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The GLOBALG.A.P. System

In order to be given a GLOBALG.A.P. certification, farms must be managed in a manner which ensures food safety and safeguards the environment and social welfare. Farms are inspected and certified against strict standards covering aspects such as food safety and traceability, environment (including biodiversity), workers' health, safety and welfare, and animal welfare. These inspections are undertaken by independent organizations. This is what makes the GLOBALG.A.P. system unique and ensures greater sustainability in production. It also requires a general approach to farming that builds in best practices for generations to come.

In addition to agricultural production certification, GLOBALG.A.P. offers a Chain of Custody (CoC) certification scheme which tracks the products through every stage in the supply chain – from the farm to the final consumer. This is monitored through the invoicing and other sales documentation process, and the final product label may also have a GGN code which confirms that the item is genuinely a GLOBALG.A.P. certified product.

The aim of this document is to give you an overview of what to expect during each stage of the certification process for GLOBALG.A.P.'s Chain of Custody standard v6.

If you have questions at any stage our [Customer Support](#) will be happy to help.

For the sake of simplicity, this guide uses the terms "certified products", "certified producers", and "certified companies". However, products, producers, and companies themselves are not certified. "Certified product" refers instead to a product originating from an IFA certified production process. "Certified producer/producer group/company" refers to a producer/producer group/company whose production processes have been certified.

The CoC standard therefore applies to the company's processes, not the certification of any product or the company itself.

GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody

A Key to Supply Chain Transparency

The Chain of Custody standard is an essential tool to assure a transparent supply chain from the farm, through the various stages of trading, sorting, packing, and warehousing, onto the retailer shelves, right through to the end consumer.

By systematically verifying the GLOBALG.A.P. claim at each transaction point in the supply chain, buyers can be assured that the products they purchase with a GLOBALG.A.P. label or a GLOBALG.A.P. certification claim really are sourced from a certified producer.

Principles & Benefits

The CoC standard principles are:

1. **Management system**, which addresses CoC standard requirements including documented procedures, processes, systems, and staff training appropriate to the size, type, and complexity of activities.
2. **Input and output verification** of the suppliers' certification status in the GLOBALG.A.P. database, including matching the quantities of certified products received with the quantities stated in the delivery documents and purchase orders.
3. **Traceability system**, which assures traceability of the final product to one (identity preservation method) or multiple (segregation method) certified producer(s) or producer group(s).

Segregation method: The segregation method permits mixing of certified products from a variety of certified producers or producer groups. The physical mixing of certified products coming from different certified producers or producer groups shall be documented accordingly, via traceability data linked to a traceability code (e.g., batch number). You shall label the final product with your company's CoC Number and a traceability (batch) code which links it to either the suppliers CoC Numbers or to the GGN of an individual producer (Option 1) or a producer group (Option 2).

Identity preservation method: If the GGN is used as the traceability (batch) code, the product identity preservation method shall be used. The identity preservation method prohibits the physical mixing of certified products with other certified or non-certified products. This method must allow the certified product to be traced back to a certified individual producer (Option 1) or producer group (Option 2). The final identity preserved product shall be labelled with your company's CoC Number and with the GGNs of the individual producers (Option 1) or producer groups (Option 2) of origin.

4. **Identification and labeling** of outgoing products and sales documents.

Outgoing sales invoices, shipment (transport) documents in paper or electronic format, and all other documentation related to transactions of certified products shall contain at least the following information:

- GGN or CoC Number: GGN for the individual producer or producer group or CoC Number for the supply chain company

- Shipped product name(s) or identification code(s)
- Shipped quantity (weight or number of units)
- Shipping date
- Logistic unit identification codes, if available
- Certification status, stating: “GLOBALG.A.P. certified” *and*, whenever applicable, “GRASP full compliance” (i.e., on all and only those products originating from producers/producer groups in full compliance with the GRASP assessment) *and* whenever applicable any other GLOBALG.A.P. standard or add-on status

Positive identification is enough, non-certified status does not need to be identified.

Packed retail consumer items (e.g., containers, bags, nets, shrink wrap) shall be labeled with at least:

- GGN or CoC Number: GGN for the producer or producer group or CoC Number for the supply chain company
- Product name or code
- Quantity (weight or number of units)
- Traceability (batch) code or producer’s GGN
- Additional information may be shown on the label, depending on the legal and trading partner requirements

It is however possible not to include GGN or CoC number in the label if there is a written agreement between the CoC company and the client not to identify the product with the GGN and/or with the CoC Number.

When Is Chain of Custody Certification Necessary?

Where Chain of Custody certification is necessary:

CoC certification is required for all parties in the supply chain that have legal ownership or physical control of certified products and perform at least one of the following activities:

1. Selling or trading IFA/CoC certified products with GLOBALG.A.P. claim on sales documents.
2. Labeling products with a GGN, CoC Number, or GGN label logo
3. Changing the composition of the product (e.g., processing, slaughtering, mixing different batches/different producers) or assigning a new identity to the products sold with the GLOBALG.A.P. claim (e.g., re-packaging, re-labeling)
4. Selling bulk products with the GGN label logo (this includes retail stores and restaurants commercializing bulk products with the GGN label logo).

Examples of businesses eligible for Chain of Custody certification:

- A packing company with a trading office, processing facility and storage unit.
- A trading company without physical possession of the product.

You Don't Need Chain of Custody Certification If:

1. Your production processes are IFA certified. If you are a producer, it is not possible to have GLOBALG.A.P. certification for growing and packing apples under both IFA and CoC standards, but if you are growing and packing apples and packing and trading oranges, you must be certified under the IFA standard for the production and packaging of apples and under the CoC standard for the packaging and trading of oranges.
2. You are a company that trades or handles products from certified companies or producers but does not ever identify or sell these products as certified or with the GLOBALG.A.P. claim. In this case the chain of custody is broken and your customers may not make any claims about the product being certified.
3. You are a retailer who purchases, handles, and sells pre-packed, labelled certified products that will be sold to the end consumer without being opened, re-packed or re-labeled (consumer-ready tamper-proof products).
4. Freight forwarders who do not have ownership of certified products.
5. Your company only provides contracted services for certified companies and therefore can be covered by your customer's Chain of Custody certificate as a subcontractor.

How To Get Certified

- Through a GLOBALG.A.P. approved certification body: You can find a list of approved certification bodies at www.globalgap.org/cb.
- Through a BRCGS/IFS combined audit: In cooperation with BRCGS and IFS, GLOBALG.A.P. has made it possible to audit the CoC standard in combination with the BRCGS Global Standard for Food Safety and in combination with the IFS Food, IFS Cash & Carry/Wholesale, IFS Logistics, and IFS Broker standards. A combined assessment will always result in the issue of two separate certificates. It can, however, reduce the time and complexity of preparing, executing, and following up on individual assessments.

The Certification Process

5 Steps to Your Coc Certificate

Step 1 - Download the Documents

Download the GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody standard documents and checklist from our website.

Step 2 - Find a Certification Body

Find a full list of GLOBALG.A.P. approved certification bodies on our website (we recommend that you approach more than one certification body for a quote).

Step 3 – Prepare for Inspection

Carry out a self-assessment using the checklist and correct any points you do not comply with.

Step 4 - The Inspection

Arrange an appointment with your GLOBALG.A.P. approved certification body. An inspector will then conduct the first on-site inspection.

Step 5 - Get the Certificate

Once you successfully comply with the standard requirements, you will receive a GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody standard v6 certificate for the relevant scope.

Getting Certified – Step 1

Download the CoC Documents and Choose Your Certification Option.

1 - GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody General Regulations

This document defines how the certification process works as well as the requirements for quality management systems and related issues.

2 - GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody Control Points and Compliance Criteria (CPCC)

This document sets the compliance requirements for the company/producer.

3 - GLOBALG.A.P. Checklist – Chain of Custody

This document is used for all inspections and self-assessments.

The GLOBALG.A.P Chain of Custody standard documents are available at https://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/for-producers/globalg.a.p./coc/

Certification Options

You can only apply for certification under option one - individual certification. Group certification is not possible for the GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody standard.

Your company will apply for GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody certification individually and is the certificate holder once certified. However, there 3 different categories for CoC certification.

Single Sites

You must choose this option if you are an individual producer/producer group/company with a single production, processing, handling, storage, and/or final consumer sale, or administrative site.

Multisite

You must choose this option if you are an individual producer/producer group/company who owns several production, processing, handling, storage, final consumer sale, and/or administrative sites that do not function as separate legal entities.

Multisite for Retail Stores and Restaurant Chains in Franchise

If your company owns a franchise network of retail stores or restaurants. In this case the individual retail stores and restaurants (sites) can function as separate legal entities but all sites will be registered under your legal entity certificate with one GGN/CoC Number.

Getting Certified – Step 2

Find a GlobalG.A.P. Approved Certification Body.

Certification bodies (CBs) provide independent third-party certification. You can find a complete list of all GLOBALG.A.P. approved CBs and their contact information on our website at www.globalgap.org/cb. It is recommended to contact several CBs in your region for quotes and choose the one that suits your needs.

Certification body service charges are likely to include travel costs, inspection fees and possibly other charges. GLOBALG.A.P. has no influence on these costs, nor receives any of this payment, although GLOBALG.A.P. does receive the [registration and certification fees](#) via the CBs.

To provide you with a quote, certification bodies may ask:

- Which products you want to buy and sell as certified.
- What activities you perform with the certified products (for example packing, processing, or trading).
- How many certified suppliers you have.
- Where your company is based and how many sites it has.
- If you intend to use subcontractors to process, pack, transport or store certified products.
- If you handle both certified and non-certified products.

Once you accept a quote, the certification body will send you a contract. The contract may be valid for up to 4 years, with subsequent renewal for periods of up to 4 years and subject to annual inspections. Together with the certification contract you must acknowledge and accept the terms and conditions of the sub-license and certification agreement and the GGN label logo license agreement (if applicable).

After signing the GLOBALG.A.P. sub-license and certification agreement, you will receive a CoC number (combination of the “CoC” prefix and a 13-digit numerical number). It is unique to each company/other legal entity and identifies your company in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

Getting Certified – Step 3

Prepare for the Inspection.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody inspection can be simple and straightforward if you have a clear plan of what needs to be done, by whom, and by when. Preparation and good project management are key to ensuring a smooth, timely and cost-effective certification process.

Assign a CoC Certification Project Manager

Your first task is to designate a member of staff or a project manager who will take responsibility for managing the certification process. This is the staff member responsible for managing your certification process, who will respond to requests for information and documents as well as communicate with trade partners, CBs, and the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat.

Define Your Traceability System

You must define the method of traceability your company will use for the certified products. You can use the segregation method if you want to ensure traceability to more than one certified producer (or producer group); or the identity preservation method if your goal is to ensure traceability to an individual certified producer (or to a certified Option 2 producer group), you can even use both methods at the same time for different products/batches. Regardless of the chosen method, traceability to the supplier delivery documentation must be assured.

Train the Necessary Staff

It is your company's responsibility to ensure that all responsible personnel understand their role in maintaining the chain of custody and traceability. The Chain of Custody standard defines responsible personnel as those who make decisions or carry out procedures that can affect the integrity of certified products.

Training can take any format: face-to-face, online, on paper and can be delivered by anyone who knows (or can learn) about the requirements. It is important to keep records of your staff training program.

Conduct a Self-Inspection

To achieve certification, your company must first perform a self-assessment (self-inspection) using the CoC v6 checklist. This will allow you to determine how many of the Chain of Custody standard requirements your company already meets, and whether you need to adjust your operations. If you discover that you need to include new procedures or systems to meet the standard requirements, make sure these are properly in place before the inspection from your chosen CB takes place.

- You must carry out the self-assessment before the first CB inspection, and every year after that prior to the next inspection.
- The self-assessment must cover all products and processes under the certification scope from all your registered sites.
- For each control point, your company must record all the comments, evidence, corrective actions, and positive findings during the self-assessment.
- The self-assessment must cover the entire checklist of all relevant scope(s) and register sites. The completed checklist must be kept available on site for review.

Getting Certified – Step 4

The Inspection

During the inspection, the CoC inspector will be looking for evidence of the effectiveness and consistency of the procedures, processes, systems, and trainings your company has in place to fulfil the requirements of the Chain of Custody standard. The inspector will review documents and records, interview staff and see your processes in action.

Inspection location: Most inspections will take place on-site at your company's premises and, if your company has multiple sites, they will cover every site included in the certificate. Inspections can be conducted remotely if companies meet the following criteria: brokers, traders, and exporters that neither store, handle, or re-label the product (no physical contact), nor subcontract others for handling their certified products.

Inspection duration: The duration of the inspection will vary depending on the size of your company, the complexity of your operations and the number of certified products you work with.

NOTE: If your company has not yet started to trade in certified products, the inspector will ask for examples, mock tests, etc. that demonstrate that your system complies with the standard.

Inspection Process

Opening meeting: The inspection begins with an opening meeting, during which the inspector will confirm your company's eligibility to continue in the inspection process, the inspection plan, the scope of the inspection (the products and activities to be inspected), the type of documentation for review, and visits to subcontractors or other sites where relevant. In addition to your appointed Chain of Custody contact person, we recommend inviting other relevant members of staff to this meeting. Use the opening meeting to clarify any questions you have regarding your inspection or the certification process.

During the inspection: The inspector will check the measures taken by your company and any subcontractors to segregate, identify, and prevent mixing of certified and non-certified products. The inspector will review the management system/s for each activity in scope (for example trading, distribution, processing), the content and implementation of written procedures, and the records showing purchase, receipt, sale, and physical handling of certified goods. The inspector will verify traceability tests – linking input and output through delivery numbers and records of internal traceability, purchase, handling and supply, input-output reconciliation based on a time-period and/or batch.

Inspection closing meeting: At the end of the inspection, inspectors will call a closing meeting to summarize their findings. They will also confirm that the scope, locations, processes, and subcontractor list is correct and that you know when to inform the certification body of any changes in your company's processes and procedures.

Getting Certified – Step 5

Your Certificate

During the closing meeting or right after the inspection, the inspector will give you a summary of all inspection findings that will detail any non-conformities they may have detected. If this is the case, you will be given a specified timeframe to review the findings and decide how to address them. You must then send the certification body an effective action plan with root cause analysis, corrective actions, and timeframes to address them.

If it is your initial inspection, you must close the non-conformity within 3 months of the inspection. If this cannot be done, your company will need to have another initial inspection at a later date. If the non-conformity was not raised in the initial inspection but in a subsequent inspection, the timeframe is a maximum of 28 days.

Examples of non-conformities:

- The inspector finds your staff to show insufficient knowledge and understanding of their Chain of Custody role which could compromise product integrity.
- The inspector finds one of your suppliers did not have a valid certificate at the time of your purchase.

Certification Decision:

Your certification body must decide whether you are to be granted certification within 28 days of the inspection or within 28 days of receiving evidence that leads to the closure of a non-conformity. Your certification body will then upload information to the GLOBALG.A.P. database covering scope, process and inspection date, and your certification status will then appear as 'certified'.

In the end, the certification body will issue a certificate with all the information they uploaded to the GLOBALG.A.P. database. The certification scope will be crops, livestock, or aquaculture and not a specific product.

Using GLOBALG.A.P. Trademarks on Your Certified Products

Once you are certified you must start using your CoC number on sales documents and on product labels.

You don't need to have a new special new label, you just need to assure that your product packaging includes at least the follow information

- Your CoC Number
- The product name or code
- The packed quantity
- Traceability (or batch) code

The GGN Label

The GGN label stands for certified, responsible farming and transparency. It is a universal mark of good farming practices with a strong core in food safety and traceability and is designed to help guide consumers in their day-to-day grocery shopping.

Aquaculture and floriculture products that come from GLOBALG.A.P. certified production processes can be labeled with the GGN consumer label, which features a GLOBALG.A.P. Number (13-digit identification number) that identifies all the certified participants in the production and supply chain.

As the company that prints the label on the consumer packaging, you need to fulfill all the following requirements:

1. Get GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody certification. www.globalgap.org/coc
2. Ensure certification of all partners in the supply chain.
3. Ensure that the farms you are sourcing from have a fully compliant GRASP assessment – the GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice – to demonstrate social responsibility. www.globalgap.org/grasp
4. For aquaculture or livestock processors handling animal products from GLOBALG.A.P. certified production: Get certification according to a GFSI recognized food safety system or a Codex-Alimentarius-based HACCP system.
5. Become a label licensee.

To become a label licensee, just send us an email: info@ggn.org.

For more information on the GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody standard, including scope and certification options, please go to www.globalgap.org/coc.

To find out about all our services for retailers, please go to www.globalgap.org/forbuyers.