

PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING OF ASSESSORS FOR USDA-NOP ACCREDITATION

INDUCTION

The assessors are empanelled as Evaluation Committee (EC) members under NPOP. The EC members are drawn from the respective Government of India Organizations/Ministries/Departments/Universities. The EC members shall have either Agricultural Science background or relevant experience for selection and nominations from their parent organizations. These selected and nominated officials are shortlisted by APEDA for imparting training and induction both for NPOP and USDA-NOP assessments.

TRAINING

Training on USDA-NOP requirements is provided to them by APEDA in addition to NPOP requirements and audit procedures. The specific requirements of USDA are also covered in the training.

All the trainees are assessed by APEDA by the end of training. Only successful qualifying trainees are opted and considered for allotting assessments as 'Observers' in the upcoming evaluations.

ALLOTMENT

The EC members are allotted for evaluation based on their competence and scope of expertise. Same EC members shall not be allotted to same CB more than twice in a row to avoid any potential Conflict of Interest.

The newly inducted officials are allotted as Observers, while those who have completed two evaluations and are approved by the NAB are allotted as Members. However, only experienced members are designated as Team Leaders.

MONITORING

The EC members are provided with preparatory documents prior to any evaluation. The Team Leaders are informed about the Observers and the Team leaders shall guide them in physical evaluations. The Team Leader in consultation with other members select the operator files for scrutiny based on the review of the preparatory documents provided by APEDA. The Team leader divides the work to all members. The Observers shall also verify operator files and fill the checklists. The observations of members and observers are taken into consideration by the Team Leader while preparing the nonconformity report. The Evaluation Report submitted by the Team Leader contains the checklists filled by each member and observer. The report is reviewed by APEDA wherein the outcome and contributions of every member of EC including

Observer is assessed. The understanding of the members and the skill in evaluating the certification programme is assessed by APEDA.

The EC members shall be monitored through a feedback system, the members and observers will submit the feedback of Team Leader and vice versa. Feedback shall also be collected from the auditee CB on all EC members as part of monitoring system. As part of monitoring, APEDA shall also take feedback through informal means from the Certification Bodies on EC members and vice versa.

During a period of three years, each member shall be observed during the assessment. The assessment shall be made on knowledge of standard, principles, procedures, assessment technique, communication skill, interviewing skills, documentation of the observations, compilation of findings, report preparation, etc. The competence of the EC member shall be assessed by any other Team Leader for continuous monitoring. This assessment shall be done in rotational basis. The format for monitoring of assessors for USDA-NOP accreditation shall be used for each Assessor.

The EC members shall be given periodic trainings by APEDA on the updates and also based on the outcome of reviews of previous assessments.

The EC members which could not demonstrate their competence during the assessments shall not be permitted to continue as approved members. Such members shall be removed from the list of EC members after obtaining approval from the National Accreditation Body (NAB). However, the EC members who have been performing consistently shall be retained.

The records on the biodata, nomination, induction training, periodic/annual training, feedback, etc. of each assessor shall be maintained by APEDA both for NPOP and USDA-NOP assessments.
