for certification, also according to the phase of certification (initial, surveillance or re-certification) and to the duration of life/ production cycle of the plant of animal.

(c) All production processes carried out during the cycle of certification shall be carried out in agreement with the ACAP Eco-Mark applicable certification rules, for the selected Standard.

(d) For fishery, the entire fishing cycle shall be carried out according to ACAP 3.

(e) For Food and Food related products and services, all products in the scope of certification must be carried out under the responsibility of the operator.

D.3.2.2 Harvesting process

(a) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of vegetal or animal products (including forestry products) is carried out by the same Operator, the harvesting process shall be included in the scope of certification

(b) If harvest, slaughtering, collection of vegetal and animal products is carried out under the responsibility of the buyer of the product (the operator does not own the product), the harvesting process shall be excluded from the scope of certification

(c) In case of exclusion of harvest, in order to be able to use the ACAP AES along the supply chain, the buyer of the product shall be ACAP Certified according to one of the ACAP AES certification schemes applicable for the product.

Example: the buyer is a food manufacturer that buys apples to make apple juice. In this case, he/she shall be certified according to the ACAP AES Certification Scheme D.

D.3.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same operator. (ex: storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing, bleeding, degutting, slicing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature.

(b) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(c) Produce handling shall always be included as long as the product belongs to the operator during handling (by the operator or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

D.3.2.4 Processes related to tourism services

(a) All activities/ services that are under the legal responsibility of the same legal entity for a specified site or multisite operation

(b) All activities carried out by the same legal entity for the same site or multisite shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(c) All activities/ services carried out on the same site or multisite shall always be included in the scope of certification (by the legal entity or subcontractor), in order to receive a licence for the EMA label.

D.3.2.5 Sub-contractors and process outsourcing

(a) Outsourcing of certified processes/ services is under the responsibility of the certified legal entity. It is allowed and regulated in different ways for different ARS/AES.

(b) Details on sub-contractors and outsourcing management will be specified in the different standards.

D.4 Conditions for certification

D.4.1 General conditions

(a) Audits are based on an evaluation of conformity with the ARS/AES Standard applicable for the scope.

(b) For the purpose of these rules, two organization types are recognized: single legal entities and group administrators.

(c) Organizations that cultivate or process products/ carry out operations considered illegal by applicable law in the country where they are grown or processed/ operated or by international agreements and conventions shall not be eligible for certification.

(d) Conditions specific for different ARS/AES Standards are specified in each Standard's regulatory documentation.

D.4.2 Single Legal Entity (Operation)

In this model, one certificate is granted to one single Legal Entity (ex: farmer, operator processor, operator).

The whole area and activities within the operation's limits and under the responsibility of the legal entity are covered by the audit scope. This includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Areas destined for agricultural and livestock production, aquaculture, forestry, processing and tourism operation, with focus on products/ services intended to be sold with certification claims.

(b) High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, forests and other natural ecosystems, as well as fallow land.

(c) Areas involving human activity and other infrastructure within its limits that include but are not restricted to administrative infrastructure, collection points, processing and packing units and storage facilities.

(d) Leased areas inside the operation.

(e) Personnel, including all contracted and subcontracted workers, supervisory and administrative staff, and management and owner representatives.

(f) People who live temporarily or permanently on the operation's site.

(g) All documentation relating to social, agronomic and environmental management and considered relevant to determining compliance with the Standard.

(h) Documentation related to trading of the certified and non-certified product handled by the farm.

Infrastructure owned or leased outside the Operation's limits but which is directly related to activities included in the audit scope. This may include, but is not limited to administrative infrastructure, collection points, processing and packing units and storage facilities.

Impacts on the surrounding communities that may be directly affected by the farm's activities.

D.4.3 Group administrators

In this model, one certificate is granted to an organization, called the 'Group Administrator', who acts on behalf of a group of Operators (Farmers, processors, tour operators) and is responsible for their compliance with the applicable ARS/AES Standard. The Group Administrator is responsible for implementing an Internal Management System (IMS), including but not limited to coordinating the commercialization of product, training and technical assistance for staff and group members, as well as internal inspections and the corresponding follow-up actions.

Group administrators fit three basic models:

(i) multi-site, where a single legal entity owns or holds more than one discrete farm/ production operation or site with separate production management system, but under one IMS of the group administrator;

(ii) groups that have a democratic structure, such as cooperatives, associations and federations;

(iii) private entities, such as plantations with associated product suppliers, exporters or a consultant's office.

The audit scope of a group administrator includes the following:

(a) Infrastructure owned or administered by the group administrator, related to the production activity in the scope. This includes but is not limited to roads, housing, administration, collection, storage, processing and packing infrastructure, as well as their surroundings.

(b) Group Members subject to the group's audit scope.

(c) All personnel hired or subcontracted by the group administrator.

(d) All documentation relating to the IMS: Documentation related to trading of the certified and non-certified product handled by the group administrator.

D.4.4 Rules for group administrators

(a) The minimum number of member farms of a group administrator is two member farms/ operations.

(b) The group administrator is responsible for trading and commercializing the products covered in the scope of the certificate, unless it decides to delegate the responsibility to third parties.

(c) If a member of the group wishes to sell certified product individually, it shall have a written agreement with the group administrator. Records of each individual transaction, indicating the volume of certified product sold individually by members shall be made available.

(d) The group administrator is responsible for ensuring that all member farms comply with the respective requirements of the relevant ARS/AES Standard.

D.5 Quality management system for Scheme D2

The QMS designed for the ACAP AES certification schemes contain elements specific for the scope of the ACAP AES certification.

(a) The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the QMS are described in the ACAP AES QMS check list for group administrators.

D.6 Audit process

D.6.1 ACAP AES Certification

Organizations wishing to achieve certification or certified organizations that are due a re-certification audit shall apply to an accredited CB.

At initial certification and every three years from then, the organization shall be subject to a certification audit. The CB will issue a certificate to the audited organization once the requirements of this standard are complied with.

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following rules apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification schemes D1 and D2.

D.6.2 Self-audit and Internal Audit.

D.6.2.1 Self-audit

It is required for ACAP certification schemes D1. It is based on the requirements of the specific standard's check lists.

During self-audit, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of the auditor.

D.6.2.2 Internal audit

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme D2.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-audit of the QMS and auditing of the activity on site, according to the specific ACAP Standard.

(a) **Internal Auditor:** The internal auditor is qualified for both auditing of QMS of a group of Operators and for the technical evaluation of the farm on-site. The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

  (i) Post-High school diploma, including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science, or equivalent)

  (ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

  (iii) Demonstrated competence in the productions in scope of certification and sustainability according to principles included in ARS/AES Standard implemented by study or practical experience.

(b) **Internal verifier.** Can carry out only the internal on-site audit a of production sites according to the requirements related to production. Can work in team with the internal Auditor for auditing of the operators of a group.

(i) High school diploma including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (ex: crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science or equivalent)

(ii) Demonstrated competence in the productions in scope of certification and sustainability according to principles included in ARS/AES Standard implemented by study or practical experience.

(iii) 1 audit as observer and 1 audit as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

D.6.3 Certification Audit

D.6.3.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ACAP Certification Scheme D, the certification Body must be approved for the scope D1 for single Operators certification or the all scope D for single and groups of operators. Approved CBs are listed in the ARSO website

D.6.3.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical evaluation of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme, the Laboratory shall be accredited to the scope of tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

D.6.3.3 Qualification of auditors

Also for external audits, two different kind ofauditors are identified:

D.6.3.3.1 Verifier for Scope D

(a) **Task**

(i) Can carry out only the technical on-site evaluation of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(ii) Can work in team with the Auditor forevaluation of the operators of a group.

(b) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food science, environmental science or equivalent degree)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated technical competence in the production in scope of the audit. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years working in the industry

(iv) Demonstrated competence in social and environmental management according to principles included in the different ARS/AES Standards. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural of food hygiene practices, according to scope, of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

D.6.3.3.2 Auditor for scope D

(c) **Task**

(i) Can carry out Audits of the QMS and on-farm post-harvest activity (ex: packing of crops, slaughtering of first processing of animals and fish, food processing)

(ii) Can carry out the technical on-site evaluation of production sites according to the requirements related to production

(iii) In team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(d) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school degree including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (crops, livestock, aquaculture, food, environment, other.)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated technical competence in the production in scope of the audit. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years working in the Industry

(iv) Demonstrated competence in social and environmental management according to principles included in the different ARS/AES Standards. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical working experience of minimum 2 years

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and good agricultural practices of minimum 2 days duration.

(vi) For QMS audits, the technical competence on production can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(vii) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as auditor on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

D.6.3.4 Initial certification

The initial certification in carried out once, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed by 2 phases:

D.6.3.4.1 Documental review

This phase is applicable only for Initial Certification for scheme D2 and regards the deskaudit of the QMS documentation

D.6.3.4.2 Initial certification audit

(i) It represents the audit carried out by the CB for final certification. In case of Initial Certification Audit for scheme D2, this audit shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

(ii) A certification audit is carried out when the organization applies for certification for the first time, to establish the level of conformity of the organization with all applicable criteria.

(iii) It shall always take place on site, during a period of activity when workers, crop plants and/or cattle are present and processes are in place.

(iv) On the application, the organization may voluntarily request to be audited against the criteria of a higher performance level.

D.6.3.5 Periodical Surveillance Audit

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audits in one certification cycle.

(a) The objectives of the surveillance audits are:

(i) To ensure the certified organization complies with all applicable critical criteria;

(ii) To determine whether the organization has implemented the improvement actions for continuous improvement criteria in this standard.

(b) Surveillance audits can be planned within 6 months from the date of certification audit (4 months before and 2 months after).

(c) According to CB risk assessment and decision, single Operators and group administrators, surveillance audits may be planned or short-noticed at any time. The CB may inform the certified organization about unannounced or short-noticed surveillance audits with no more than two working days in advance, with the exception of group administrators of smallholder members, for which up to five working days in advance apply.

(d) During surveillance audits to group administrators, the sample of member farms will be selected during the opening meeting. In case of groups located in distant areas or different Regions, the selected area or Region can be communicated within 5 working days from the audit.

(e) Organizations considered as ‘high performers’ will be allowed to undertake maximum one desk surveillance audit per 3 years’ cycle, instead of one on-site surveillance audit.

D.6.3.6 Re-certification Audits

The re-certification audit is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification and follows the same rules as Initial certification audit.

D.6.3.7 Follow Up-audit

Before the final audit report is issued and only in the case of nonconformities an audited organization may demonstrate compliance with open nonconformities up to 30 days after the closing meeting of any audit. In case of Initial Certification Audit, corrective actions can be completed up to 90 days. The CB may charge for additional costs of this process.

The objectives of a Follow-up audit are:

(a) To control whether open nonconformities that prevented a positive certification decision are addressed, closed, and verified for efficacy, to allow the certificate to be issued or maintained

(b) To determine whether the organization has reached the minimum performance level and the certificate may be issued or maintained.

(c) If during a follow-up audit, an audited organization does not comply, the certificate is not issued or suspended. This audited organization may not be subject to additional follow-upaudits for the next six months and a complete new audit of the same level of the failed audit (surveillance or re-certification) is needed to re-activate the certificate.

(d) Organizations with nonconformities on any of the zero-tolerance criteria are not eligible for a foll0w-up audit. The certificate is not issued, suspended or is cancelled. This audited organization may not be subject to additional follow-up audits for the next twelve months. A new complete Certification process must be started (document review and Initial audit)

(e) A follow-upaudit may take place remotely, when it is possible to evaluate the improvement actions through documents or remote interviews with farm management or group administrator representatives.

D.6.3.8 Investigation audit

Investigation audits are carried out in response to a complaint, reported incident, or substantial information regarding the performance of a certified organization relating to one or more critical criteria of a ACAP AES Standard.

An investigation audit may be carried out at any time, when the CB determines there is sufficient evidence of a potential nonconformity. The certified organization may be subject to a desk investigation audit only if it is possible to demonstrate conformity through documents.

Investigation audits are unannounced. However, the certified organization may be given advanced warning (no more than two working days), when doing so can avoid significant logistical obstacles and the issue at hand cannot be influenced by an advanced warning.

The CB bears the cost of investigation audits. However, should the complaint, reported incident, or substantial information be confirmed, the cost of these audits may be charged to the certified organization.

D.6.3.9 Scope expansion audit

The objective of a scope expansion audit is to assess compliance with certification rules for new areas, activities or member farms that a certified organization wishes to add to its scope before a re-certification or surveillance audit.

All applicable criteria of the ARS/AES standard relevant for the certification are evaluated for the new areas or for a sample of new member farms (in the case of group administrators), as well as for new crops or cattle species.

D.6.4 Audit timing

D.6.4.1 Timing for initial certification audit

The audit shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and documentation review. All the products must be present on-site and at least one product representing a “family” of similar products must be in harvest (end of production cycle, process in place.) at the moment ofauditing.

(a) **Crops**

(i) Cultivation cycle is completed and harvest is in place the day of audit.

(ii) In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must be harvesting the day of the audit

(iii) Harvest can be assessed on at least one crop representative of the following groups: fruit perennials, open field vegetables, green-house vegetables, multiple harvest crops.

(iv) If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be in place the day of audit.

(b) **Livestock and aquaculture**

(i) Life/ production cycle is completed.

(ii) The final steps of production are completed (ex: slaughtering, milking, eggs picking, etc.)

(iii) In case of group of farmers, at least 25% of the sample must have completed one cycle the day of theaudit

(iv) Complete cycle can be assessed on at least one specie representative of a similar group of species.

(c) **Fishery**

Wild catch and post-harvest activity (if applicable) must be in place the day of audit

(d) **Food production**

At least one production cycle representative of product families and technology must be operating the day of the audit.

D.6.4.2 Timing for Periodical Surveillance Audits

In the case Agriculture scopes, if single farms operators or group administrators are cultivating seasonal crops, at least one surveillance audit shall take place during the harvest season.

For all other scopes, at least one production/service process must be in place the day of the audit

Where needed, more details may be found in the intro of the specific ARS/AES Standards.

D.6.5 Sampling of farmers and/or production sites

In case of certification scheme D2, group of operators, a sample of the operators/ production sites registered in a operators group/ multisite operation will be verified.

The D2 scheme is not applicable to Food Processing. In case of multisite food companies, all production sites must be audited to be included in the certificate.

The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

D.6.5.1 Sampling for initial audit:

(a) The square root (SQR) of the total number of farmers/ production sites, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products “families”/ processes included in the scope of certification and the number of samples for each product/ process must be equally balanced.

(c) In case of small groups of operators/ production sites, at least one sample for each product/ process in the scope of certification must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(d) The same operator/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.6.5.2 Sampling for surveillance audit

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers/ production sites multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and audited for surveillance.

(b) At least one of the products/ processes included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest (end of cycle, process in place). If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) The products/ processes not in harvest or not present at the moment of the surveillance audit must be verified for compliance by evaluating evidences and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Operator/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.6.5.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB audits:

(a) The Square root of the total number of farmers/ production sites, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for re-certification or transfer from a different Certification Body.

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the products/ processes present the day of the audit and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the products present on-site must be in harvest (end of cycle, process in place) at the moment of the audit

(d) In case of small groups of operators/ production sites, at least one sample for each product/ process on-site must be verified, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Operator/ production site can be sampled for more than one product/ process.

D.7 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Operator, among accredited laboratories. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

D.7.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm compliance, are specific for the different ARS/AES Standards and are related to product-specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated in the ARS/AES Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and the testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out on-site, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, according to specific Standards requirements.

(d) The list of the parameters and contaminants to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

D.8 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

D.8.1 Continuous improvement criteria

ARS/AES Standards contain a continuous improvement system that requires certified legal entities (ex: farmers, processors, tourism operators) to gradually increase their compliance over four performance levels.

The specific binding level requirements (**Tiers**) will not change under any condition, including suspension or cancellation of a certificate, modification of scope or the change of a CB.

D.8.2 The Maturity Model of ACAP AES certification scheme

The Performance Tiers provide a framework for operators (Operators, processors, tourism operators, etc.) to improve their compliance levels in line with the continual improvement principles. These tiers provide opportunities for operators to invest gradually as well as for small-scale operators to engage in the certification process at affordable rates.

D.8.3 Management plan

The management plan, in this respect called the **Operator Sustainability Plan (PSP)** is an organizational tool for determining baseline performance levels, identifying a roadmap for continual improvement, and for achieving and documenting improvements in the environmental, social, and economic performance of the operation. The contents of the management plan:

(a) Organized according to environmental, social, and economic factors.

(b) Describes the operation's land, resources, and current practices, including baseline information on the status of Indicators relevant for the ARS/AES Standard to be applied.

(c) Identifies critical criteria and indicators the operator must monitor to maintain or improve performance.

(d) Records goals for meeting criteria and improving performance.

(e) Documents strategies implemented, results observed, and outcomes achieved.

(f) Identifies any unexpected outcomes or problems, as well as plans for mitigating or improving outcomes for the next cycle.

D.8.4 Classification of findings

Regarding scheme D Critical Non-Conformance. This is a Major non-conformance raised against a Required Indicator of a Critical Criteria.

D.8.5 Critical criteria

Critical criteria cover the highest-priority and highest-risk environmental, social and labour issues. Single Operators and group administrators are required to comply with all applicable critical criteria at all time as a condition to grant or maintain the certificate.

Zero-tolerance critical criteria. Failing to comply with any of the Required Indicators related to the following zero-tolerance criteria results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate:

(a) No destruction of High Conservation Value areas

(b) No forced / slave labour

(c) No mistreatment of workers

(d) No sexual harassment

(e) No discrimination

(f) No worst forms of child labour

Critical criteria are identified with "**C**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

D.8.6 Level of performance indicators

There are three categories of Indicators to be addressed and complied to achieve and maintain certification against one or more ARS/AES Standards:

(a) **Required Indicators.** These indicators are critical for compliance and achievement of the certificate and include indicators that are linked to Critical criteria. Compliance to 100% of these indicators is required to complete (o maintain) the certification cycle. Required indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Required Indicators are identified with "**R**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

(i) Non-Conformances raised against a Required indicator linked to a Critical Criteria must be scored as Critical non-conformance and cannot be closed with a Follow Up audit and results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate. It will not be possible to receive a new audit before six months. New audit must be carried out by the same

(ii) Non-Conformances raised against a Required indicator linked to other criteria must be scored as Major non-conformance and must be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for initial certification). Failure to complete effective corrective actions within the given timeframe will results in the denial or the suspension of the certificate until satisfactory corrective actions are completed.

(b) **General Indicators.** These indicators are considered fundamental for compliance and achievement of the certificate. Compliance to minimum 80% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (or maintain) the certification cycle. General indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. General Indicators are identified with "**G**" in the different ARS/AES Standards

Non-compliances raised against a General Indicator may be scored as Major or Minor non-conformity, or Observation, according to categorization given in ARS/AES 1.

(i) Minor Non-Conformances must be closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 80% of compliance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 20% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions assessed during the next following audit. If at the end of the following audit some Minor non-conformance are not closed with corrective actions, these will be added to the new Minor non-conformances raised during the audit.

(ii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement

(c) **Optional Indicators.** These indicators are considered for continual improvement. Compliance to minimum 20% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (o maintain) the certification cycle. Optional indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification Tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Optional Indicators are identified with "**O**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

Non-compliances raised against an Optional Indicator may be scored as Minor non-conformity, or Observation, according to categorization given in ARS/AES 1.

(i) Minor Non-Conformances must be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 20% of compliance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 80% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions must be completed before the next re-certification audit.

If at the end of a following audit some Minor non-conformance are not closed with corrective actions, these will be added to the new Minor non-conformances raised during the audit.

(ii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement

Indicator	Compliance to Tier	Critical NC	Major NC	Minor NC	Observation
Required from Critical Criteria	100% the day of audit	Yes No corrective actions allowed Certificate cancelled Time for new audit >6 months	NO	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement
Required from other Criteria	100% with follow up	NO	Yes Corrective actions allowed within 28 days FU audit required	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement
General From all criteria	80% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 80% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 20% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement
Optional From all criteria	20% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 20% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 80% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement

D.8.7 Levels of performance (Tiers)

For the achievement of certification, there are four levels of performance, which are elaborated hereafter.

D.8.7.1 Bronze Tier

Minimum Entry Level: The Operator (Operator, processor, tourism operator, etc.…) commits to engage in the process and develops a Operator Sustainability Plan (PSP) that identifies sustainability goals and strategies for achieving them.

In addition, 100% of Required indicators, at least 80% of General indicators and at least 20% of the Optional indicators required for the Bronze tier, must be complied with.

This certification is valid for a period of up to three years, subject to confirmation through annual surveillance audit. Re-certification at the entry level is possible for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

D.8.7.2 Silver Tier

The Operator (Operator, processor, tourism operators, etc.) demonstrates considerable progress in sustainability performance.

Indicators required for the Silver tier are additional to the one required for bronze tier. 100% of Required indicators, at least 80% of General and at least 20% of the Optional indicators for Silver Tier must be complied with.

Silver tier achievement can be claimed if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

D.8.7.3 Gold Tier

The Operator (Operator, processor, tourism operators, etc.…) demonstrates very substantial sustainability performance.

Indicators required for Gold Tier are additional to the one required for Silver Tier. 100% of Required indicators, and at least 80% of General Indicators for Gold Tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must be complied with.

Gold tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

D.8.7.4 Platinum Tier

The Operator (Operator, processor, tourism operators, etc.) demonstrates an outstanding level of sustainability performance.

Indicators required for Platinum Tier are additional to the one required for Gold Tier.

100% Required indicators and at least 80% of General indicators required for the platinum tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must complied with.

Platinum tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely as long as performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

Tier	Required Indicators	General Indicators	Optional indicators
Bronze	100%	80%	20%
Silver	100%	80%	20%
Gold	100%	80%	20%
Platinum	100%	80%	20%

D.8.8 Additional performance criteria and rules

(a) Possible new non-conformities against new criteria detected during surveillance audits or witnessing audits will be added to the original balance of Minor non-conformances still open from the previous audit/s.

(b) In the case of group administrators with smallholder members, performance criteria is applied to each single sample.

(c) A maximum of 20% of the audited sample of smallholders may fail on reaching 80% of General Indicators and 20% of Optional Indicators at Follow under the condition that these remaining Minor nonconformities are corrected no more than 12 months after the preceding audit.

D.9 The ACAP AES certificate

D.9.1 Validity of the certificate

The certificate has a 36 months' validity, starting with the date of issue.

The expiry date of the certificate is fixed, but the validity of the certificate may be extended in the following cases, without modification to the original certificate issue date:

(a) Up to a maximum of six months in the event of a force majeure condition.

(b) Up to a maximum of three months, with a justified technical motivation (example: seasonal productions or processes)

D.9.2 Maintaining the certificate

To maintain its certified status, the certified organization shall pass two surveillance audits after a certification audit.

The surveillance audit shall take place within 4 months before and 2 after the date the certificate was issued. In case of audit done after the expiring date of the certificate, an extension to the validity of the certificate up to 3 months will be required.

A certified organization may be subject to investigation audits at any time.

D.9.3 Modifying the scope of the certificate

(a) The certified organization may request to change the certificate scope at any time to increase or reduce the productive area, or increase or reduce the number or composition of member farms.

(b) Certified organizations requesting to include new crop activities or new livestock species within the scope of a certificate shall be subject to a scope expansion audit.

(c) A certified organization may increase its production area or its number of member farms by up to 10%, or add up to 10% of new member farms, without being subject to a scope expansion audit, certification audit or surveillance audit. If the increase in area or number of member farms exceeds 10%, or if the group has more than 10% of new member farms, then the certified organization shall be subject to a scope expansion audit.

(d) The certified organization may decide to increase its scope through a certification audit or surveillance audit. If this is the case, additional time is added to the audit, if required.

(e) Modifications to the scope of the certificate will not change the expiration date of the certificate or the organization’s baseline year.

D.10 Compensation for announced minor destruction of natural ecosystems

When destruction of natural ecosystems - but never for High Conservation Value areas - up to 1% of the total certified land area is planned by a certified farm manager or group administrator, it will not be a cause for certificate cancellation provided that the responsible CB was informed beforehand and authorized this minor destruction under the following conditions:

(a) Destruction of natural ecosystems will take place only for the reason of installing new farm infrastructure or repairing previously existing farm infrastructure (roads, irrigation infrastructure, including pumping facilities, channels, ponds, reservoirs, dams, and impoundments), permanently installed machinery, and facilities for washing, processing, or packing) or for smallholder farms for the purpose of planting food crops;

(b) Applicable law is complied with.

D.10.1 Reinstatement of the certificate

To reinstate a certificate that was cancelled, the organization shall submit an application for a new certification.

D.10.2 Compensation for unannounced minor destruction of natural ecosystems

Minor destruction of natural ecosystems - but never for High Conservation Value areas - that have inadvertently been conducted by a certified organization or member farm of a certified group administrator or certified group administrator is permitted only under the following conditions:

(a) The destruction event is the first one during the organization's certification history;

(b) The converted area is located outside of High Conservation Value areas, protected areas, or land that is illegal to convert;

(c) A plan with objectives, quantitative targets and parameters, time-bound management actions, resources and responsible personnel for the required restoration is prepared by an ecological restoration specialist and submitted for approval within three months of the date of destruction, including the following requirements:

  (i) The destruction is mitigated through restoration in the or close to the converted area or by setting-aside for conservation at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas;

  (ii) The converted natural ecosystem area is taken out of agricultural production and designated with the aim to restore the area to its former natural condition;

  (iii) On larger farms, destruction of natural ecosystems of up to 2% of the farm area or 50 hectares (whichever is less) is only permitted if such destruction is compensated by at least a 1:1 ratio of ecologically comparable areas, as specified in a time-bound plan prepared by a qualified professional;

  (iv) Destruction of up to 10% of the farm area or 1 hectare (whichever is less) is permitted without the need for compensation. In the case of smallholder groups, these thresholds apply at the level of each member farm.

D.10.3 Child labour remediation

Farms shall provide evidence of remedial actions for child labourers and his or her family following their removal from farm employment:

(a) Timely access to medical services;

(b) Timely access to psychological and rehabilitative services, as indicated by the child's condition;

(c) Facilitation of the child's entrance and integration into local school until the legally permitted school-leaving age; and

Hiring of the child's immediate or extended family member, if available. If no such family member is available for hiring, the farm management or group administrator pays the child's family a wage support no less than the removed child's wages until the child reaches the legal school-leaving age or age 15, whichever is higher.

Annex E
(normative)

Scheme E: Sustainable harvesting of wild botanical species for African traditional medicine

This certification scheme covers certification of produce of medicinal plants both from *Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Collection Practices (GCP)* in the wild. Operators/collectors can achieve certification under any one of the two options described in this document.

The cultivation of medicinal plants is included in the ACAP Certification Scheme A and both A1 and A2 schemes are applicable.

The purpose of this scheme is to ensure an objective audit and certification of the medicinal plant collected in the wild and promote uniformity in its operation for the collector seeking certification.

(1) ARS 950, *African Traditional Medicine — Terms and terminology*

(2) ARS 951, *African Traditional Medicine — Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

(3) ARS 952, *African Traditional Medicine — Guidelines on good agricultural and collection practices (GACP) for medicinal plants*

(4) ARS 953, *African Traditional Medicine — Certification schemes for medicinal plant produce*

(5) ARS 954, *Minimum requirements for registration of traditional medicines*

(6) ARS 955, *African Traditional Medicine — Technical guidelines for safety, efficacy and quality of raw materials and herbal medicines*

(7) ARS 956-1, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards —Aloe vera* L. Burm.f.

(8) ARS 956-2, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards — Ambrosia maritima* L.

(9) ARS 956-3, *African Traditional Medicine —- Medicinal plant standards — Urtica dioica* L.

(10) ARS 956-4, *African Traditional Medicine — Medicinal plant standards — Calotropis procera* (Ait) R. Br.

E.1 Registration data

In addition to the requirements in ACAP 1-1, specific information is required for Certification Scheme E.

E.1.1 Detail of certified production

E.1.1.1 Wild crops

(a) Name of wild species to be collected

(b) Expected quantity collected (tons)

(c) Identification of area for collection (map of area)

(d) Postharvest activities and address of postharvest unit.

(e) Number and identification of production sites (map of sites and site location information)

(f) Legal authorization for collection of wild species

E.1.1.2 Additional information for groups of collectors

(a) Name of wild species collected by each collector

(b) Area of collection of each collector (map of area)

(c) Expected quantity collected by each collector

E.2 ACAP Certification Scheme E scopes of certification

E.2.1 Wild species

Products included in the Scheme E come from wild botanical species and are collected from the wild.

(a) Wild harvest of the identified species in a specified quantity and from a specified area must be carried out according to Legislation and evidence must be provided as a first step of the certification process.

(b) A clear identification of the species and tools for visual identification shall be prepared and evidence of approval by a qualified entity or expert must be available

(c) Evidence of qualification of the collectors must be available, as well as a program for training.

E.2.2 Processes

E.2.2.1 Production cycle

(a) As a general concept, the ACAP certification scheme E requires a different preparation, based on very sensitive sustainability rules based on conservation of wild species and use of correct harvesting techniques variable within different Species.

(b) The preliminary preparation of guidelines and instructions specific for each wild Specie harvested is required in order to avoid inappropriate actions that may lead to damage of the wild biodiversity or damage to the final users (consumers). Guidelines must be approved by a qualified entity or qualified expert.

(c) Demonstration of qualification of the personnel involved in collection and selection of the wild crops is required. A program for continual qualification improvement and update shall be provided.

(d) The production cycle is the growing cycle of the plant in the wild, in the different environmental and climate conditions.

E.2.2.2 Harvesting process

(a) Harvest is the core of the process to be certified. For this reason, it cannot be excluded

(b) If harvest is subcontracted, the subcontractor must follow the same rules of qualification as the collectors of the certified company and will be audited for certification.

E.2.2.3 Post-harvest produce handling.

(a) Produce handling includes any type of post-harvest handling of products that is still under the legal responsibility of the same operator. (ex: storage, drying, trimming, washing or any other handling where the product may have physical contact with other materials or substances but does but change its main aspect and nature).

(b) Medicinal plants processing is not considered a post-harvest activity and, where applicable, it is covered under Certification Scheme B.

(c) Produce handling, including description of processes done, shall be declared during registration and indicated on the certificate.

(d) Produce handling shall always be included if the product belongs to the operator during handling (by the operator or subcontractor), if the ARSO Mark in order to receive a licence for the ARSO Mark.

E.2.2.4 Sub-contractors and process outsourcing

(a) For ACAP Certification Scheme E, sub-contractors of harvest and produce handling are considered at the same level as part of the Company and must comply with the same Standard Rules.

(b) Sub-contractors for harvesting shall be audited for certification.

(c) Sub-contractors for produce handling shall be audited for certification. Exception is dome if the sub-contractor is already ACAP certified for Scheme E.

(d) Any other sub-contractor will be under the responsibility and control of the certified Operator. On a case-by-case base, the Certification Body has the right to audit any other sub-contractor, within the scope of the Standard's requirements covered by the sub-contractor.

E.3 ACAP Certification Scheme E Specific Normative Documents

The Normative documents presented in this chapter (and any additional document or integration that will be identified as "Normative for certification scheme E") are specific for certification scheme E and relevant to all Parties involved in the ACAP certification process.

The specific documents are represented by:

(a) ACAP Standard, technical normative document to be certified within Scheme E: Traditional African Medicine Standard.

(b) ACAP check list for auditing for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce

(c) ACAP QMS check list for group or collectors operating for the same legal entity

E.4 Quality management system for Scheme E

The QMS designed for the ARSO ACAP certification schemes contains elements specific for the scope of the ACAP certification.

(a) The requirements, as well as the criteria for compliance, for the QMS are described in the ACAP QMS check list for group of collectors of wild species operating for the same certified legal entity.

E.5 Audit process

The specific processes for certification of medicinal plant produce are provided in the following documents:

ACAP 5-1, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-1: General requirements*

ACAP 5-2, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-2: Good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-3, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-3: Good agricultural practices (GAP) for medicinal plant produce*

ACAP 5-4, *Certification scheme for medicinal plant produce — Part 5-4: Good manufacturing practices (GMP) for herbal medicines*

In addition to ACAP 1-1, the following requirements apply for the certification of the ARSO Certification scheme E.

E.5.1 Self-audit and Internal Audit

E.5.1.1 Self-audit

It is required for ARSO certification Scheme E.

During self-audit, all deviations and not applicable requirements must be recorded and corrective actions implemented.

No specific requirements are in place for the qualification of the auditor.

E.5.1.2 Internal audit.

It is required when more than one collector of wild crops is involved in the certification scope.

There are 2 different requirements of qualification for self-audit of the QMS and witnessing of the collection and post-harvest activities, according to the specific ARSO Standard.

E.5.1.2.1 Internal Auditor. The internal auditor is qualified for both auditing of QMS of multi-collector's organization and for the technical evaluation of collection and post-harvest operation.
The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Internal Auditor:

(i) Minimum a High school diploma.

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicine plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP.

E.5.1.2.2 Internal verifier. Can carry out only the internal technical audit of wild plants collection and post-harvest, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for auditing for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce . Can work in team with the internal Auditor for auditing of the operators of a group.

(i) High school diploma

(ii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicine plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iii) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP.

(iv) 1 audit as observer and audit as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor

E.5.2 Certification Audit

E.5.2.1 Certification Body

For the certification of the ARSO Certification Scheme E, the certification Body must be approved for the scope. Approved CBs are listed in the ARSO website

E.5.2.2 Laboratory

For testing and analytical evaluation of compliance for the ACAP Certification Scheme, the Laboratory shall be accredited to the scope of tests and methodologies required by the specific standards (technical specification) to be certified. Accredited Laboratories, with the detail of their accredited scopes are listed on the respective Accreditation Body websites whose links can be obtained from the AFRAC website

E.5.2.3 Qualification of auditors

Also for external audits, two different kind of auditors are identified:

E.5.2.3.1 Verifier for Scope E

(a) **Task**

(a) Can carry out only the evaluation of wild plants collection and post-harvest, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for auditing for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce.

(b) Can work in team with the internal Auditor for evaluation of the operators of a group.

(c) Qualification. The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Verifier:

(i) High school diploma with agricultural, natural science or similar applicable focus, or

(ii) High School diploma and post high school courses with focus agriculture, natural science or similar applicable focus.

(iii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 16 hours.

(iv) Demonstrated competence in wild medicinal plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(v) Documented qualified Course in food hygiene and HACCP of minimum 2 days' duration.

(vi) 1 audit as observer and 2 audits as verifier witnessed by a qualified Auditor or Verifier

E.5.2.3.2 Auditor for scope E

(a) **Task**: Can carry out Audits of the QMS and post-harvest activity.

(b) Can carry out the technical evaluation of the wild plants collection, according to the requirements included in the ACAP check list for auditing for good collection practices (GCP) for medicinal plant produce.

In team, covers the task of team leader and/or lead auditor.

(c) **Qualification**: The following requirements shall be complied for qualification of the Auditor:

(i) Post-High school diploma including courses pertinent with the major scope of certification (agriculture, natural science, botany, other similar scopes)

(ii) Documented official training on auditing techniques according to ISO 19011 with focus on ISO 9001 auditing standard of minimum 36 hours.

(iii) Demonstrated competence in wild medicinal plants. This competence can be from education, courses or demonstrated practical experience of minimum 2 years.

(iv) Documented qualified Course on food hygiene and HACCP of minimum 2 days duration

(v) The technical competence on wild collection can be complementary covered by a sector expert, working in together with the auditor.

(vi) 1auditor as observer and 2 auditors on a complete audit (QMS plus Production), witnessed by a qualified Auditor

E.5.2.4 Initial Certification

The initial certification in carried in 2 steps, at the first ARSO Certification for the specific Scheme of certification. The change of certification Body does not require a new initial certification. The initial Certification is composed by 2 phases:

E.5.2.4.1 Documental review

This phase regards the desk audit of the documentation related to internal operative manuals and guidelines on collection of the wild species in object. It also includes auditing of legislation requirements, required authorization for collection, internal QMS procedures and documentation on qualification of involved personnel, including sub-contractors, where applicable.

E.5.2.4.2 Initial audit

It represents the audit carried out by the CB for final certification. It is carried out on-site during practical collection, this audit shall follow the documental review. It can be consecutive or carried out with a maximum timeframe of 3 months from the documental review. In case of exceedance of the timeframe, the review must be repeated.

E.5.2.5 Periodical Surveillance audit

According to the duration of 3 years of the certification cycle, there are 2 surveillance audit in one certification cycle.

E.5.2.6 Re-certification audit

The re-certification audit is carried out at the end of the third cycle of certification.

E.5.2.7 Audit timing: Initial certification audit

The audit shall be planned when the production cycle is completed and evidences can be collected from both visual and review of documentation.:

Crops

Harvest is in place the day of audit

In case of groups of collectors operating for the same legal entity, at least 75% of the sampled collectors must be harvesting the day of the audit

Harvest can be assessed on at least one wild species representative of the following groups: perennials, herbs, etc.

If post-harvest activity is included in the scope of certification, it must be in place the day ofthe audit.

E.5.2.8 Sampling of collectors of wild species

In case of certification scheme E, where a group of collectors is operating under the same certified legal entity, a sample of the collectors registered in the group will be verified. The sample is taken with regard to the following principles.

E.5.2.8.1 Initial audit

(a) The Square root of the total number of collectors, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and audited for first certification

(b) The sample shall be representative collection of all the groups of species included in the scope of certification and the number of samples within species must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 30% of the products must be in harvesting period at the moment of the audit.

(d) The same Collector can be sampled for more than one product

E.5.2.8.2 Surveillance audit

(a) The Square root of the total number of collectors multiplied by 0.6, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for surveillance audit

(b) At least one of the Species included in the scope of certification shall be in harvest or at end of cycle. If more products are on-site, the number of samples for each group of species must be equally balanced.

(c) The products not in harvest or not present at the moment of the surveillance audit must be verified for compliance by evaluating evidences and records from the previous certified cycle.

(d) The same Collector can be sampled for more than one product.

E.5.2.8.3 Re-certification/ transfer of CB audits

(a) The Square root of the total number of Collectors, approximated by the higher value, shall be sampled and assessed for re-certification

(b) The sample shall be representative of all the groups of Species present the day of the audit and included in the scope of certification. The number of samples for each product must be equally balanced.

(c) At least 1 of the species in the certification scope must be in harvest (end of production cycle) at the moment of the audits.

(d) In case of small groups of collectors, at least one sample for each product on-site must be audited, even if the final sample is larger than the SQR of the group.

(e) The same Operator can be sampled for more than one product.

E.6 Sampling and testing of products (where applicable)

The laboratory can be selected by both the CB and the Operator, among the ARSO qualified laboratory list, according to criteria such as kind of testing required, location, etc.

E.6.1 Sampling and testing

(a) The analytical tests to be carried out on the products to be certified or any testing required to confirm compliance, are specific for the different ACAP Standards and they related to product-specific requirements.

(b) Sampling and testing methodology are specifically indicated in the ACAP Standard in relation to the purposes of the sampling and testing

(c) Sampling may be carried out at harvest time, before the product is put on the market, or taken from the market, on a case-by-case base.

(d) The list of the parameters and also contaminant to be searched by the laboratory shall be prepared taking into consideration the Specific requests from the Standard of certification.

E.7 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

With regard to scheme E, the following criteria are applied for the final evaluation of compliance.

E.7.1 Major Non-Conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audit: All Major NC must be closed with effective corrective actions before the release of the certificate

E.7.2 Minor non-conformance

(a) Initial (First certification) audit: It is allowed for the 20% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

The remaining 80% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

(b) Surveillance and Re-certification audit: It is allowed for the 10% of the Minor NC raised during Initial audit to be closed within the next surveillance audit, upon presentation and approval of a corrective action plan.

(c) The remaining 90% of the Minor NC raised shall be closed within the given time

Annex F
(normative)

Scheme F: Sustainable wild catch fisheries and aquaculture of marine and freshwater species

F.1 Introduction

This certification scheme is applicable to wild catch of fish and other sea water/ fresh water species and marine and freshwater inland and marine aquaculture. It can be operated by single fishery units of by a fishery fleet willing to certify their products according to the African Standards included in ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme.

F.2 Reference standards

F.2.1 African reference standards

F.2.1.1 The African Standard ARS/AES 02, *Fisheries — Sustainability and eco-labelling — Requirements* has the following principles:

Principle 1: Legal compliance
Principle 2: Respect human rights
Principle 3: Respect labour rights
Principle 4: Maintain fisheries resources and rebuild depleted fish stocks
Principle 5: Maintain ecosystems integrity
Principle 6: Contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to the detrimental effects of climate change.
Principle 7: Responsible waste management
Principle 8: Efficient use of resources

F.2.1.2 ARS AES 5, *Aquaculture — African catfish — Sustainability and ecolabelling — Requirements* and ARS AES 6, *Aquaculture — Tilapia — Sustainability and ecolabelling — Requirements* have the following core principles:

Principle 1: Comply with all applicable laws and regulations
Principle 2: Responsible environmental management
Principle 3: Conserve water resources
Principle 4: Conserve species biodiversity and wild populations
Principle 5: Use resources responsibly
Principle 6: Environmentally responsible fish biosecurity and welfare
Principle 7: Be socially responsible
Principle 8: Economically sustainable aquaculture farm

F.2.2 Other standards

1. ARS 1106: Tilapia production aquaculture farms — Good aquaculture practices
2. ARS 1107: Freshwater Aquatic Animal Production Farms — Good aquacultural Practices
3. ARS ISO 16488: Marine finfish farms — Open net cage — Design and operation
4. *CD-ARS 1866:2024, Abalone — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*
5. *CD-ARS 1867:2024, Shrimp/prawns — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*
6. *CD-ARS 1868:2024, Tropical marine fin fish — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*
7. *CD-ARS 1890:2024, Seaweed — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*
8. *CD-ARS 1894:2024, Freshwater trout aquaculture — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*
9. *CD-ARS 1944:2024, Fish breeding and hatchery management (fish seed certification) — Ecolabelling and sustainability — Requirements*

F.3 Audit results and evaluation of compliance

F.3.1 Continuous improvement criteria

ARS/AES Standards contain a continuous improvement system that requires certified legal entities to gradually increase their compliance over four performance levels.

The specific binding level requirements (**Tiers**) will not change under any condition, including suspension or cancellation of a certificate, modification of scope or the change of a CB.

F.3.2 The Maturity Model of ACAP AES certification scheme

The Performance Tiers provide a framework for operators to improve their compliance levels in line with the continual improvement principles. These tiers provide opportunities for operators to invest gradually as well as for small-scale operators to engage in the certification process at affordable rates.

F.3.3 Management plan

The management plan, in this respect called the **Operator Sustainability Plan (PSP)** is an organizational tool for determining baseline performance levels, identifying a roadmap for continual improvement, and for achieving and documenting improvements in the environmental, social, and economic performance of the operation. The contents of the management plan:

(a) Organized according to environmental, social, and economic factors.

(b) Describes the operation's land, resources, and current practices, including baseline information on the status of indicators relevant for the ARS/AES Standard to be applied.

(c) Identifies critical criteria and indicators the operator must monitor to maintain or improve performance.

(d) Records goals for meeting criteria and improving performance.

(e) Documents strategies implemented, results observed, and outcomes achieved.

(f) Identifies any unexpected outcomes or problems, as well as plans for mitigating or improving outcomes for the next cycle.

F.3.4 Classification of findings

Regarding scheme F, Critical Non-Conformance. This is a Major non-conformance raised against a Required Indicator of a Critical Criteria.

F.3.5 Critical criteria

Critical criteria cover the highest-priority and highest-risk environmental, social and labour issues. Single Operators and group administrators are required to comply with all applicable critical criteria at all time as a condition to grant or maintain the certificate.

Zero-tolerance critical criteria. Failing to comply with any of the Required Indicators related to the following zero-tolerance criteria results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate:

(a) No destruction of High Conservation Value areas

(b) No forced / slave labour

(c) No mistreatment of workers

(d) No sexual harassment

(e) No discrimination

(f) No worst forms of child labour

Critical criteria are identified with "**C**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

F.3.6 Level of performance indicators

There are three categories of Indicators to be addressed and complied to achieve and maintain certification against one or more ARS/AES Standards:

(a) **Required Indicators.** These indicators are critical for compliance and achievement of the certificate and include indicators that are linked to Critical criteria. Compliance to 100% of these indicators is required to complete (or maintain) the certification cycle. Required indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Required Indicators are identified with "**R**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

(i) Non-Conformances raised against a Required indicator linked to a Critical Criteria must be scored as Critical non-conformance and cannot be closed with a Follow Up audit and results in the denial or the immediate cancellation of the certificate. It will not be possible to receive a new audit before six months. New audit must be carried out by the same audit team.

(ii) Non-Conformances raised against a Required indicator linked to other criteria must be scored as Major non-conformance and must be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for initial certification). Failure to complete effective corrective actions within the given timeframe will results in the denial or the suspension of the certificate until satisfactory corrective actions are completed. Considering the complexity of possible missing data to be retrieved, the time interval allowed for the correction of non-conformities is extended to 6 months.

(b) **General Indicators.** These indicators are considered fundamental for compliance and achievement of the certificate. Compliance to minimum 80% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (or maintain) the certification cycle. General indicators change according to the different ARS/AES Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. General Indicators are identified with "**G**" in the different ARS/AES Standards

(i) Non-compliances raised against a General Indicator may be scored as Major or Minor non-conformity, or Observation.

(ii) Minor Non-Conformances must be closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 80% of compliance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 20% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions assessed during the next following audit. If at the end of the following audit some Minor non-conformance are not closed with corrective actions, these will be added to the new Minor non-conformances raised during the audit. Each corrective action must be fully implemented within a year.

(iii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement.

(c) **Optional Indicators.** These indicators are considered for continual improvement. Compliance to minimum 20% of these indicators, applicable for the scope, is required to complete (or maintain) the certification cycle. Optional indicators change according to the different ARS/AES

Standards and their number increases with increasing of the certification tiers, from Bronze to Platinum. Optional Indicators are identified with "**O**" in the different ARS/AES Standards.

(i) Non-compliances raised against an Optional Indicator may be scored as Minor non-conformity, or Observation, according to categorization given in respective standards.

(ii) Minor Non-Conformances must be all closed with effective corrective action and Follow Up audit within 28 days (90 days for Initial certification) up to the minimum requirement of 20% of compliance for the specific tier of certification. For the remaining 80% a corrective action plan shall be proposed and approved by the Auditor within the same timeframe, corrective actions must be completed before the next re-certification audit. However, during the inspection all the aspects concerning these requirements will be checked and each deficiency will be highlighted in the Auditing Report as a recommendation. The Company shall evaluate the possible necessity of implementing corrective measures and, within the following inspection, shall inform the Certification Body regarding the decisions taken and the corrective measures implemented.

(iii) Observations do not have influence on the final certification but must be taken into consideration and implemented for continual improvement

Indicator	Compliance to Tier	Critical NC	Major NC	Minor NC	Observation
Required from Critical Criteria	100% the day of audit	Yes No corrective actions allowed Certificate cancelled Time for new audit >6 months	NO	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement
Required from other Criteria	100% with follow up	NO	Yes Corrective actions allowed within 28 days FU audit required	NO	Yes Only for continual improvement
General From all criteria	80% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 80% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 20% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement
Optional From all criteria	20% with follow up	NO	NO	Yes Corrective actions up to minimum 20% allowed within 28 days. FU audit required. Remaining 80% action plan 28 days FU next audit	Yes Only for continual improvement

F.3.7 Levels of performance (Tiers)

For the achievement of certification, there are four levels of performance, which are elaborated hereafter.

F.3.7.1 Bronze Tier

Minimum Entry Level: The Operator commits to engage in the process and develops a Operator Sustainability Plan (PSP) that identifies sustainability goals and strategies for achieving them.

In addition, 100% of Required indicators, at least 60% of General indicators and at least 20% of the Optional indicators required for the Bronze tier, must be complied with.

This certification is valid for a period of up to three years, subject to confirmation through annual surveillance audits Re-certification at the entry level is possible for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

F.3.7.2 Silver Tier

The Operator (Operator, processor, tourism operators, etc.) demonstrates considerable progress in sustainability performance.

Indicators required for the Silver tier are additional to the one required for bronze tier. 100% of Required indicators, at least 80% of General and at least 20% of the Optional indicators for Silver Tier must be complied with.

Silver tier achievement can be claimed if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years for a maximum of 2 cycles (6 years) after which the entity must progress to a higher tier.

F.3.7.3 Gold Tier

The Operator demonstrates very substantial sustainability performance.

Indicators required for Gold Tier are additional to the one required for Silver Tier. 100% of Required indicators, and at least 80% of General Indicators for Gold Tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must be complied with.

Gold tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely if performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

F.3.7.4 Platinum Tier

The Operator demonstrates an outstanding level of sustainability performance. Indicators required for Platinum Tier are additional to the one required for Gold Tier.

100% Required indicators and at least 80% of General indicators required for the platinum tier and at least 20% of the optional indicators must complied with.

Platinum tier achievement can be claimed indefinitely as long as performance is re-verified through annual surveillance, and recertified every three years.

Tier	Required Indicators	General Indicators	Optional indicators
Bronze	100%	80%	20%
Silver	100%	80%	20%
Gold	100%	80%	20%
Platinum	100%	80%	20%

F.4 Additional performance criteria and rules

(a) Possible new non-conformities against new criteria detected during surveillance audits will be added to the original balance of Minor non-conformances still open from the previous audit/s.

(b) In the case of group administrators with smallholder members, performance criteria is applied to each single sample.

(c) A maximum of 20% of the audited sample of smallholders may fail on reaching 80% of General Indicators and 20% of Optional Indicators at Follow under the condition that these remaining Minor nonconformities are corrected no more than 12 months after the preceding audit.

F.5 Certification of ARS/AES 2, aquaculture and chain of custody

F.5.1 Certification of ARS/AES 2 and aquaculture

The certification process consists of three main stages (See Figure 1 below)

1) Audit;
2) Review;
3) Decision.

F.5.1.1 The Initial Audit phase consists of two phases:
a) Preliminary phase (S1);
b) Audit implementation phase (S2).

F.5.1.2 The preliminary phase (S1) aims to:
a) Audit the documentation of the firm management system;

b) Assess the firm site location and characteristics and exchange information with the firm's staff in order to assess whether the audit implementation phase, S2 can be started;

c) Review the firm's understanding of the regulations' requirements, particularly related to the identification of key aspects, processes, objectives and functioning of the management system;

d) Gather the necessary information about areas of interest of the management system, processes, and location(s) of the firm, including related legal aspects and compliance to the regulation (e.g. regarding quality, environment, legal aspects related to the firm's activity, associated risks, etc.);

e) Review the allocation of resources for S2 and develop a plan with the firm for S2;

f) Plan S2, create a detailed document of the firm's management system, activities, and sites;

g) Check if the implementation of the management system indicates the firm is ready for the S2 audit.

A part of the S1 may take place at firm's head offices. Once S1 is completed with positive outcome, it is possible to proceed directly to S2.

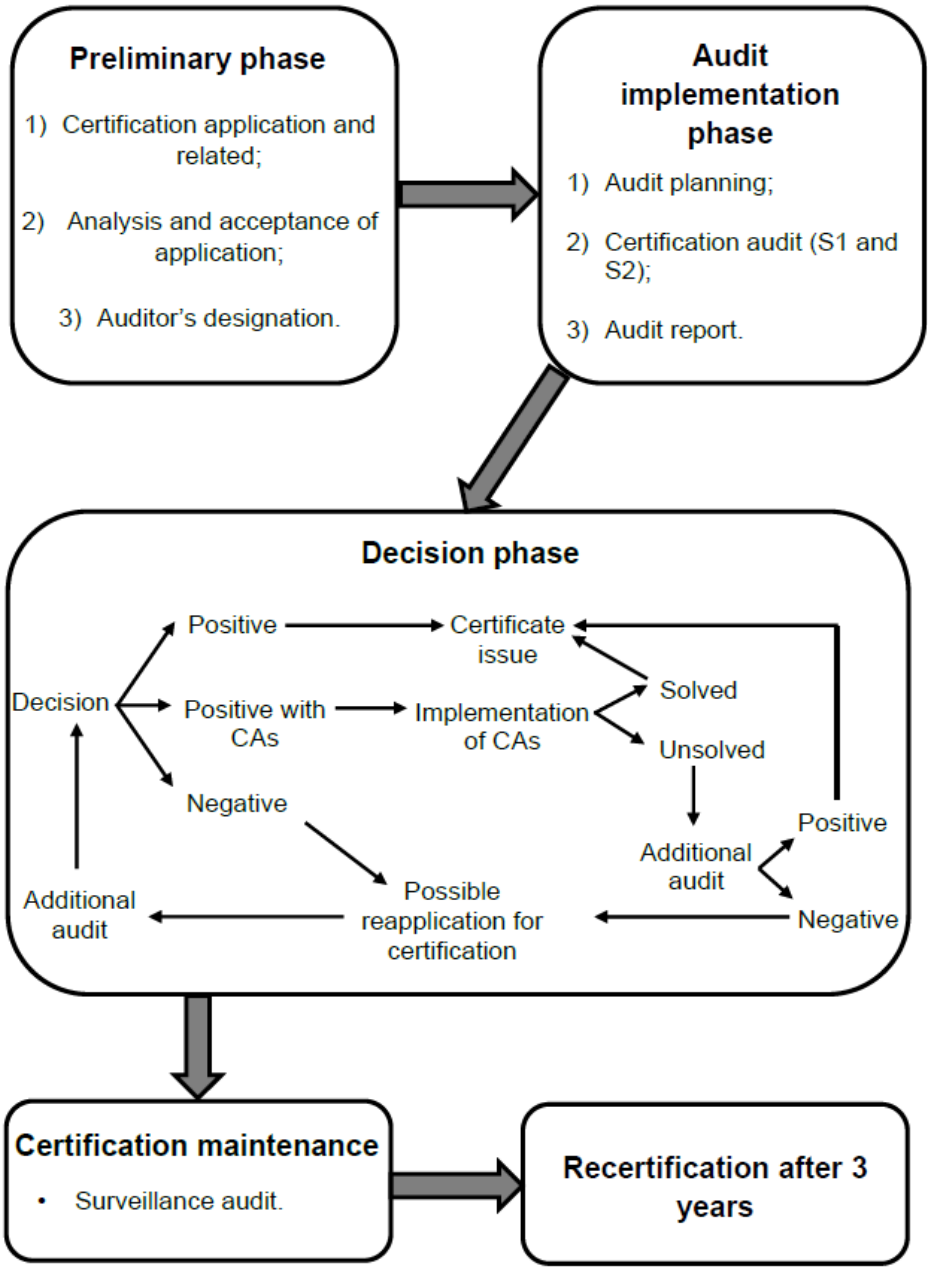


Figure F.1: Steps for issuance and maintenance of certification[2]

Audit implementation phase (S2):
During S2, the implementation and efficiency of the firm's management system are assessed. This phase shall be carried out at the firm's site(s) where the processes subjected to certification take place, and shall include an audit of the following:

a) Compliance of the management system to all the legislative requirements;

b) Activities of monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing in accordance to the fundamental objectives and goals of the firm;

c) The firm's management system and its compliance against the legal requirements;

d) The firm's control of the processes;

[2] FOS 0001, *Certification Procedure — FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS-FF, FOS-FM, FOS-FO, FOS-O3 and CoC General requirements*

e) The firm's governance;

f) Links between regulation requirements, policy, objectives and goals of the firm, all the applicable legal requirements, responsibilities, staff competences, activities, and procedures;

g) Internal audits and review by the firm's management.

Audits are carried out according to the principles outlined in ISO 19011.

F.5.2 Certification- CoC

All companies processing certified products shall undergo a Chain of Custody (CoC) audit. The chain of custody standard applies to each step of the supply chain. In the case of companies and/or subcontractors (service providers) only trading, distributing or storing certified tamper-proof, packaged products, the audit is not necessary.

The certification process for Chain of Custody (CoC) consists of three main stages detailed in F.5.1.

F.5.3 Subcontractors and suppliers

Subcontracted operators (*i.e.* fish farms, fishing vessels and processors) working on behalf of the firm and responsible for the production of the product to be certified, shall be included in the scope of certification.

Subcontracted activities that fall within the scope of the certification shall be declared during application, to allow the CBs to schedule audits at these premises. There shall be a contract between the firm and all subcontractors responsible for the production of the product to be certified, as the firm is responsible for the compliance of all subcontracting company to ACAP standards. CBs are responsible for verifying the existence of those contracts before starting the certification process.

Suppliers are independently certified operators that own a valid ACAP certification. Suppliers do not need to be included in the scope of certification of a processor seeking ACAP CoC certification when they own a valid ACAP certification.

F.5.4 Certification of operator group

The certification of operator or processor group is authorized when:

(1) All operators or processors in the group belong to the same legal entity, and/or

(2) All group members implement a common management system (e.g. evaluation of escapes, farming practices, traceability of the batch, equipment maintenance, etc).

In the latter case, there shall be written contracts in force between each operator member and the legal entity of the operator group. The group shall undertake internal audits of all members, covering all products under the certification scope to ensure compliance with the certification requirements. The internal audits shall include minimum one internal audit of the management system and of one internal audit covering 50% of all group members per year. The group is the certificate holder once certified. If individual members of a operator or processor group leave the group, the certificate is not valid for that member, and its products cannot carry the label anymore.

New operators may be added to a certificate in effect. If it corresponds to 10% or less, this addition can be done with an internal audit. It is the responsibility of the certificate holder to update the CB and ARSO on any addition or change of group members. The newly added operators shall be audited during the subsequent audit. If it corresponds to more than 10%, the audit shall be carried out by a CB.

The CB does not inspect all operators or production sites, but just a sample. Hence, the CB shall assess whether the internal controls of the group are appropriate.

F.5.5 Non-conformities and corrective actions

From the date of the onsite audit, the CB shall produce the audit report within 15 working days. Non-conformities (NCs) detected during the audit shall be reported by the auditor to the firm and to ARSO. The firm is responsible to address and solve all NCs detected during the audit before the issue of the certification.

- **In the case of Major NCs:** The company requesting the certification shall be 100% compliant with essential requirements to be recommended for certification by the certification body. The certificate cannot be granted if the company has a major NC that is not closed.

- **In the case of Minor NCs:** To be recommended for certification by the certification body, the company shall:

  (a) **Elaborate a corrective action plan to come into compliance with all important requirements:** within maximum three weeks from the date of audit of the NCs, the company shall submit a proposal to carry out the corrective actions to the satisfaction of the certification body. In the proposal, the company shall include the timeframe for the implementation of each corrective action, considering that all minor NCs must be closed before the surveillance audit. The proposal shall be analysed by the certification body regarding its consistency and feasibility. If accepted, the certificate can be granted.

  (b) **Resolve all minor NCs reported in the corrective action plan which are verified in the surveillance audit:** the company must have complied with the approved proposal. If the approved proposal has not been fully implemented, the certificate is suspended until the resolution of any remaining minor NCs.

The firm shall plan and implement corrective actions (CAs) in the appropriate timeframe.

CBs are responsible for the communication of the NCs, for their implementation within the appropriate timeframe, and for their audit and approval. The auditor shall report any NCs in the audit report together with evidence of non-compliance. The CAs are considered completed for the purpose of certification only when their implementation is verified and approved by the auditor.

The CB shall report non-conformities according to the latest ACAP CAR template and related evidence of CA implementation together with the audit report to ARSO.

F.5.6 Decision

The CB shall make the decision of granting a certification within a maximum of 30 working days after closure of any outstanding NCs. The decision is based on the amount and type of NCs recorded, if any, during the audit, and on any other relevant information given. The requirement for firms to solve NCs before gaining certification depends on the level of the NC.

ARSO Secretariat shall be informed of audit outcomes alongside the complete audit report and a copy of any certificates.

F.5.7 Issue of certificates

The CBs issue the certificates, which are valid for three years and shall include the following minimum information:

- ARSO Mark
- Certification Body Logo;
- The name and address of the company;

- The name and address of the CB;
- The certified sites and/or list of certified vessels;
- The certification scheme with reference to the current standard version;
- The fishery subjected to certification, fishing method and fishing area for wild catch products, or the type of aquaculture production and farm sites for farmed products;
- In case CoC certificate, describe the audited process (e.g. farming, fishing, fish feed production, fish oil production, pre – processor, end processor, import, export, distribution, …) and refer to products covered by certification;
- The certificate number;
- Date of issue;
- Date of expiry;
- Signature or other authorisation defined by the responsible person.

In addition, each issued certificate shall include information about the national accreditation body (including accreditation number and name of the AB based on the instructions issues by the AB).

The validity of the certificate can be extended beyond three years for a maximum period of 60 days after the certificate's expiry date to allow for recertification. This maximum extension can only occur if there is a valid reason, which shall be reported by the CB and evaluated by ARSO Secretariat.

Valid reasons are here intended as:

- Lack of production (e.g. sanitary problem, closed fishing season, etc.);
- Geopolitical situations (e.g. civil wars, general strikes, etc.);
- Natural disasters (e.g. tsunami, earthquake, etc.);
- Evidence of absence of key people in the company related to the certification process.

F.5.8 Publication of the audit report

The CB shall produce an audit report using the checklist relative to the appropriate standard. It is the CB's responsibility to use the most updated version of the standards.

It is requested to specify in the audit report, section "Additional information", what type of audit is being conducted (initial, surveillance, additional or recertification) and, in the case of multi-site audits, specify also the method for calculation of places inspected.

The report shall be approved by the CB and sent to ARSO Secretariat once the certification process is concluded

Certification Body shall file full audit reports at its office and make these reports available to relevant parties upon request and specify in the contract with certified companies the possibility of excluding commercially sensitive information before making audit reports publicly available.

F.5.9 Use of ARSO ACAP Mark

The ARSO ACAP Mark can be used by the certificate owner on its own or together with other labels. Guidelines on the use of the Mark are provided by ARSO.

F.5.10 Maintenance and renewal of certification

F.5.10.1 Surveillance audit

A surveillance audit shall be carried out by the CB to ensure certified companies maintain certification standards. The first surveillance audit shall be carried out within 12 months from the certificate issue. In the case of justified impediments (*e.g.* delayed fishing season), the CB may request for authorization to postpone surveillance audits for a maximum period of 90 days after the due date. Where possible and subject to fishery restrictions surveillance audits shall be carried out within 18 months from each recertification audit.

F.5.10.2 Recertification audit

Recertification audits shall be carried out at the end of the certificate's period of validity, *i.e.* three (3) years. The CB shall inspect the complete checklist (Essential/ Required, General and Optional requirements) of the applicable standard(s) during all audits.

Recertification audits are mainly focused on the NCs identified during the initial audit and on the CAs. Audits also review any additions to the management system, fishing boats or aquaculture sites previously not sampled. Audits shall follow the requirements of ISO 19011.

F.5.10.3 Unannounced audits

Unannounced audits come in addition to the initial, surveillance or recertification audits of the three-year certification cycle. Therefore, these are additional audits and shall be carried out without significant advance warning. The CB shall inform the firm staff with a maximum of two working days before the intended visit.

The CBs shall specify in the contract with certified companies the possibility of undergoing unannounced audits and that related costs shall be covered by the company subject to the audit. Annually, 3% of the companies certified by the CB in the previous year must undergo unannounced audits. This monitoring shall be carried out in a diversified manner, aiming to include at least one company certified according to each African standard. Audits shall follow the requirements of ISO 19011.

F.5.11 Certification suspension and cancellation

During a certification contract, the CB can suspend the firm's certification for the following reasons:

a) A wrong or misleading use or advertisement of the certification by the company;

b) The company refuses or hinders the audit activities;

c) The company fails to meet the financial obligations defined by the contract with the CB;

d) The auditor detects major NCs that the firms are not able to solve (e.g. stock status);

e) The company fails to carry out any CAs following NCs detected by the CB;

f) Unlicensed use of the ARSO logo or failure to pay the annual fee for the logo use.

The CB shall inform the firm about the time period within which the CAs shall be undertaken. In the event of a suspension of certification, ARSO Secretariat shall be notified.

A suspension can be revoked after an additional audit whose outcome provides evidence all NCs have been corrected. This shall take place within 90 days, otherwise the certification is revoked. The costs of the additional audit shall be covered by the firm. In the time period between the suspension of the certification and the cancellation of the suspension, the product will not be considered compliant to the African standards.

The revocation of certificate causes the immediate prohibition of the use of the certificate by the company and/or the withdrawal of all certificates of membership. The decision of revocation and the related reasons shall be communicated to the company and ARSO Secretariat.

The CB shall have clear procedures for receiving, processing and investigating complaints concerning and from certified companies, as well as appeals of non-compliances of certification decisions in relation to the standards valid at the time of the audit.

F.6 Minimum qualifications of auditing staff

F.6.1 Auditing staff for ARS/AES 2, aquaculture and chain of custody shall have the following minimum knowledge and experience:

a) Knowledge of ACAP documentation related to the certification scheme under audit, achieved through successful completion of a course officially recognised by ARSO Secretariat. The course shall include updated current best practices for fisheries and/or aquaculture.

b) Knowledge of the ISO 19011 standard and proficiency in the related techniques and methodologies. Particularly, the CB shall ensure that the auditing staff complete a course on this subject of at least 8 hours.

c) Knowledge of the processes related to the certification scheme under audit and sufficient knowledge of the related products/services, including legal requirements.

   These skills may be concentrated in one single auditor or they can be distributed among several staff members of the audit team.

d) A high school diploma or equivalent is necessary and for the following certification criteria are required:

   - For aquaculture: minimum one-year work experience in the technical or production department of an aquaculture company;
   - For wild capture fisheries: minimum one-year work experience in the technical or production department of a fishing company or a seafood processing company;
   - For sustainable fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil: minimum two years of work experience in the food industry.

Alternatively, the auditing staff shall have one of the following university degrees: Biology, Marine Biology, Chemistry, Veterinary, or similar degree in food technology or food safety, and should carry out the following as a trainee auditor:

- For aquaculture: three audits of aquaculture sites (ARS/AES 5, ARS/AES 6 or in alternative Friend of the Sea, Global GAP Aquaculture, Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP), Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) audit experience or other similar schemes);
- For wild capture fisheries: three audits of fishing activities (ARS/AES 2 or in alternative Friend of the Sea or Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) audit experience or other similar schemes);
- For sustainable fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil: three audits of food processing activities.

In all cases, the candidate shall have successfully completed at least one audit as “auditor in training” of the standard he/she is being qualified for under the supervision of a qualified auditor.

These requirements also apply to the lead auditor. In addition, the lead auditor shall have successfully completed a minimum of one audit as “lead auditor in training” for the standard he/she is being qualified for under the supervision of a qualified lead auditor.

When any changes in the requirements for assessing CBs are applied, the CBs have up to six months to come into compliance, as a transitional period. In addition, the CBs have the option to apply for exceptions with a valid justification (e.g. by demonstrating that the number of auditors is not sufficient).

The CB shall provide a Curriculum Vitae of all auditors selected for assessing companies against seafood standards prior to their first audit. Specific template shall be used.

Once ARSO receives all the requested documents and approve them, the auditor shall undertake the audit(s) training. The CB shall communicate when the process is completed and then ARSO shall issue an official statement.

The CB shall provide a Competence evaluation of all the auditors selected for assessing companies against seafood standards.

The Competence evaluation shall include the following items:

- An evaluation of knowledge and skills for each fundamental area the auditor will be expected to be working;
- An evaluation of knowledge of pertinent fishery and/or aquaculture programs and the ability to access and be able to apply relevant laws and regulations;
- An evaluation of the personal attributes of the auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner;
- A period of supervision to covering fishery and/or aquaculture principles, specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge;
- A documented sign off by the certification body of the satisfactory completion of evaluation requirements.

The CB shall provide every two years, starting from the date of the first submission, an updated Competence evaluation of all the auditors assessing companies against seafood standards.

F.6.2 Specific requirements for CoC

The auditors in charge of CoC shall have the knowledge and experience listed in F.6.1 (a, b, c, and d) and shall have completed at least five CoC audits as a trainee for chain of custody standards (including the three audits for sustainable fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil as mentioned above) or in alternative Friend of Sea, Global GAP, Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP), Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA), ISO 22000, British Retail Consortium (BRC), International Featured Standards (IFS), ISO 22005 or other recognized schemes.

F.7 Standards in introduction and revision

ARSO shall notify any change to standards, certification and accreditation procedures to ABs, CBs, and companies/ firms. The updates are sent to all accredited CBs as official communications. It is the responsibility of the CBs to inform their staff of such updates.

When the competent AB revises a new version of the current certification standards, the firms are allowed a transitional period (36 months for the wild capture standard and 12 months for all the other standards) from the date of publication of the standard to come into compliance. During this period both standards versions are considered valid, while the new version becomes compulsory at the end of the transitional period, as defined for that standard revision. In the case of modifications that require considerable investments by the firms, the length of the transitional period can be extended for an additional time span of six months. The additional time request shall be submitted by the CBs with a valid justification.

F.8 Sample's temporal and spatial distribution

Friend of the Sea does not indicate to the CBs a fee structure in order to determine the audit costs, since they are highly variable. However, each CB shall specify to its potential customers its own fee structure in a non-discriminatory manner, detailing how the costs are calculated and considering the special circumstances and requirements of developing countries and countries in transition. The written fee structure shall be made available upon request and adequate to support accurate and truthful audits commensurate with the scale, size and complexity of the fishery, fish farm or chain of custody. The initial audits shall include onsite visits.

The following procedure allows to understand how potential operating costs are calculated:

F.8.1 Certification of ARS/AES 2

The number of man-days necessary to carry out the audit depends on the size of the company and fishery being audited. If the fleet meets all the following similarities, only the square root (see Table F.1) of the total number of vessels supplying the company to be certified shall be inspected:

- All fishing vessels use the same fishing method;
- All fishing vessels use the same catching capacity per vessel (±40%);
- All fishing vessels operate in the same fishing area (intended as FAO or ICES area, depending on the reference area for the audit of the stock status of the species under consideration);
- All fishing vessels are managed uniformly by the same shipowner or under the same regulation.

To ensure that costs are kept to a minimum, the number of vessels to be inspected is determined using the calculation in Table F.1. Vessels already certified for other companies (common fleet) can be included in the certification scope but shall not be considered in the calculation of vessels to be inspected. The method for the calculation of the number of man-days required is outlined in Table F.2.

Table F.1: The number of vessels to be inspected based on the total number of vessels under audit

Total number of vessels	Sample size
up to 30	x=SQRT (n vessels)
31-300	x=0.8* SQRT (n vessels)
301-3.000	x=0.6* SQRT (n vessels)
3.000-10.000	x=0.4* SQRT (n vessels)
over 10.001	x=0.2* SQRT (n vessels)

Table F.2: The calculation of man-days for the audit of wild capture fisheries

Audited item	In situ man-days
Fishing boat	0.25 (2 hours)
Chain of Custody	0.5 (4 hours)
Social Accountability	0.5 (4 hours

A day of audit is comprised of 8 hours, excluding travel time. The indications in Table F.2 correspond to the minimum allowable audit time.
Other factors may affect audit times:

a) Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company;

b) Complexity of the environmental legislation and regulations, e.g. simplifications due to a very restrictive legislation, with strict controls of single properties, complications due to a lax legislation and rare controls;

c) Complexity of the organisation, e.g. simplifications due to the existence of documents and controls by the Public Administration, i.e. application of the principle of subsidiarity; complications of the controls due to the complex organisation of firm;

d) Other factors, such as delays in fishing vessels returning to port and during transhipment operations.

Exceptional cases:

1. Audit in remote areas:

When the onsite audit is not immediately possible because of remote geographical location or temporal constrictions of the fishing activity, a documental audit can be considered acceptable only if the vessels to be audited are equipped with full-time closed-circuit TVs (CCTVs) system on board and digital logbooks, that can provide the evidence of standard compliancy. The firm shall also engage to undergo onsite audit during the fishing season or as soon as the fishing vessels return to port.

Off-site documental audits may be carried out when the fishing vessels do not land for periods longer than 6 months or when the landing ports are located in areas that are not accessible for the auditing staff.

2. Unavailability of vessels:

In the case of unavailability of vessels at port (e.g. due to delays in landing or other impediments), the CB shall perform remotely the complete audit of the unavailable vessels included in the sample to inspect. This implies the review of all the documents and supporting evidences requested by the standard (e.g. fishing licences, boat registrations, logbooks, procedures) for all the vessels in the samples. The complete audit of vessels shall be performed during the following audit (i.e. surveillance or recertification).

F.8.2 Certification to aquaculture standards

The number of working days necessary to carry out an audit is proportional to the number of aquaculture sites and the number and complexity of the processing factories to be inspected. If all aquaculture sites operate within the same management system and same farming practices, the number of sites inspected will be the square root of the total number of sites, as outlined in Table F.3. The method for the calculation of working days is outlined in Table F.4.

Table F.3: Calculation of the number of aquaculture sites to be inspected

Total number of sites	Sample size
up to 30	x=SQRT (n sites)
31-300	x=0.8* SQRT (n sites)
301-3.000	x=0.6* SQRT (n sites)

Table F.4: Method for quantification of working days for the audit of aquaculture

Audited item	In situ working days
Aquaculture site	1 (8 hours)
Chain of Custody	0.5 (4 hours)
Social accountability	0.5 (4 hours)

Other factors may affect audit times:

a) Possible integration with Global G.A.P. Aquaculture;

b) Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company;

c) Complexity of the environmental legislation and regulations, e.g. simplifications due to a very restrictive legislation, with strict controls of single properties; complications due to lax legislation and rare controls;

d) Complexity of the organisation, e.g. simplifications due to the existence of documents and controls by the Public Administration, i.e. application of the principle of subsidiarity; complications of the controls due to the complex organisation of firm;

e) Other factors.

Exceptional cases:
In case the audit of offshore plants is not possible due to adverse weather conditions, a documental audit may be considered acceptable if the firm is able to provide evidence of compliance to all requirements related to the production site management. The firm shall also engage to undergo onsite audit during the following surveillance audit.

F.8.3 Certification of CoC

The number of working days necessary to carry out the audit is proportional to the number of certification items and, above all, to the number of suppliers involved in the sourcing process and to the source(s) of the product.

If all processing sites (permanent locations where organizations carry out production processes) operate under the control of a single entity (multi-site organisations), the number of sites inspected will be the square root of the total number of sites (Table F.3). The minimum audit time required for sustainable fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil and chain of custody certifications is summarised in Table F.5.

Table F.5: Minimum audit time required for sustainable fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil and chain of custody certifications

Audited item	In situ working days
Product source and use of GMO, Chain of Custody per processing site	0.5 (4 hours)
Social Accountability	0.5 (4 hours)

A day of audit is comprised of 8 hours, excluding travel time. The indications in Table F.5 correspond to the minimum allowable audit time. All processing sites shall be audited during the period of validity of the certificate (three years).

Other factors may affect audit times:

a) Possible integration with Global G.A.P. Aquaculture;

b) Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company.

F.8.4 Certification of operators and processors groups

- The number of man-days necessary to carry out the audit depends on the size of the operator group being audited and of its members.

- If all members of a fishery group meet the homogeneity criteria defined for fishing fleets (A1), only the square root (see Table 1) of the total number of vessels supplying the company to be certified shall be inspected.

- In the case of a group of aquaculture operators, the number of operators/sites to be audited is equivalent to the square root of the current number of operators/production sites operating with the same management system.

- Procedures for auditing methods and frequency of audits shall take into consideration risk factors to decide in which cases more audits are necessary. Anyway, all firms shall undergo at least one surveillance audit during the certification cycle (3 years). CBs can use their own judgment to determine risk factors and shall document it.

- For audit timing, refer to paragraphs from F.8.1 to F.8.4.

- The CB shall inspect the complete checklist (Essential, Important and Recommended requirements) of the applicable standard(s) during all audits.

Surveillance Audits
The duration of the surveillance audit shall be 1/3 of the duration of the initial certification audit and shall be greater than 0.5 days. One third of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audits shall be visited during the surveillance audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The surveillance audits shall include onsite visits.

Recertification Audits
Recertification audits shall have a duration of 2/3 of the initial certification audit. Two thirds of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audits shall be inspected during the recertification audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The recertification audits shall include onsite visits.

Additional Audits
Additional audits (i.e. unscheduled audits due to the detection of major NCs) can have a shorter duration that shall be proportional to the importance of the NC or to the specific case and shall be justified by the CB. Firms that have been certified before official accreditation of ACAP schemes shall be verified by means of a first certification audit at recertification.

Unannounced Audits
The duration of the unannounced audit shall be 1/3 of the duration of the initial certification audit and shall be greater than 0.5 days. One third of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audit shall be visited during the unannounced audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The unannounced audits shall include onsite visits.

Annex G
(normative)

Scheme G: Good financial grant practice certification

The objective of this standard for Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) is to standardize, simplify and strengthen the financial governance of grant funding. For grantors, they can use the standard as a minimum requirement to their grantees. For grantees, they can claim compliance with this standard to support applications for grants from grantors. This standard is to establish a consistent approach to the management of grants throughout the grant life cycle, for the benefit of grantors and grantees.
Operating in compliance to the standard should:

(a) reduce the cost and administration time for both grantors and grantees;

(b) reduce the multitude of audits and financial audits that grantees have from different grantors;

(c) increase the confidence of grantors to fund directly to grantees;

(d) reduce the risk of corruption, bribery and fraud; and

(e) enable targeted financial capacity building by grantors

This standard is designed to codify and provide requirements on established good practice. It is a quality standard and not an accounting standard. The GFGP standard provides a common framework for how grantees shall financially manage grants. It provides details of the requirements, specifications and criteria to be applied, to implement good financial grant practice.

Grantors and grantees are very diverse in nature, and range from:

(a) very large to very small;

(b) straightforward to very complex;

(c) short to longer term in nature;

(d) operating in safe to risky environments;

(e) having different levels of risk they are willing to accept;

(f) government to private foundations and individual entities;

(g) national to regional to international in nature; and

(h) mature to new and emerging.

The standard is designed to be inclusive of all the above by having four tiers from bronze to platinum. Table 1 is illustrative only and gives some indication of the types of organizations that might fit into each tier.

The tiers are cumulative from bronze through to platinum. Therefore, for an organization to achieve silver compliance, it will be required to comply with all of the requirements within the bronze and silver tiers. For an organization to achieve gold compliance, the organization will be required to comply with all of the requirements within the bronze, silver and gold tiers. To achieve platinum compliance, the organization will be required to comply with all of the requirements in this standard.

The four tiers have been designed to encourage grantees to progressively strengthen their financial grant practices as their organization develops.

The four tiers also enable grantors to manage their exposure to risk as some grantors may choose to specify grantees comply with a certain tier, or parts of a tier, depending on the size or nature of the grants that they manage and are responsible for. Grantors may, after an audit, decide to award the grant, even if the grantee does not meet their requirements and may mitigate their risk by putting in place additional financial controls, or provide capacity strengthening funding to bring the grantee up to the required level.

This standard addresses the principles of good financial grant practice, which are:

(ix) accountability;
(x) stewardship;
(xi) compliance to standards;
(xii) transparency;
(xiii) viability;
(xiv) integrity;
(xv) consistency and
(xvi) efficiency and effectiveness

Table G.2 — Organization activity indicative of GFGP tiers

Tier	Description – the organization is likely to:
Bronze	— only operates within a region in a Country be a sub-grantee of a gold level organization carrying out part of their grant activity; and/or — have few programmes and grantors.
Silver	— operate either regionally or over a number of regions within a country; — have more than a few programmes and/or complex programmes; — be a sub-grantee of a gold level organization carrying out part of their grant activity; and/or — be a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).
Gold	— be large with multiple complex programmes or with more complex programmes in which they are both grantees and grantors (i.e., manage sub-grants); — manage activities across international boundaries, receive funding from a variety of grantors and often sell services to raise more funding; and/or — be an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO), national NGO, research institution or university.
Platinum	— have a mission that requires longer term financial sustainability; and/or — be an INGO, NGO, established research institution, university, charity with the expectation of long term income (i.e., funding that covers a significant portion of its operational costs) that is regularly renewed by the same grantor or has its own income or investments.

In turn, these principles are supported by four key pillars of good financial management, which, if correctly applied, will provide the evidence to support compliance with good financial grant practice. These are:

(v) Internal controls

(vi) Record keeping

(vii) Planning

(viii) Monitoring

Further detail on both the principles of good financial grant practice and four key pillars of good financial management can be found in ARS 1651, *Good financial grant practice — Requirements*.

Annex H
(informative)

Scheme H: Cosmetology and wellness certification

Certification Scheme H on cosmetology and wellness is detailed in ACAP 4, *Cosmetology and Wellness — Certification Framework*. This framework document provides guidance for the certification of facilities which provide cosmetology and wellness services and products including the following sub-schemes:

(a) Scheme H1: Barbering

(b) Scheme H2: Haircare

(c) Scheme H3: Skin care

(d) Scheme H4: Nail care

(e) Scheme H5: Massage therapy

(f) Scheme H6: Reflexology

(g) Scheme H7: Aromatherapy

(h) Scheme H8: Spa therapies

(i) Scheme H9: Hair removal techniques

(j) Scheme H10: Body art and body piercing

Annex J
(informative)

Scheme J: Sustainable mining certification

Sustainable mining certification is based on a set of African standards which specify objectives and leading performance requirements for economically, environmentally and socially responsible practices. Scheme J serves as the basis of a voluntary system offering independent third-party audit and certification of economic, environmental and social performance measures at industrial-scale mine sites.

J.1 The expected impacts are:

(1) Promote a common vision of sustainability in the mining industry in Africa.

(2) Facilitate the implementation of a voluntary sustainable mining management scheme.

(3) Facilitate the integration of mining sustainability concepts in existing and future legislation in African countries.

(4) Improve trust relationship among all the stakeholders

(5) Improve the social acceptance of mining activities.

(6) Contribute to economic and social development of local communities.

(7) Improve the efficient use of natural resources.

(8) Improve restoration and rehabilitation of natural areas affected by mining activities.

(9) Promote the use of best available techniques.

(10) Contribute to the streamlining of permitting procedures.

(11) Help to formalize the set of data to be provided to the authorities for statistical or other regulatory purposes

The sustainable mining certification is based on the sustainability principles and criteria with the following broad objectives:

J.2 Institutional and positive legacy framework

(a) Policy and legal framework for large scale mining (LSM)
(b) Policy and legal framework for artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)
(c) Guidance on governance aspects
(d) Guidance on legal compliance
(e) Environmental and social impact, assessment and management
(f) Environment and social impact monitoring
(g) Protect, respect and remedy framework
(h) Complaints and grievance mechanisms, and access to remedy
(i) Planning and financing reclamation and closure

J.3 Economic guidelines

(a) Econometric assessment of mining developments
(b) Revenue, royalty and rent payments transparency
(c) Transparent marketing and fair pricing practices for ASM minerals
(d) Linkage framework for market access by ASM

(e) Local mineral beneficiation and mineral separation requirements
(f) Transparent mineral valuation framework

J.4 Social guidelines

(a) Community and stakeholder engagement
(b) Engagement with indigenous people
(c) Fair labour and working conditions
(d) Occupational health and safety
(e) Community health and safety
(f) Emergency preparedness and response
(g) Human rights due diligence and compliance
(h) Mining and conflict-affected or high-risk areas
(i) Security and human rights
(j) Artisanal and small-scale mining
(k) HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria
(l) Obtaining community support and delivering benefits
(m) Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)
(n) Cultural Heritage
(o) Resettlement

J.5 Environmental guidelines

(a) Water management
(b) Waste and materials management
(c) Air quality
(d) Noise and vibration
(e) Greenhouse gas emissions
(f) Protected areas
(g) Conservation and protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services
(h) Cyanide management
(i) Mercury management
(j) Environmental impacts of different mining processes
(k) End of life mine reclamation/closure requirements

Sub-Schemes in this category include those under development based on the following African standards:

(i) ARS 1340, *Production of natural stone for building — Sustainability assessment and certification*

(ii) ARS 1343, *Sustainable sand mining — Requirements and assessment guidelines*

Annex K
(normative)

Scheme K: Ecological organic agriculture certification

K.1 Introduction

ACAP Scheme K specifies the criteria for organic agriculture certification to be performed by Certification Bodies (CB) for individual and group certifications.

K.2 Functions and activities for an organic certification scheme

The organic certification scheme includes at least the activities listed in ISO/IEC 17067as follows:

K.2.1 Selection, including planning and preparation of activities, specifications of requirements, e.g. normative documents, sampling, as applicable;

K.2.2 Determination of characteristics, as applicable through: (a) Testing, (b) Inspection, (c) Design appraisal, (d) Auditing of services/processes, and (e) Other determination activities;

K.2.3 Review - Examining the evidence of conformity obtained during the determination stage to establish whether the specified requirements have been met;

K.2.4 Decision on certification - Granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending, withdrawing certification; and

K.2.5 Attestation, licensing - Issuing a certificate of conformity or other statement of conformity (attestation).

K.3 General requirements for certification body

A certification body (CB) should be competent to take all necessary steps to ensure the consistent operation, integrity, impartiality, and independence of its certification systems following the principles of ISO/IEC 17065.

K.4 Standard and normative documents

ARS 751, *Organic food products — Code of practice*
WD-ARS 1016, *Organic fruits and vegetables production and post-harvest handling and storage — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1422, *Organic honey certification — Requirements and guidelines*
WD-ARS 1895, *Organic aquaculture — General principles, management standards and permitted substances lists*
WD-ARS 1896, *Organic dairy production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1897, *Organic livestock production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1898, *Organic and grass-finished beef cattle production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1899, *Organic potato production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1900, *Organic poultry production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1901, *Organic rice production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1902, *Organic tomato production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1903, *Organic garlic, leek and onion production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1904, *Organic sweet potato production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1905, *Biodynamic and organic agriculture — Farming and processing requirements*
WD-ARS 1906, *Organic cotton production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1907, *Organic tea production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1908, *Organic coffee production — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1909, *Organic freshwater trout aquaculture — Requirements*
WD-ARS 1910, *Organic shrimps/prawns aquaculture — Requirements*

K.5 General requirements for applicant for certification

K.5.1 The legal requirements and certification agreement apply.

K.5.2 The organic certification system shall be based on written agreements, with clear responsibilities of all parties involved in the chain of operations for production of an organic produce and/or product.

K.5.3 The operators shall sign contracts/agreements requiring them to

K.5.3.1 Follow the applicable organic agriculture standards, relevant regulatory requirements and other documents such as certification scheme or certification process;

K.5.3.2 Give access to the CB or designated authority and provide any necessary information for inspection purposes, e.g. access to:

- all relevant units and facilities of the organic operation including the non-organic production and handling units owned or managed by the operator;
- accounts and sales related records of the organic operation for the purposes of traceability of origin, nature and quantities of all raw materials bought, and the use of such materials. In addition, written and/or documentary accounts of the nature, quantities and consignees of all agricultural products sold should be accessed; and
- its record-keeping system adapted to the scope of certification that enables the CB to retrieve information necessary for evaluation of the production, storage, processing, purchase, and sale; and other relevant documentation to provide adequate audit/inspection trails and traceability of organic produce and/or products.

K.5.3.3 Inform the CB of all complaints received by the certified clients relating to the certified products.

K.5.3.4 Notify the CB of any change that may affect the ability of the operator to conform with applicable certification requirements.

NOTE Examples of changes may refer to changes in group member, plantation areas, or type of products, etc.

K.5.4 Provide the CB with information regarding any previous organic certification and/or other certification scheme currently undertaken or in progress.

K.5.5 Provide the CB with the updated information on the scope of certification, which the operator maintains or intends to maintain for ensuring organic integrity.

K.6 Resource requirements

K.6.1 The CB shall ensure that its personnel have sufficient knowledge on the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements identified by the ARS.

K.6.2 The following criteria should be applied for CB personnel in organic certification, which should include but not limited to, as appropriate, the initial review personnel, inspection and evaluation personnel, technical reviewers, and decision-makers. These personnel should have:

K.6.2.1 Sufficient background and knowledge in agriculture and/or food technology. The requirements may vary based on the functions undertaken by the personnel and the product category. Knowledge may be gained typically through educational qualification and/or experience, adequate to provide knowledge of organic products and processes. Personnel should be qualified on the basis of use of appropriate evaluation methods.

NOTE A number of evaluation methods like review of records; feedback; interviews; observations/witness; and examination can be used to evaluate knowledge and skills

K.6.2.2 Received appropriate training with respect to organic agriculture, food, processing, trade, specific production areas (e.g. mushroom production) and the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements as identified by the AMS.

K.6.2.3 Gained experience through participation in sufficient number of inspection/s or its equivalent man-days as defined by the CB for personnel involved in evaluation activities.

K.6.3 The CB should actively identify training at entry level as well as based on needs identified through systematic performance reviews and provide, as necessary, training to its staff on the requirements of the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements identified by the AMS, the certification scheme, and relevant methodologies. Adequacy of such training plans, training and evaluation records, and related materials should be maintained.

K.6.4 The performance audit should be done regularly for each evaluator/inspector. The performance audit should include observation of a sufficient number of on-site inspection/s or its equivalent man-days as defined by the CB, typically within a three-year period, unless there is sufficient supporting evidence that the inspector is continuing to perform competently.

K.7 Process requirements

K.7.1 General

K.7.1.1 Any organic certification scheme offered by the CB should have defined requirements for CB's functioning as well as certification process requirements.

K.7.1.2 The organic certification scheme should take into consideration explicitly the following aspects as applicable: retroactive recognition of conversion period, separation and inspection of non-organic production units, parallel /split production, group certification, and wild collection.

K.7.1.3 The CB should have available and implement policies and procedures for risk-based inspections, management of deviations, non-conformities and corrective actions, exchange of information between CBs and competent authorities.

K.7.2 Application

When accepting an application, the CB receiving the application should ensure availability of all the background information with respect to the operator, and whether another CB had denied certification to the applying operator. The CB should also have a documented system for corroborating the information received from the CB who had previously certified the applying operator.

K.7.3 Inspection

K.7.3.1 The CB should ensure that a full physical inspection is undertaken prior to certification of the organic operation. An inspection report should be drawn up after each visit.

K.7.3.2 The inspection protocol of the CB should at the very minimum undertake the following:

a) Auditi of the production, processing, and handling system by means of visits to facilities, fields, and storage units (which may also include visits to non-organic production units);

b) Review of records and accounts in order to verify flow of goods (production/sales reconciliation on farms, input/output reconciliation, and the trace back audits in processing and handling facilities);

c) Identification of areas of risk to organic integrity; and

d) Verification that changes to the standards and to the requirements of the certification body have been effectively implemented, and that corrective actions have been taken.

K.7.4 Sampling

K.7.4.1 Sample analyses and testing should serve as supporting tools to verify information; the organic certification scheme of the CB should set out standard procedures for taking samples, where necessary, based on perceived risks.

K.7.4.2 The CB should have documented policies and procedures aligned with the regulations relevant to establishing organic integrity. These should generally include the following:

a) System for identifying cases in which samples should be taken for analysis if use of a substance, prohibited by the standards, is suspected.

b) A procedure on taking samples and sending them to the laboratory.

c) The number of samples to be taken and the frequency of sampling.

K.7.5 Testing

Samples taken by the CB should be analyzed in ISO/IEC 17025 accredited testing laboratories. In the absence of laboratories accredited to ISO/IEC 17025, samples should be analyzed by DESIGNATED testing laboratories.

K.7.6 Certification decision

The CB grants organic certification to the applicant upon satisfaction of the criteria for certification.

K.7.7 Certification documentation

The CB should issue official organic certification document/s to each operator containing the following information:

K.7.7.1 For individual certification, the name, address, number of certified farms/plots, and total certified area of the operator whose organic produce and/or products are the subject of organic certification. In case of multiple crops, a crop list could be provided as an attachment. The operator should notify the CB for any change in the organic management system (e.g. change in the size of the area);

K.7.7.2 In case of group certification, name of the group, address, total area, and the name of all group members as well as their addresses, locations, and status (organic or in-conversion) of organic certification of each member should be included as an attachment;

K.7.7.3 Unit certified, e.g. processing unit, packaging unit, and/or storage unit;

K.7.8.4 Name and address of the CB that issued the organic certification documents;

K.7.7.5 The scope of the certification granted, including:

a) Organic produce and/or products certified, which should be identified by type or range of products. In case of group certification, this information can be described in an attachment;

b) Unit certified, e.g. processing unit, and/or packaging unit;

c) Applicable organic agriculture standard/s and/or applicable certification scheme that is/are the basis for the organic certification; and

d) Effective and expiry dates, or period of validity.

K.7.8 Surveillance

The CB should implement a system and documented procedures in conducting operator risk-based surveillance activities including:

K.7.8.1 A full physical audit/inspection is undertaken, at least once a year, of the organic production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging, and storage unit/s.

K.7.8.2 Additional, occasional, and unannounced visits/inspections should also be undertaken according to need or at random.

K.7.8.3 In the case of reported frauds, mislabeling and other complaints, the CB should conduct necessary investigation including, but not limited to, inspection and document review, depending on the nature of reported case.

K.8 Group Certification

K.8.1 Scope

The CB should limit the scope of group certification to groups that fulfill the following requirements:

K.8.1.1 The group have registered operations with a functional internal control system;

NOTE This requirement does not limit the arrangement to farmers. Other operations organized collectively may also be included provided the other requirements in K.8.1 are met.

K.8.1.2 Large farming units, simple processing units, and traders may be included as part of a group but should be inspected directly by the CB;

K.8.1.3 Simple on-farm processing and storage units may be included as part of a sample inspection arrangement;

K.8.1.4 No group of processing units and traders can apply for group certification;

K.8.1.5 Group members should have geographic proximity;

K.8.1.6 The group should be large enough and have sufficient resources to support a functional internal control system (ICS) that assures compliance of individual members with production standards in an objective and transparent manner; and

NOTE The requirement refers to the three factors that the size of the group should ensure sufficient resources, transparency, and impartiality. The CB must determine whether the group is large enough to satisfy these factors.

K.8.1.7 The group should have coordinated marketing.

K.8.2 Requirements

Group certification should require that at least:

K.8.2.1 The entity should be the group as a whole. This means that group members cannot use the organic certification independently (i.e. marketing as separate individual member outside of the group's internal control);

K.8.2.2 An effective and documented internal control system (ICS) should be in place, and there are competent personnel managing and implementing the system. The system should include a documented management structure of the ICS;

K.8.2.3 A general description of the operation with the definition of the type of group (such as cooperative, association, exporter with operators under contract);

K.8.2.4 Internal inspection protocol should be described and implemented. Audits/inspections of all group members for practices in accordance with Clause 8 of this Guide should be carried out by the ICS at least annually;

K.8.2.5 Internal inspectors should be designated by the group to carry out internal audits/inspections. The internal inspectors should receive suitable training. The ICS should set out rules to manage potential conflicts of interest of the internal inspectors;

K.8.2.6 A clear description and identification of the production units and group members should be recorded, updated, and made available at all times;

K.8.2.7 A mechanism to include new members and to implement sanctions on non-conforming group members should be in place;

K.8.2.8 The relationship of the management body to each of the group member, the relationship between group members, and conflict of interest should be evaluated by the CB prior to the issuance of the certificate;

K.8.2.9 Risk assessments should be conducted; and

NOTE Risk assessments should be done by both the CB and the group.

K.8.2.10 The core documentation is complete, which includes:

a) Appropriate maps/sketches;

b) A complete list of the group members and status of the members to the ICS;

c) Farm/field and/or processing records;

d) Yield estimates; and

e) Signed member agreements stating obligation from all group members to comply with applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements.

K.8.3 Contracts

Group certification should require that the management body of the group sign a written contract with the CB specifying the responsibilities of the group. The contract should require that the group management obtain signed obligations from all group members to comply with the applicable organic agriculture standards and relevant regulatory requirements and to allow internal and external inspections.

K.8.4 Access to standards

All group members should have access to the applicable or relevant sections of organic agriculture standards and relevant regulatory requirements presented in a way adapted to their language and knowledge.

K.8.5 External Inspection

The CB should conduct external inspections as follows:

K.8.5.1 Inspection of the group should be carried out by the CB at least annually;

K.8.5.2 The inspection visit should include both an inspection for conformity with the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and regulatory requirements and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the ICS;

K.8.5.3 Inspection of a sample of group members should be undertaken by the CB;

K.8.5.4 Determining the risk classification of the group and sample number of group members subject to external inspection should take into account the following aspects:

a) The number of operations in the group; and

b) The outcomes of the risk assessment of the management structure (low, medium or high risk) which include, but are not limited to:

1) The value of the produce/products and the difference between the price of the organic and non-organic produce/product;

2) Degree of similarity of the production systems and the crops within the group;

3) Risks for co-mingling/mixing and/or contamination; and

4) Experience of the group, (i.e. number of years in operation, number of new members registered annually, nature of problems within the organization, potential conflicts of interest, and staff turnover).

c) Determination of the number of group members subject to annual external inspection for group certification should be calculated by taking the square root of *n*, where *n* is the total number of group members or in accordance with the relevant regulations.

d) The sample should be selected based on a combination of risk-based and random selection. The risk factors may include the number of years an individual group member has been into organic production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging and storage, their size, location and/or identified risk.

e) The production, post-harvest, processing, handling, packaging, and storage units visited by the external inspection body must be predominantly different from one year to the other. Larger production units, processors, and exporters should be inspected annually by the CB.

K.8.6 Audits of the internal control system (ICS)

K.8.6.1 Internal audits of all group members should be carried out at least annually; new group members are included only after internal inspections/audits, according to procedures agreed with the CB;

K.8.6.2 Sample external audits should be carried out with the relevant documents from the internal inspection/audits, and the methods and results of the internal inspection/audits should be compared with the results of the external inspection to determine whether the inspections/audits of the ICS have adequately addressed the compliance of group members;

K.8.6.3 Instances of non-conformity have been dealt appropriately by the ICS and according to a documented system of sanctions;

K.8.6.4 Adequate records of inspections have been maintained by the ICS;

K.8.6.5 The group members understand the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements; and

K.8.6.6 The external inspector is encouraged to witness a number of internal control inspections.

K.8.7 Records

The CB shallmaintain basic data on all group members, in addition to certification records of the group as a whole. A standardized form containing the basic data should be completed and updated by the group management which includes: identification code, name, location (at least on an area map), year of entrance into the certification system, date of last internal and external inspection, number of hectares, certified crops, sales, yield estimates, and status of the group members.

K.8.8 Responsibility

The group shall be responsible for conformity of all group members. The ICS should include the application of sanctions to individual group members who do not conform with the applicable organic standards and relevant regulatory requirements as identified by the AMS. The group should inform the CB of the irregularities and non-conformities found, as well as the corrective actions implemented.

K.8.9 Sanctions

In the event of non-conformity by the group and/or its group members, sanctions should be issued commensurate with the severity of the non-conformity. Failure of the ICS to detect and act on non-conformances should invoke sanctions on the group as a whole. In cases where it finds the ICS to be lacking in reliability and effectiveness, the CB should apply sanctions to the group as a whole, including, in case of serious deficiencies, the withdrawal of the organic certification of the group.

K.9 Publicly available information

K.9.1 The requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 shall apply with respect to publicly available information and the directory of certified products.

K.9.2 The CB operating the organic certification scheme should have processes for informing all concerned, including the prospective and present certified, operators about the applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements.

K.9.3 The CB should clearly identify the standards and requirements used for the different product categories. These should be available to the operator and publicly accessible.

K.9.4 The detailed information regarding applicable organic agriculture standard/s and relevant regulatory requirements against which the products will be certified and the certification processes, as well as schedule of fees should be made available through publications and electronic media.

K.10.2 The conditions for use of certification scheme mark and validity of organic certificate should be in accordance with the rules and regulations the CB that certified the last process (processing, packing, labeling) should be identified.

K.10.3 The validity of certificates for organic certification scheme should be in accordance to the relevant regulations on organic agriculture.

K.10.4 The CB should

K.10.4.1 Exercise control over the use and display of certificates and logos that it can authorize operators to use;

K.10.4.2 Be able to request an operator to discontinue the use of certificates and logos that it authorizes an operator to use based on the provisions of the agreement;

K.10.4.3 Apply suitable actions to deal with incorrect/falsified references to the certification system or misleading use of certificates or logos that it authorizes operators to use.

K.11 Extension, reduction, suspension, reinstatement, withdrawal or transfer of certification

Reference shall be made to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 with respect to changes affecting certification and termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification.

K.12 Records

The CB should maintain records to demonstrate that the certification procedures on organic production, handling, storage, processing, and packaging have been effectively implemented. Such records should include but not limited to:

K.12.1 Full description of the production, handling, storage, processing, and packaging units;

K.12.2 It should also maintain information about individual members of a group as well as the certified organic unit's sub-contractors, if any.

K.13 Complaints and appeals

K.13.1 Reference shall be made to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 with respect to complaints and appeals.

K.13.2 The competent authority should also establish policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints received from the general public such as consumers including operators about the operation of the CB or certification activities as well as complaints against operators.

K.14 Non-conforming produce/products

The CB should define procedure(s) that should be implemented when a produce or product no longer fulfils certification requirements, such as product recall and/or providing information to the market. The CB should ensure that appropriate corrective actions have been carried out satisfactorily.

NOTE See also ISO Guide 27 (Guidelines for corrective action to be taken by a CB in the event of misuse of its certification mark of conformity)

K.15 Fraudulent claim of certification

Sanctions and penalties for fraudulent claims of certification including misuse of certification marks and mislabeling should be enforced in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

K.16 Management systems

Reference shall be made to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 with respect to management system requirements.

Annex L
(normative)

Scheme L: Made in Africa certification

This certification Scheme applies to any party seeking certification of the requirements for the Made in Africa products, that includes Agro-processing, Forestry and forestry products, Mineral products, Chemicals and pharmaceuticals, Leather and leather products, Textiles and textile products, Machinery, tools and equipment, Construction materials, Petro-chemical products, rubber and plastics products, Tourism, hospitality and creative services, Knowledge based services and Logistics and transport. The award applies to all production, processing, and trading within the ACAP field of application.

The award is based on the main criteria for Made in Africa and can be certified alone or, when available, in combination with the ARSO product certification standard applicable for the production or service in the scope. The criteria included in the Made in Africa are listed below.

(v) Competitive business environment
(vi) Rules of origin
(vii) Intellectual property rights
(viii) Quality and regulatory infrastructure

According to the kind of production and /or service carried out by the Company, some criteria may not be applicable. Where a certain criterion is not applicable, the company will have to justify.

Various applicable standards are available freely in the ARSO catalogue and website.

L.1 Scheme L1: Single site farms/companies

This certification scheme is applicable to Single site Farms/Companies, willing to certify their products according to the ARSO standards included in Scheme L.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the Made in Africa criteria applied to the production process of products and services to be verified by auditing of implementation of the Made in Africa Criteria

L.2 Scheme L2: Group of farmers/companies or multisite production operations

This certification scheme is applicable to group of Farmers/companies or multisite production operations willing to certify their products according to the African standards included in Scheme L and managed by a centralized Quality Management System (QMS), where the QMS owner is also the owner of the certificate.

The main certification criteria are related to compliance with the Made in Africa criteria applied to the production process of products or services to be verified by:

(iii) Auditing of implementation of the MiA criteria.

(iv) Auditing of QMS implementation

The implementation of a QMS at group or multisite level, allows sampling while giving confidence on the general level of compliance of the whole group.

The present certification scheme is applicable to the African Standards included in Scheme L and integrates the general rules for scheme L2 with regard to the management of certification for groups of farmers or multisite and implementation of the QMS.