

PROCEDURE FOR USDA NOP ACCREDITATION

The National Accreditation Body (NAB) considers applications only from NPOP Accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) for USDA NOP accreditation.

Procedure for initial accreditation

The Certification body accredited under NPOP must submit an application in prescribed format for USDA NOP accreditation to APEDA. The application form is available on APEDA website under icon NPOP/Application Forms. The application must accompany the supporting documents and prescribed fee as notified by the NAB.

The prima facie review of the application is done by APEDA by ensuring the completeness of the application and submission of requisite fee. The review also ensures that the policies, procedures and template for NOP certification has been developed and submitted along with the application.

The deficiency if any noted will be communicated in writing to the Certification Body and the Certification Body must submit additional information to APEDA.

Technical review of policies, procedures and templates will be done by APEDA based on NOP Regulation and the deficiencies will be notified to the Certification Body. The Certification Body must revise the documents based on the review report of APEDA and must submit the compliance report to APEDA.

The compliance report will be reviewed again by APEDA and the Certification Body will be notified on the compliance.

If the Certification Body fails to submit the second compliance report to APEDA, the application will be rejected.

Upon completion of documentation requirements, the physical evaluation will be planned and scheduled by APEDA which will be conducted by the Evaluation Committee. This may be conducted along with NPOP surveillance or renewal audit also.

The preparatory documents will be sent by APEDA to the EC prior to the physical evaluation and the EC will conduct the assessment based on NOP requirements.

The physical evaluation will also cover witness audit of one of the inspectors of the CB in order to assess the competence of the inspector. The non compliances will be given to the Certification body in writing during the conclusion of the assessment.

The CB will submit corrective action report for the Non Conformities which will be reviewed by APEDA.

If the CB fails to submit corrective action to APEDA, the application will be rejected and application fee will be forfeited.

The evaluation report of the EC and the assessment report of APEDA will be placed before the NAB for its review and decision. The decision of the NAB will be communicated to the CB by APEDA.

The CB will submit Accreditation contract and code of conduct to APEDA based on which Accreditation Certificate is issued to the CB. The Accreditation Certificate clearly indicates the scope of accreditation granted by the NAB, validity of accreditation in addition to the name and address of CB.

MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

Every NOP accredited CB will be subject to surveillance audit by the EC annually. The report of the surveillance audit will be reviewed by the NAB if any action to be taken.

RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

The CB will apply 3 months prior to expiry of accreditation to APEDA along with requisite fee and supporting documents in the prescribed format available on APEDA website.

The EC will conduct renewal audit of the CB and the renewal audit report and assessment report will be reviewed by the NAB to decide on renewal of accreditation.

EXTENSION OF ACCREDITATION

For extension of scope of accreditation, the CB will apply in prescribed format available on APEDA website along with supporting documents and fee. The policies and procedures will be reviewed by APEDA and based on the physical evaluation and decision by the NAB, scope will be extended.

SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION

The NAB will decide on the disciplinary measures to be taken on the CB on suspension, termination or reduction of scope. The sanction catalogue of NPOP will be followed for taking decision. The suspension will be reinstated only when compliance is ensured.