

CHAPTER 2

SCOPE AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAMME

The National Programme for Organic Production (hereinafter referred to as ‘NPOP’) proposes to provide an institutional mechanism for the implementation of National Standards for Organic Production (hereinafter referred to as ‘NSOP’). The aims of the NPOP, *inter alia* include the following:

- (a) To provide the means of evaluation of certification programme for organic agriculture and products (including wild harvest, aquaculture, live stock products) as per the approved criteria.
- (b) To accredit certification programmes of Certification Bodies seeking accreditation under this programme.
- (c) To facilitate certification of organic products in conformity with the NSOP.
- (d) To facilitate certification of organic products in conformity with the importing countries organic standards as per equivalence agreement between the two countries or as per importing country requirements.
- (f) To encourage the development of organic farming and organic processing.

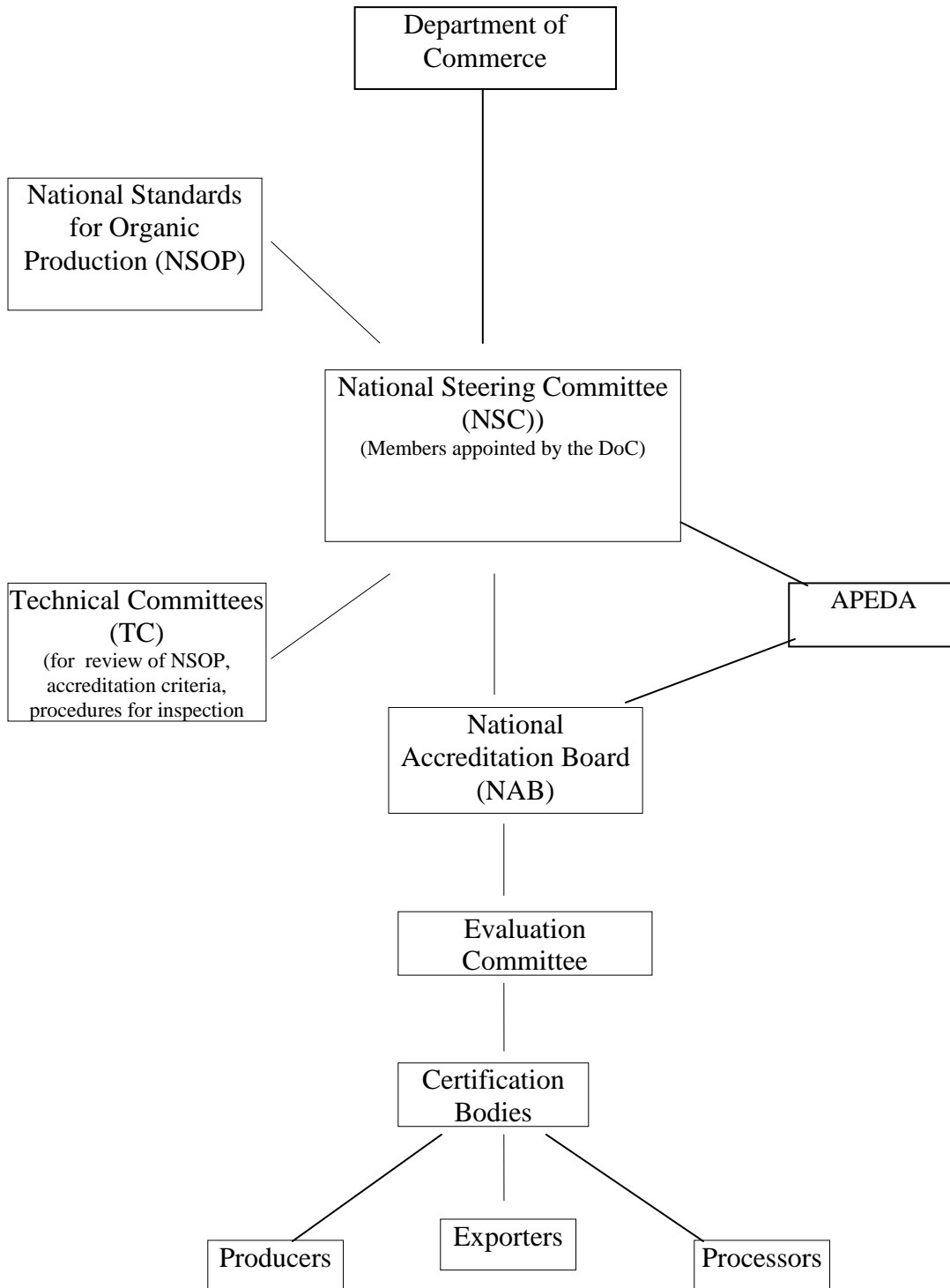
2.1 SCOPE

The NPOP shall, *inter alia*, include the following:

- (a) Policies for development and certification of organic products as notified by the Department of Commerce from time to time
- (b) National standards for organic products and processes.
- (c) Accreditation of certification programmes to be operated by Certification Bodies.
- (d) Certification of organic products.

2.2 OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The operational structure of the NPOP is given in Fig. 1 below:



2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL SET UP

Details of the organizational set-up of the NPOP are given below:

(a) Department of Commerce (DOC)

The National Programme for Organic Production shall be operated under the overall guidance and directions of the Department of Commerce, Government of India. The Department of Commerce shall act as the Apex body of the NPOP.

(b) National Steering Committee (NSC)

The Department of Commerce shall constitute an apex policy formulation committee called the National Steering Committee (hereinafter referred to as 'NSC') to be headed by Commerce Secretary. The Commerce Secretary may nominate any other officer to chair the NSC meeting. The NSC shall be responsible for the implementation and administration of the NPOP. The NSC shall be serviced by APEDA. The members of the NSC shall be drawn from the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Textiles, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Environment & Forest, APEDA, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Commodity Boards (such as the Tea Board, Spices Board, Coffee Board, Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) and other government and private organizations having experience in organic farming and production. The members of Ministries shall be the Ex-officio members of the NSC. The NSC shall have the power to co-opt members other than those mentioned in this clause 2.3 (b) or as notified by Government of India from time to time.

The responsibilities of the NSC shall *inter alia*, include the following:

- (i) Approving procedures for implementation of the NPOP, which would include the NSOP, Accreditation policy and procedures as well as the regulations for use of the Certification Trade Mark "India Organic Logo".

- (ii) Delegating responsibility of implementing the NPOP.
- (iii) Constituting the National Accreditation Body (NAB).
- (iv) Constituting Technical Committee(s) and such other committees as deemed appropriate for the implementation of the NPOP.
- (v) Take decisions on the proposals placed by various committees set up by NSC.

The NSC shall meet at least once a year to review the functioning of the NPOP and take decisions on various policy matters concerning the implementation and functioning of the NPOP. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 30% of the total strength.

The NSC shall also appoint such sub-committees, as it deems fit, for the smooth and efficient functioning and implementation of the NPOP.

The NSC shall review and amend the NPOP from time-to-time.

(c) National Accreditation Body (NAB)

The NAB shall be serviced by APEDA. The NAB shall consist of members representing Department of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, FSSAI, MPEDA and various Commodity Boards (such as the Tea Board, Spices Board, Coffee Board). The Additional Secretary (Plantations) shall be the Chairman of the NAB. The NAB shall have the power to co-opt members other than those mentioned in this clause 2.3 (c) as notified by the Government of India from time to time.

The NAB shall meet as and when required for review of the Certification Bodies.

The responsibilities of the NAB shall include:

- (i) Drawing up procedures for the evaluation and accreditation of the certification programmes of the Certification Bodies

- (ii) Formulating procedures for evaluation of the Certification Bodies
- (iii) Accreditation of the Certification Bodies
- (iv) Constituting an Evaluation Committee
- (v) Any other responsibilities assigned by NSC from time to time

The quorum for NAB meeting shall be 30% of the total strength.

(d) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

APEDA shall function as the Secretariat for the implementation of the NPOP. The responsibilities of APEDA, as a Secretariat, shall include, *inter alia*, the following:

- (i) Take steps for the implementation of the decisions of the NSC, NAB and the Committees constituted under the NPOP.
- (ii) Organize and convene all the meetings under NPOP
- (iii) Convene the various committees constituted under the NPOP.
- (iv) Evaluation of the Certification Bodies
- (v) Investigation of complaints received from the importing countries
- (vi) Initiate any other multilateral issues pertaining to equivalence etc. that would promote the export of organic products.
- (vii) Receive and screen applications from the applicant bodies and coordinate and arrange their evaluations
- (viii) Shall issue necessary implementation guidelines to the accredited Certification Bodies for inspection and certification from time to time
- (ix) Any other functions assigned by the NSC/NAB from time to time

APEDA shall meet the requirements of ISO 17011 for accreditation of Certification Bodies under the NPOP.

(e) Technical Committee

The NSC shall constitute various Technical Committee(s) comprising of experts drawn from relevant field/organizations to formulate various technical standards, suggests amendments/changes in the existing standards, review the standards from time to time and to advise the NSC on relevant issues pertaining to organic sector.

(f) Evaluation Committee (EC)

The NAB shall constitute an Evaluation Committee to evaluate the implementation of certification programme of the Certification Bodies. The NAB shall draw a panel of experts qualified in the field of agricultural sciences or any related field of food industry. These experts shall be drawn from organizations that are not involved in the certification activities and shall sign a contract of confidentiality with APEDA. The experts shall have required training in audit procedures. The Certification Body shall not be evaluated by the same committee for more than two consecutive years.

An Evaluation Committee shall be drawn from this panel of experts and shall comprise of minimum of three experts. Two experts shall constitute the quorum. Such Evaluation Committee will evaluate the Certification Body at least once in a year and shall submit the following documents to APEDA after completion of the evaluation:

- (i) Conformity /non-compliance report
- (ii) Observations
- (iii) Recommendations
- (iv) Supporting documents

APEDA shall review the report(s) of the Evaluation Committee and submit its assessment report and present it, along with its recommendations, to the NAB for accreditation decision.

Any deviation from the report of the Evaluation Committee shall be recorded in writing by APEDA.

(g) Certification Bodies

Agencies accredited by the National Accreditation Body under NPOP for certifying organic products. The accredited Certification Bodies shall certify organic products as per the scope of accreditation approved by the NAB.
