MEXICO COMPLIANCE PROGRAM MANUAL

For Certification to the Mexican Organic Standards (LPO)

CCOF SERVICIOS DE CERTIFICACIÓN S. DE R.L. DE C.V.

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SECTION ONE: WELCOME TO THE MEXICO COMPLIANCE PROGRAM!

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V. (hereinafter referred to as "**CCOF Mexico**") is responsible for the administration and implementation of the Mexico Compliance Program for certification to the Mexican organic standards (LPO). CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V. is a subsidiary of CCOF Certification Services, LLC (hereinafter referred to as "**CCOF CS**"). [1]

PURPOSE OF MANUAL

This Manual establishes a unified framework based on ISO/IEC 17065 standards of policies, procedures, and requirements used by CCOF Mexico to offer organic certification in a consistent, impartial, and effective manner.

CCOF Mexico provides this manual to describe additional requirements or explanations of regulations and/or standards. This manual is available at www.ccof.org/mexico.

CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT

By completing and signing the Mexico Compliance Program Application to enroll in the Mexico Compliance Program, the applicant acknowledges that it has received, has read, fully understands, and agrees to be bound by the terms of this manual, and further agrees to comply with and strictly adhere to all regulations, procedures and policies set forth in this manual including but not limited to those described below: [2]

a) Establishing, implementing, and updating annually an Organic Plan that is submitted to CCOF Mexico.
b) Permitting on-site inspections at least once per calendar year with complete access to the production or handling aspects of the operation, including non-certified production areas, structures, or offices by CCOF Mexico. These inspections may be announced or unannounced at the discretion of CCOF Mexico or as required by an accreditation authority, government entity with jurisdiction, or other governing body.
c) Maintaining all records applicable to the organic operation for not less than five (5) years beyond their creation.
d) Allowing authorized representatives of CCOF Mexico, an accreditation authority, government entity with jurisdiction, or other governing body access to these records under normal business hours for review and copying to determine compliance with the applicable regulations or governing law.
e) Understanding CCOF Mexico may use subcontractors for inspecting, testing and other technical services, as necessary.
f) Submitting any applicable fees for certification. Failure to pay fees may result in issuance of Notification of Noncompliance.
g) Immediately notifying CCOF Mexico concerning any application, including drift, of a prohibited substance to any field, production unit, site, facility, or product that is part of an operation.
h) Immediately notifying CCOF Mexico of any change in your certified operation or portion of it that may affect its compliance with applicable regulations or governing law.
i) Using the CCOF Mexico name and the CCOF marks in Section Two only in accordance with this manual and ceasing all use upon notice by CCOF Mexico. Any use of the CCOF Mexico name or the CCOF marks in Section Two, without the express consent of CCOF Mexico, is strictly prohibited and constitutes an infringement of CCOF Mexico and/or CCOF CS's rights. CCOF Mexico and/or CCOF CS shall be entitled to its reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in bringing any civil action, arbitration, or mediation to enforce its rights to its names or marks.
j) Understanding that the use of the CCOF Mexico name and the CCOF marks in Section Two must be in accordance with this manual.
k) Authorizing CCOF Mexico to list certified parcel crops, products, and acreage on my certificate and in online and print directories.
l) Immediately ceasing all claims of CCOF Mexico LPO certification associated with this operation, and destroying or returning all certificates, labeling, and marketing material containing reference to CCOF Mexico in the event that this operation surrenders (voluntarily cancels) its certification, or its certification is suspended.

[1] ISO/IEC 17065: 2012, 4.1.1
[2] ISO/IEC 17065: 2012, 4.1.2.1, 4.1.2.2

ACRONYMS USED

ALOOA: Mexico's production standards for organic operations (Agreement which makes public the Guidelines for Organic Operations of farming and livestock activities. The ALOOA encompasses both the 2013 Agreement, and the 2020 and 2023 modifications[3] to the Agreement. The ALOOA acronym is used within this manual to cite articles referenced in both publications. ALOOA articles cited throughout this manual reference the most up to date version in the 2013, 2020, or 2023 publications, respectively.

CCOF CS: CCOF Certification Services, LLC

CCOF Mexico: CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V

CMOEA:[4] The Canada Mexico Organic Equivalency Arrangement, also known as the Memorandum of Understanding recognizing equivalency regarding organic products.

DN: Mexico's regulations which establish the requirements for use of the Mexico Organic Seal ("Distintivo Nacional")

The DN encompasses both the 2013 Agreement by which the National Seal for Organic Products is made known and the general rules for its use in the labeling of products certified as organic are established, and the 2021 Agreement that modifies the similar one by which the National Seal for Organic Products is made known. The DN acronym is used within this manual to cite articles referenced in both publications. DN articles cited in this manual reference the most up to date version in the 2013 or 2021 publications, respectively.

LPO: Mexico's organic program under its Organic Products Law

MCP: Mexico Compliance Program for certification to the LPO

SADER: Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development (previously SAGARPA)

SENASICA: Mexico's National Health, Food Safety and Food Quality Service

LOCATIONS & HOURS

CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V. :
Orion 3454 Orion, Col. La Calma
Zapopan, Jalisco, México
Open by appointment

Our location is open for customer service by appointment. To arrange an appointment, send an email to ccof@ccof.org or call 001-831-423-2263 to be directed to appropriate personnel.

Personnel work in several different locations throughout the United States and Mexico to perform certification evaluations remotely[5]. Each operator is assigned a customer service contact and is informed of their direct phone number, email address, and WhatsApp contact information.

Applicants in Mexico are encouraged to contact our Applicant Support personnel, whose contact information is available at www.ccof.org/mexico and in the directory of SENASICA-approved LPO approved certifiers.

MEXICO COMPLIANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

General information

CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V. (CCOF Mexico) is a subsidiary of CCOF Certification Services LLC that oversees and operates the Mexico Compliance Program. This Manual contains the policies, procedures, and certification requirements applicable to certification under the Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO).

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[3] "AGREEMENT which modifies, adds and repeals various provisions of the Agreement which makes public the Guidelines for Organic Operations of farming and livestock activities" – published in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF) on June 8, 2020
"AGREEMENT modifying Annex 1 – National List of Permitted Substances for Guidelines for Organic Operations of farming and livestock activities, published on October 29, 2013." – in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF) on May 2, 2023

[4] ALOOA Article 258; https://www.gob.mx/senasica/documentos/reconocimiento-de-la-equivalencia-en-materia-de-productos-organicos-entre-mexico-y-canada?state=published

[5] RLPO Article 18.II.c

Applicants to CCOF Mexico for LPO certification under the Mexico Compliance Program also hold, or are concurrently applying for, USDA NOP certification with CCOF Certification Services LLC (CCOF CS). Therefore, applicants and operators should consult CCOF CS's Certification Services Program Manual for additional information that is relevant to their USDA NOP certification.

The Mexico Compliance Program is available to operators located in Mexico and the United States. CCOF Mexico operates the program in compliance with the Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO) and its other applicable provisions.

CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V. is approved by Mexico's National Service of Agroalimentary Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA), under the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), as an organic certification body under Mexico's Organic Products Law (Ley de Productos Orgánicos, LPO) and holds ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation from the Committee on Accreditation for Evaluation of Quality (CAEQ) for organic certification activities under the LPO.

CCOF Mexico's SENASICA approval code is **OC-220921-14-CPAA-004**.

These recognitions are maintained through comprehensive oversight activities, including evaluations of quality management systems, policies and procedures, personnel qualifications, certification records, and on-site assessments of certified operations.

Services offered
CCOF Servicios de Certificación S. de R.L. de C.V.'s **Mexico Compliance Program** is for certification to the LPO, Mexico's organic program and regulations. Certification services are offered for the following LPO scopes:

- **Crop production**
- **Mushroom production**
- **Wild harvest**
- **Processing/handling of organic agricultural products**
- **Marketing of organic agricultural products**

Certification services are **not** offered for the following:

- **LPO livestock scopes:** All types of domestic livestock production (including eggs, milk, and meat), apiculture production, insect production, etc.
- **Participatory Certification[6]:** Participatory certification systems are recognized by SADER for certain organized groups of family farmers and small-scale producers that market products directly to consumers through local markets, direct sales, or similar arrangements.
- **Personal care products:** Personal care products such as soap, shampoo or skin moisturizers, are outside the scope of the SADER's oversight, and do not require certification in Mexico.

Enrollment
Enrollment in this program is required for operations and applicants located in Mexico.[7] Operations and applicants located in the United States and wishing to export products making organic claims to Mexico must also enroll.[8]

THE LPO REGULATIONS

Mexican organic regulations

All current Mexican organic regulations are available in English and Spanish at *https://www.gob.mx/senasica/documentos/ley-de-productos-organicos*.

The LPO regulations are comprised of the following documents published in Mexico's Official Gazette (Diario Oficial de la Federación, DOF):

Organic Products Law (LPO): Published in the DOF February 7, 2006.

[6] ALOOA Articles 226, 227, 228
[7] LPO Articles 2, 30; RLPO Article 2.V.; ALOOA Articles 2, 3
[8] LPO Articles 2, 33; RLPO Article 2.V.; ALOOA Articles 3, 258, 259

Regulations of the Organic Products Law (RLPO): Published in the DOF April 1, 2010.

Agreement which makes public the Guidelines for Organic Operations of farming and livestock activities (ALOOA): Published in the DOF October 29, 2013 and modifications published in the DOF June 8, 2020 and May 2, 2023.

Agreement which discloses the national seal of organic products and the general rules are established for use in the labeling of products certified as organic (DN): Published in the DOF October 25, 2013 and modifications published in the DOF December 3, 2021.

Operators seeking LPO certification are responsible for reviewing the full text of the ALOOA, including the original publication of 2013 and modifications of 2020 and 2023. These publications are accessible at any time at the link above, or by contacting us to request a paper copy.

Operators must comply with all applicable requirements of the Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO) and its implementing regulations to achieve certification. Operators complete an Organic Plan, made up of the Mexico Compliance Program Application and additional forms applicable to their activities. The Organic Plan describes how the operator plans to comply with the applicable LPO requirements. See Section Two, Applying for Certification, for more details.

Exceptions

The Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO) and its implementing regulations provide limited exceptions to certain organic production requirements. To protect organic integrity and ensure consistent application of certification requirements, CCOF Mexico only grants the exceptions described in this section for operations certified under the crop, mushroom, and wild crop scopes.

The following exceptions may be approved by CCOF Mexico, provided the operation demonstrates compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements and submits supporting documentation acceptable to CCOF Mexico:

- **Use of nonorganic seed or planting stock (including from 'natural' production or land in conversion)** [9]
- **Retroactive recognition of the three-year land conversion**[10]
- **Container production (non-soil production)** [11]

Except as expressly identified above, CCOF Mexico does not grant other exceptions available under the crop, mushroom, wild crop, or handling/processing scopes. Exceptions that are not approved by CCOF Mexico include the use of conventional seed (treated with prohibited substances) in organic production, sporadic parallel processing (at facilities not included in the Organic Plan), and the use of synthetic additives or processing aids in food preparation or preservation. Furthermore, unless specifically directed to do so by SENASICA/SADER, CCOF Mexico does not authorize temporary variances or exceptional activities, including those related to catastrophic circumstances, exceptional weather conditions, pest or phytosanitary disease outbreaks, contamination, or fires. See "Exceptional Activities" in Section Two below for details.[12] This policy is intended to reduce certification risk and maintain confidence in the organic integrity of certified products. Any request for an exception not specifically authorized in this section will be denied.

CCOF Mexico does not offer LPO certification under the livestock scope or grower groups (participatory certification); therefore, no livestock-related or participatory certification exceptions are reviewed or granted.

[9] ALOOA Article 35.I
[10] ALOOA Articles 11-12
[11] ALOOA Article 5.XV
[12] ALOOA Article 233

Mexican organic product composition requirements[13]

Organic products may make the following label claims for sale in Mexico if their composition meets the following requirements:

- **"100% Organic":** Must contain 100% organic ingredients, excluding water and salt.
- **"Organic":** Must contain at least 95% organic ingredients, excluding water and salt. The other 5% of ingredients must be allowed on the National List and not commercially available in organic form. Must be free of prohibited substances and added sulfites.
- **"Made with Organic":** Must contain at least 70% organic ingredients, excluding water and salt. The other 30% of ingredients may be nonorganic agricultural ingredients or National List materials. Only wine may contain added sulfites. Must not contain organic and nonorganic versions of the same ingredient.
- **Ingredients Identified as Organic in the Ingredient Panel Only**: May contain less than 70% organic ingredients. These products do not require certification.

Mexican organic labeling requirements[14]

Operators must disclose all labels and brands manufactured under certification(s), including private labels or other brands not owned by the operator. All labels used on packaging must be included in the Organic Plan and must be approved prior to printing. Labels for product sold in Mexico or exported to Mexico must meet the Mexican organic labeling requirements, linked below.

Operators wishing to use the Mexico Organic Seal ("Distintivo Nacional") are responsible for reviewing the full text of the Agreements which establish the requirements for its use, referred to in this manual by the acronym "DN." The DN encompasses the original publication of 2013 and its modification of 2021. The full text of both publications is accessible at any time at https://www.gob.mx/senasica/documentos/ley-de-productos-organicos or by contacting us to request a paper copy. See the Acronyms Used in Section One for more details.

Requirements for labeling organic products for sale in Mexico can be found in the Mexico (LPO) Labeling Guide.

Supply Chain Requirements[15]

For operators in Mexico, all ingredients/supplies must be certified to the LPO or to a regulation recognized as equivalent by SENASICA.

For operators in the United States, all ingredients/supplies must be certified to the LPO. If ingredients/supplies are not LPO certified, the final product is recertified when applicable. In the case of recertification, ingredients/supplies must be certified to the LPO, US, Canada, EU, or Japan organic regulations. For more details, see Section Two "Recertification Application Review Procedure & Criteria".

Equivalencies[16]

Requirements for trade of organic products under organic equivalency arrangements (or Memorandums of Understanding) between Mexico and other countries are described in the CCOF Global Market Access (GMA) Manual, including verification under the Canada-Mexico Organic Equivalency Arrangement (CMOEA).

SECTION TWO: THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The CCOF Mexico Certification Committee is responsible for reviewing all applications and issuing certification decisions following the procedures and criteria described in this manual.

The CCOF Mexico Certification Committee Coordinator is a professional with at least three years of experience in the organic sector. The Coordinator is responsible for:

[13] ALOOA Articles 200; 204; Anexo 1

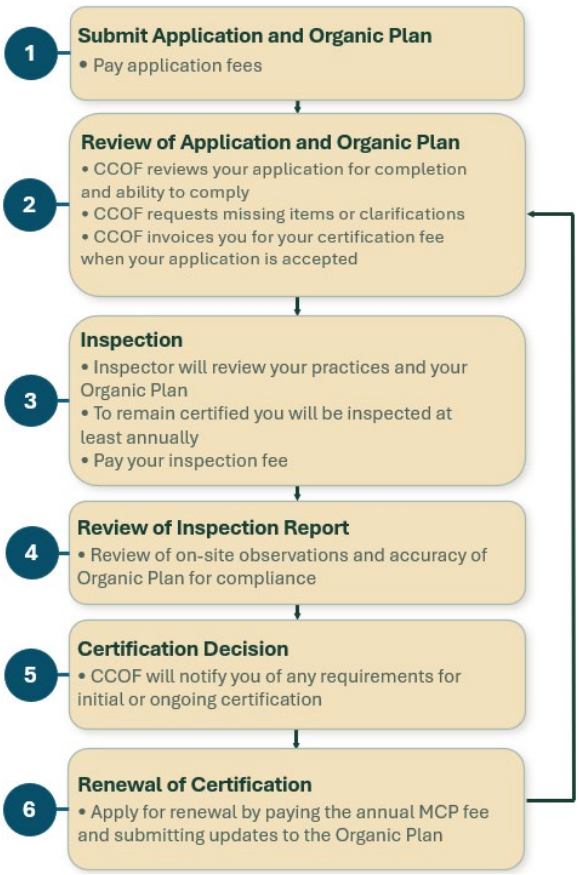
[14] LPO Article 30; ALOOA Articles 191; 198; 201; 202; 204, 205; Agreement which discloses the national seal of organic products and the general rules are established for use in the labeling of products certified as organic (DN)

[15] LPO Article 33; ALOOA Articles 200, 204, 212, 214, 258, 259

[16] LPO Article 33; ALOOA Article 258

- Ensuring that this manual is correctly implemented by the Certification Committee.[17]
- Determining whether to seek clarification on regulatory requirements from SENASICA in the case of complex, controversial, and/or contentious files. [18]
- The final approval of this manual.[19]

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS



APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION

The Organic Plan

An application packet may be obtained by contacting CCOF Mexico and requesting one be sent to you via mail or email, or you can download it directly from www.ccof.org/mexico. The application packet consists of:

- **Mexico Compliance Program Manual** (this document).
- **The Organic Plan:**[20]
  - Mexico Compliance Program Application (Certification Agreement). This form addresses LPO specific criteria.
  - Organic Plan template for the appropriate scope(s). These forms address general (generic) criteria applicable to multiple regulatory standards.

The forms contain instructions & information to help complete the application.

Due to the importance and complexity of the application review, inspection, and compliance review process, it is recommended that applications for organics be submitted 12 weeks prior to organic harvest, projected sales, or other deadlines.

Submitting an Application

Send the Organic Plan including all required attachments. Please fill out the information completely and provide as much detail as possible. This helps the certification process move forward in a timely manner. Be sure to keep a copy of all the forms you submit!

Applicants transferring existing LPO certification from another certifier must cease use of labels and references to the prior certification upon receiving Mexico Compliance Program certification, with the exception that sealed products labeled with the prior certifier's name may be sold, provided that they were packaged while the prior certification was valid and an inventory has been provided to both certifiers.[21]

All applicants must provide with their Organic Plan an organic production estimate, per crop or product by weight or volume.[22]

Certification Application Review Procedure & Criteria

Once the entire application packet is received, the application is reviewed by the CCOF Mexico Certification Committee to determine whether the applicant appears to comply or may be able to comply with the applicable LPO requirements. See "The Certification Committee" above.

The application review procedure includes, but is not limited to, assessment of compliance or ability to comply with the following criteria:

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[17] ALOOA Article 210 I, II, IV
[18] ALOOA Article 210 III
[19] ALOOA Article 210
[20] ISO/IEC 17065:2012 4.1.2.1, 7.4.1; LPO Article 3, XV; ALOOA Articles 7, 12, 22, 23, 32, 34, 41, 51, 56-57, 66, 68,184, 187, 214, 217
[21] SENASICA Oficio B00.04.02.05.01-371.4692/2019, Anexo 1; ALOOA Articles 201, 204
[22] RLPO Article 26

Minimum principles

The applicant or its authorized representative must sign the Mexico Compliance Program Application and must provide sufficient information to identify the LPO scope(s) requested. Additional information may be requested if necessary.[23]

Soil and water conservation[24]

Applicants for crop, wild crop, and/or mushroom scope certification must describe in their Organic Plan the practices used for soil and water conservation. Soil conservation practices must maintain or improve soil fertility and organic matter and minimize erosion. Water conservation practices must ensure water is used efficiently and avoid contamination of water sources.

Parallel production

Applicants with parallel production must provide information within their Organic Plan demonstrating a reliable system for guaranteeing separation of organic and nonorganic products throughout all stages of production and processing; cleaning or purging equipment as applicable; and maintaining records identifying organic status and facilitating product traceability.[25]

Requesting Exceptions

Those applying for exceptions permitted under LPO must indicate in the Organic Plan which exception(s) they are requesting, and provide the following information within or attached to their Organic Plan:

- **Retroactive recognition of the three-year land conversion:** Records and/or other relevant documentation (e.g. field history affidavits, results of soil and plant analyses performed, residue testing, etc.) demonstrating that during the retroactive period of conversion, the land was fallow with no applications of materials, or that the land was used for production and no prohibited materials were applied.[26]
- **Use of nonorganic seed or planting stock (including from 'natural' production or land in conversion):** Records and/or other relevant documentation (e.g. letters from suppliers, catalogs, etc.) demonstrating that organic seed or planting stock of the species or variety of interest is not available in the market, or is not available in sufficient quantities. The applicant must also demonstrate through records or other relevant documentation that the nonorganic seed or planting stock is untreated or treated with allowed materials.[27]
- **Container production (non-soil production):** Records and/or other relevant technical justification (e.g. results of soil, plant, or water analyses performed) demonstrating that production in soil is not viable due to the characteristics of the product or the agroecological conditions. Market demand is not an acceptable justification.[28]

The exceptions above are granted only when the applicant demonstrates sufficient justification through the Organic Plan, the additional information above, and the on-site inspection. No exceptions other than those listed above are granted. For more details, see Section One. Approval of an exception is subject to ongoing verification, and continued eligibility for the exception is evaluated during annual inspections and through the operation's continued compliance with applicable LPO requirements.

Inputs & materials

All applicants must provide information within their Organic Plan on inputs and materials used and planned for use. Renewing operators must request review and approval of inputs and materials before use to verify compliance with organic regulations. All inputs and materials (including but not limited to fertility and pest control materials, seed treatments, processed product processing aids, and non-agricultural processed product ingredients) are evaluated against applicable LPO requirements and Annex 1 of the ALOOA (the National List of Allowed Substances for Organic Operations). Generic names of the substances/ingredients that comprise each input or material, and the applicant's intended use of the input or material, are evaluated against the LPO requirements.

[23] ALOOA Article 210 IV
[24] ALOOA Articles 23-28, 32-34
[25] ALOOA Articles 185-187, 189, 203, 237
[26] ALOOA Articles 11-12
[27] ALOOA Article 35.I
[28] ALOOA Article 5.XV

To request approval of a new input material, the operator must submit a request to CCOF Mexico at inbox@ccof.org. The request must include documentation sufficient to demonstrate that the material complies with LPO requirements, including the material's complete composition (100% of ingredients), intended use, and supporting documentation, such as a technical data sheet, product label, or other relevant records. Additional information may be requested as needed to complete the evaluation.

If materials are made or formulated by the operation for on-farm use, the operation must demonstrate that these materials are used in compliance with the conditions for use (restrictions) established in the National List.

An overview of the material review process is outlined below. The applicant or operator is notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation: whether the input or material is permitted, permitted with restrictions, or prohibited for use in organic production or processing. Where required by current applicable regulations, brand name formulated materials must have relevant registrations (e.g. COFEPRIS sanitary registration).[29]



Timeline & decision[30]

Within a reasonable amount of time (generally fewer than ten business days after receiving the application), the findings of the application review are communicated in writing. Further information may be requested to clearly define, document and understand the information submitted.

Applicants receive notifications of any deadline to submit further information via the compliance report, generally around twenty business days.

If it is determined that the applicant does not comply and is unable to comply with applicable LPO requirements, or if the applicant fails to respond to requests for information, they are issued a notification of Noncompliance and/or Denial of Certification per Section Four below. When an applicant fails to respond to repeated requests for information, the Denial of Certification is issued within one year of receipt of the application.

If the application is substantially complete and the applicant complies with or appears to have the ability to comply with applicable regulations, the application is accepted.

[29] RLPO Article 40, ALOOA Articles 20, 31, 36, 173, 267, 272, 273, 277, Annex 1
[30] ALOOA Article 215

Recertification Application Review Procedure & Criteria[31]

Recertification is a certification activity through which CCOF Mexico evaluates products certified to an eligible foreign organic standard to determine compliance with applicable LPO requirements. The review includes verification of critical control points, product composition, supply chain integrity, certification status, and other applicable requirements established by the LPO.

Applicants for LPO handling or marketing scope certification who are certified by CCOF CS to USDA NOP, or applying for that certification concurrently, are eligible to apply for recertification under LPO to export organic products to Mexico. Recertification is required when products are supplied by operations that are not certified to the LPO by a SENASICA-approved certification body. Broker operations that do not physically handle or design labels for exported products are not eligible to apply for recertification.

To request recertification, an operation must submit a completed Organic Plan, consisting of the Mexico Compliance Program Application and any additional relevant forms. Applicants are required to provide sufficient information for CCOF Mexico to evaluate compliance, including product volumes for the products requested for recertification, documentation demonstrating that all applicable certification conditions and noncompliances have been satisfactorily resolved, supply chain verification records, copies of the applicable foreign organic certificates, and any additional records necessary to verify compliance with LPO requirements. By requesting recertification, the operator authorizes CCOF Mexico to review the organic certificate, certification review letters, inspection reports, and Organic Plan on file with CCOF CS.

As part of the recertification process, CCOF Mexico verifies the scope, validity, and applicability of the foreign organic certificate, as well as the recognition and competency of the certification body that issued the certificate. CCOF Mexico reviews only operations certified by CCOF CS to the USDA NOP standard and thus have verified competency of certification decisions through access to the CCOF CS quality system and Inspector Conflict of Interest Statement for each inspection.

The recertification review is conducted by the CCOF Mexico Certification Committee. See “The Certification Committee” above. The review includes an evaluation of the application materials provided to CCOF Mexico, and supporting documentation available from CCOF CS including current certification records and the most recent inspection report. During the evaluation, the following are verified: product eligibility, certification status, certificate scope, compliance with LPO requirements, the resolution of any related outstanding conditions or noncompliances, product volumes, and supporting records. Additional information may be requested from the applicant when necessary to complete the evaluation.

Certification decisions are made in accordance with CCOF Mexico certification procedures and based on an objective review of the information collected during the evaluation process. Recertification is granted only when sufficient evidence demonstrates compliance with all applicable requirements. If required information is incomplete, production estimates have not been provided, or applicable conditions or noncompliances remain unresolved, approval will not be granted until the deficiencies have been adequately addressed.

When compliance with applicable requirements cannot be demonstrated, CCOF Mexico notifies the applicant in writing of the deficiencies identified and any required corrective actions. The operation may be subject to noncompliance procedures, proposed suspension actions, or denial of certification as applicable. See Section Four below.

Upon approval, CCOF Mexico issues written notification to the client and provides an LPO certificate and addendum. The certificate identifies the certified operation, the products covered by the approval, the applicable certification scope, and the effective and expiration dates of certification which is not to exceed one year. The accompanying production estimate addendum identifies the approved products and associated product volumes reviewed by CCOF Mexico.

Recertification approvals apply only to the products identified on the certificate and are limited to the production quantities or volumes reviewed and accepted by CCOF Mexico. Additional products, significant increases in approved volumes, or other material changes may require further review and the issuance of revised certification documentation.

[31] ALOOA Article 212

ON-SITE INSPECTIONS[32]

Once the certification application is accepted, operators are assigned an appropriate inspector within a reasonable time, and the inspector receives all relevant information for the inspection. Generally, the inspection is performed within 30 days following the assignment. The initial inspection may be delayed for up to 6 months to observe the land, facilities, and activities that demonstrate compliance or capacity to comply.

An initial on-site inspection is conducted of each production unit, facility, and site that produces or handles products included in the application. Each year after, an on-site inspection is conducted after the operator applies for renewal (see the section "Renewal of Certification" below).

The inspection procedure and criteria consist of the following:

- A qualified CCOF Mexico inspector whose training and experience matches the operator's activities is assigned.
- The inspector reviews the operator's certification file.
- The inspector contacts the operator to make an appointment for the inspection and to review any preliminary questions concerning the operator.
- The inspector travels to the operator to conduct the inspection and verify the operator's compliance or capability to comply with the standards and applicable requirements.
- The inspector conducts an exit interview with the operator at the end of the inspection.
- The inspector completes the inspection report and submits it for a certification decision.
- The inspection report is reviewed by qualified CCOF Mexico certification personnel different from the personnel who conducted the inspection, and a certification decision is issued.

Scheduling

The inspector contacts the operation to schedule the inspection. The initial inspection must occur prior to the first "organic" harvest from any parcel. All on-site inspections must be conducted at a time when land, facilities, and activities that demonstrate the operator's compliance with applicable organic regulations and standards can be observed (except during additional on-site inspections, such as unannounced inspections).

On-Site Compliance Verification

The on-site inspection is conducted to verify the operator's compliance or capability to comply with the applicable LPO requirements.

Inspectors must be granted complete access to the operator's production units and all facilities used for storage, handling, processing, and/or marketing to verify that the operator maintains control across all stages of the organic operation. This includes, as needed, access to non-certified production areas, structures, storage areas, and documentation associated with non-organic production.[33]

The inspector starts the inspection by conducting an introductory meeting with the representatives of the operator.

Inspectors verify if the information included in the Organic Plan accurately reflects the practices used or planned to be used.[34] Also, information is verified to determine that prohibited substances have not been and are not being applied to the operator. The inspector uses a checklist to evaluate general (generic) criteria applicable to multiple regulatory standards, along with LPO specific criteria where significant differences exist.[35]

Additional information may be required, including the collection and testing of soil, water, waste, seeds, plant tissue, plant, and processed products samples.[36] At the time of the inspection, the inspector provides the operator's authorized representative with a receipt for any samples taken by the inspector. There is no charge to the inspector for the samples taken. Photographs may be taken of operations during on-site inspections and/or surveillance events.

[32] ALOOA Articles 235-239, 241-247, 249-254, 256, 257
[33] ALOOA Article 236, 237, 242, 246
[34] ALOOA Article 239
[35] ISO/IEC 17065:2012 7.4.1
[36] ALOOA Articles 216, 244, 254

Operator Participation
All inspections (other than unannounced inspections) must be conducted when an authorized representative of the operator who is knowledgeable about the operation is present. Failure to complete an annual inspection is cause for the issuance of a notification of Noncompliance and/or Proposed Suspension.

Operators and inspectors must ensure that there is ample time for the inspection. The duration of an inspection varies by operator and from inspection to inspection. The inspector needs to view all documents that form the operator's audit trail, and the operator must have complete input, harvest, production, and sales records for no less than the five years prior available for inspection, including all receipts for inputs, contracted services, and equipment rental.[37]

Traceability and Mass Balance[38]

Operators must be able to demonstrate during on-site inspections functioning audit trail/record keeping systems that include traceability and/or mass balance. The operator must have audit trail/supply chain records readily available for the inspector to perform traceback from the time of purchase/acquisition through production, back to the last certified operator, as well as in/out mass balance audits.

Exit Interview[39]
At the end of the inspection, the inspector conducts an exit interview with an authorized representative of the operator who is knowledgeable about the inspected operator to confirm the accuracy and completeness of inspection observations and information gathered during the inspection. The inspector must also address the need for any additional information as well as any issues of concern. The Exit Interview lists findings of possible noncompliance/nonconformity for failure to comply with the LPO requirements, as well as observations of areas for improvement that could lead to future noncompliance. The inspector does not suggest or recommend how to resolve a possible noncompliance. The Exit Interview is not the final certification decision, and additional information or points of noncompliance may be issued later during the review and decision-making process.

Inspection Report[40]
Following the inspection, the inspector completes the on-site inspection report and CCOF provides a copy. The report summarizes the operator's Organic Plan and practices and describes observations of compliance or noncompliance with the LPO organic regulations. Each report includes a list of all points of concern and potential noncompliance found by the inspector. All operators are provided with access to an electronic copy of their on-site inspection report and any test results by the inspector. Inspectors are required to submit reports within a timely manner, generally 15 business days from the date of the inspection.

Choice of Inspector
Inspectors assigned to inspections may be staff, contractors, or contractors in affiliation with a subcontractor. Operators may not influence the choice of inspector or contact inspectors directly to solicit inspection assignments. Operators have the right to be informed about the identity of the inspector before the inspection visit and may raise objections based on conflicts of interest or other reasons by submitting the objections. The certification body shall rule whether the grounds on which the inspector was refused are accepted. If a potential conflict of interest is decided, an inspector may not be assigned or reassigned accordingly. To maintain impartiality, every effort is made to assign highly qualified inspectors who are committed to safeguarding impartiality and upholding confidentiality.

Additional/Unannounced Inspections[41]

Additional on-site inspections may be conducted to determine compliance with the applicable organic production and handling regulations and standards. Additional on-site inspections are conducted annually for monitoring purposes and/or to verify compliance with LPO regulations. [42] At minimum, additional inspections totaling at least 11% of

[37] RLPO Article 39; ALOOA Articles 203, 223
[38] ALOOA Article 203, 223, 259
[39] ALOOA Articles 208, 239, ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 7.4.6
[40] ALOOA Article 257
[41] ALOOA Article 243
[42] ALOOA Article 221 Bis

operators certified under the Mexico Compliance Program are conducted annually, based on risk analysis and random selection:[43]

- Additional inspections of at least 10% of total operators certified under the Mexico Compliance Program, and
- Unannounced additional inspections of at least 10% of the sum of: the number of annual inspections plus the number of additional inspections indicated above.

Selection of operators is based on risk assessment at all stages of production, processing/handling and marketing, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Operator characteristics, such as production types, company size, length of time engaged in organic production, acreage or location of parcels, etc;
- Complexity of the operator's business structure and/or supply chain;
- Previous inspection/review results and/or complaints;
- Indicators of possible non-compliant activity, such as inconsistencies in mass balance, records, or other information provided, etc;
- Positive residue test results for prohibited substances;
- Potential for drift;
- Parallel production of the same organic and nonorganic product(s);
- Any other criteria established in the LPO regulations.[44]

Testing of organic products and inputs may be conducted as described in Section Four.

CERTIFICATION REVIEW AND DECISION[45]

The inspector does not have the final say about certification. The role of the inspector is to provide information so that certification specialists can decide about whether to grant or renew certification.

Within a reasonable time after completion of the on-site inspection, generally within 90 days, the evaluation (certification review) is conducted by the CCOF Mexico Certification Committee following the procedures and criteria outlined in this manual. See "The Certification Committee" section above.

The evaluation includes: the on-site inspection report, Organic Plan, results of any analysis for substances conducted, and all other relevant additional information requested from or supplied by the operator. A checklist is used to review general (generic) criteria applicable to multiple regulatory standards, along with LPO specific criteria where significant differences exist.[46]

If the evaluation finds that the applicant or operator meets the regulations described in this manual, and (for renewing operators) has resolved any outstanding recommendations or conditions, certification is granted or renewed. The operator is issued an LPO certificate with a 1-year validity period, starting from the full on-site inspection verification date, and a Compliance Report listing any recommendations or conditions to be met.

If an applicant cannot demonstrate compliance, certification is denied as outlined in Section Four.

If a renewing operator's full on-site inspection demonstrates noncompliance with the regulations, a notification of Noncompliance is issued. The LPO certificate with a new 1-year validity period is not issued until the Noncompliance is resolved. See the Noncompliances and Resolution of Noncompliance sections in Section Four.

All certification decisions are documented and communicated through the Compliance Report, which outlines the certification determination, compliance requirements, deadlines, and rights and options. The Compliance Report is issued to the operation using its designated preferred method of communication, including email and/or postal mail, and serves as the formal notification of CCOF Mexico's certification decision.

[43] ALOOA Article 221 Bis
[44] ALOOA Article 221 Ter
[45] RLPO Artículos 26, 27; ALOOA Artículos 207, 208, 209, 210, 211
[46] ISO/IEC 17065:2012 7.4.1

RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

To maintain eligibility for sale of organic product in Mexico, operators must renew their LPO certification annually. Operators wishing to renew their LPO certification for the following year must apply for renewal by timely payment of the Mexico Compliance Program fee for the following year and providing updates to the Organic Plan, detailing any deviations from, changes to, modifications to, or other amendments made to the previous year's Organic Plan, and any additions or deletions intended to be undertaken in the coming year.

The Mexico Compliance Program fee is invoiced in the fourth quarter of each year and payment, or an approved payment plan, is due by January 1 of the following year. See Section Three for more information on this fee.

CCOF Mexico arranges the renewal inspection once the steps above are completed by the renewing operator. All renewing operators are subject to an annual inspection. Accordingly, 100% of renewing operators are inspected each calendar year.[47]

An on-site renewal inspection is conducted during the calendar year as described in the On-Site Inspection section above. Following the full on-site inspection, a certification decision is made, and if applicable, a new LPO certificate is issued, as described in the Certification Review and Decision section above.

SURRENDER OF CERTIFICATION

An operator may voluntarily cancel their certification under the Mexico Compliance Program through written or verbal notification of surrender at any time.[48] Only an authorized representative of the operation may surrender the certification. Operations located in Mexico remain enrolled in the Mexico Compliance Program if continuing in other certification programs.[49]

Upon voluntary surrender of certification, the operation must cease all claims to LPO certification and remove the term "organic" or its synonyms from all products to be sold in Mexico.[50]

Operations transferring certification to another certifier from CCOF Mexico must immediately cease use of labels and references to CCOF Mexico upon receiving LPO certification from the new certifier, even if the CCOF Mexico LPO certification remains valid, with the exception that sealed products labeled with CCOF's name may be sold, provided that they were packaged while the CCOF Mexico LPO certification was valid and an inventory has been provided to both certifiers.[51]

ORGANIC CERTIFICATE[52]

The Mexico Compliance Program LPO certificate carries a 1-year validity period, starting from the full on-site inspection verification date. The organic certificate specifies, at minimum, the:

A) Name and physical address of the operator
B) Name of the organic operator's representative
C) Operator identification number
D) Certificate number
E) Validity period
F) Scope(s) of LPO certification
G) Name, address, website and telephone number of CCOF Mexico
H) Place and date of issuance.

The annexes to the LPO certificate include general information about the certified operation, such as the certified products and their quantity, volume, or weight, among other details.

A certificate may be re-issued when any of the above information, or the contact information of the certifier has changed.

[47] ALOOA Article 221 Bis
[48] ALOOA Article 11, 224
[49] LPO Article 2; RLPO Article 2, Fracción V; ALOOA Articles 2, 3
[50] ALOOA Article 199, 220
[51] SENASICA Oficio B00.04.02.05.01-371.4692/2019, Anexo 1; ALOOA Articles 201, 204
[52] RLPO Article 26 and 27

All changes, corrections, or additions to the certificate must be requested in writing.

APPLICABILITY OF CERTIFICATION

The operator and its parcels and products listed on the LPO organic certificate and annex have only been approved for compliance with the LPO regulations.[53] Other local, state, or federal labeling regulations may apply to products sold by the operator, and it is the responsibility of the certified operator and/or the company that is identified on product labels to make sure that information and claims on the labels comply with all applicable regulations and are truthful.[54]

CONTROL OR INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION DOCUMENT[55]

Mexico requires a Control or International Transaction Document for products making organic claims imported into Mexico. Border agents review the Control or International Transaction Document, the LPO organic certificate, and the product labels for compliance with the Mexican organic regulations. See the full regulation for details.[56]

The Control or International Transaction Document is available at www.ccof.org/mexico. The following operators may request this document by contacting export@ccof.org:

- Operators located in the U.S. and certified or recertified to the LPO, for organic product exports to Mexico.
- Operators located in Canada and enrolled in the Global Market Access Program, for exports to Mexico of Canadian certified organic products and verified as compliant with the terms of the Canada Mexico Organic Equivalency Arrangement (CMOEA).
- Operators located in Mexico and certified to the LPO, for organic product sales within Mexico.

Operators that import organic products into Mexico must maintain copies of the corresponding control documents and have them available at inspections.

MODIFICATIONS TO CERTIFICATION[57]

All operators are required to establish, implement, and maintain an Organic Plan. The Organic Plan is a living document that must be updated any time practices regarding activities change or are to be changed. The Organic Plan is central to maintaining certification. Operators are responsible for ensuring that this information is current and accurately reflects the organic practices of the operator.

Operators are informed in writing when they are affected by a change or modification of certification. Modifications of certification may include, but are not limited to reduction, expansion, or extension of scopes, products, parcels, etc. When a modification results in changes to any information contained in the LPO organic certificate, an updated certificate is issued without extending the existing 1-year validity period.

Adding or Removing Acreage, Products, Facilities

If an operator wants to add new acreage, products (including new labels and/or new products for recertification), or facilities to the existing certification, or change the address of a current facility, the operator must complete the relevant section of the Organic Plan and submit for review. Some additions may be completed with a review of paperwork only, while others require an inspection. All additions must be submitted, reviewed and approved before any products grown or processed from the additions may be sold as organic. Operators should contact CCOF as soon as possible to discuss what paperwork is needed and if an inspection is required to ensure that the new areas of production are adequately covered by certification.

To remove acreage, products (including labels and/or recertified products), or facilities from the existing certification, the operator must notify CCOF Mexico in writing.

Adding or Removing Scope of LPO Certification

To add a new scope of LPO certification, an operator must submit the relevant Organic Plan pages and have an inspection. For example, an operator certified for organic crop production that wishes to add processing. Expansions

[53] LPO Article 30
[54] ALOOA Article 205
[55] ALOOA Articles 255, 259
[56] Agreement that establishes the merchandise whose importation is subject to regulation by the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as the issuance of the certificate of origin for the exportation of coffee, published in the DOF on December 26, 2020, modified on various subsequent dates.
[57] RLPO Articles 26, 27; ALOOA Article 206

may not be approved for the scope of operation or breadth of certification of an operator with open Noncompliance(s) or Proposed Suspension(s) related to compromised integrity, unless the change is required to resolve or correct the compliance issues.

To remove an existing scope of LPO certification, the operator must notify CCOF Mexico in writing.

Business Changes
Operators that undergo a change which results in a new Tax ID, business structure, or owner must fill out and submit a Business Change Contract. This form provides details on the nature and scope of the change and may help streamline the certification process.

LPO Regulation Changes

As Mexico's LPO regulations change, this program is modified to ensure access to the Mexican market. Operators are notified of any changes to the Mexico Compliance Program with six months' notice prior to enforcement of any standard change when possible, or as required by SENASICA/SADER.

If required due to the nature of the regulation change, additional inspection(s), review, and certification decisions may be completed; updated certificates may be provided; and/or market surveillance may be conducted as applicable.

Exceptional Activities[58]

Upon notification from SENASICA/SADER, exceptional activities aimed at counteracting the effects of catastrophic circumstances may be permitted. In such cases, the continuity of organic status will be determined by SENASICA/SADER.

USE OF NAME AND TRADEMARKS

CCOF Mexico must be identified on product packaging by its full name: "CCOF Servicios de Certificación, S. de R.L. de C.V."

Operators certified by CCOF Mexico are allowed by CCOF CS to use the marks shown below on LPO certified organic product packaging. The marks can be requested for download at Labeling & Logos - CCOF.org.



Operators must only use the CCOF Mexico name and the CCOF marks shown above in accordance with standards and/or policies and must cease all use of CCOF Mexico's name and the CCOF marks shown above upon notice. Any use of CCOF Mexico's name or the CCOF marks shown above without the express consent of CCOF Mexico and/or CCOF CS is strictly prohibited and constitutes infringement of policies and procedures. The operator is responsible for reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in bringing any civil action, arbitration or mediation to enforce its rights in its name or seal.

SECTION THREE: FEES

We are committed to maintaining stable certification fees and being completely transparent about the costs of certification.

Applicants and operators are encouraged to contact us to discuss the costs of certification. A formal cost estimate is provided to new applicants upon acceptance of the application. Fees may vary from year to year.

Fees are provided below in US dollars (USD) and Mexican pesos (MXN). The value in Mexican pesos can vary according to the current exchange rate. Operators may consult https://www.banxico.org.mx/ to determine the current exchange rate.

[58] ALOOA Article 233

Applicants and operators can access current fees by consulting this manual, which is available at www.ccof.org/mexico. Operators are notified when fees listed in this manual change.

MEXICO COMPLIANCE PROGRAM FEE

There is an annual fee of $900 USD for the Mexico Compliance Program. This is equivalent to approximately 16,150 MXN in October 2026.

Applicants are invoiced for this fee when requesting enrollment. Renewing operators are invoiced for this fee annually.

CONTROL OR INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION DOCUMENT FEE

There is a fee of $85 per Control or International Transaction Documents. This is equivalent to approximately 1530 MXN in October 2026. See the Control or International Transaction Document available at https://www.ccof.org/resource/control-or-transaction-document-for-mexico/ for information on additional fees for rush services.

APPEAL FEE

There is an appeal fee of $500 USD for appeals under the Mexico Compliance Program. This fee is meant to prevent spurious appeals and to help offset costs, as described in the Appeals section below. This is equivalent to approximately 8970 MXN in October 2026.

OTHER APPLICABLE FEES

Applicants to CCOF Mexico for LPO certification or recertification are certified to, or concurrently applying for, USDA NOP certification with CCOF CS. Additional information on applicable fees related to certification services offered by CCOF CS is provided in CCOF Certification Services Program Manual.

PAYMENT OF FEES

With your payment, please include a memo or invoice, and your client code. Payments may also be submitted online at: www.ccof.org/payment.

SECTION FOUR: ENFORCEMENT, ADVERSE ACTION, SANCTIONS & DUE PROCESS

ENFORCEMENT

All allegations of violations of organic regulations and standards are taken very seriously. All substantive written reports of violation are thoroughly investigated. However, no rules or laws can strengthen the program more than the commitment of the operator to follow the regulations and standards with care and honesty.

Issues related to violations of regulations and standards are treated with the highest priority. The marketplace acceptance and success of third-party certification programs strongly depends on the consumers' confidence in the authenticity and integrity underlying certified product label claims. To this end, quality certification services are implemented that ensure compliance prior to granting certification and monitor continued compliance of the operator.

Enforcement procedures occur in various contexts and include the ability to take adverse action against noncompliant operators to protect consumer confidence in the organic certification process. When an operator is found to be out of compliance with the regulations and standards, adverse actions and sanctions are applied as described below.

Enforcement procedures also include measures to ensure due process to protect the rights of certification applicants and operator by providing an opportunity to respond to noncompliance findings prior to adverse action and sanctions taken. This balance of adverse action and due process ensures the certification process remains strict but fair.

Complaints and Investigations[59]

CCOF Mexico investigates complaints and disputes related to the Mexico Compliance Program, LPO organic production and handling requirements, certification activities, product compliance with applicable regulations and standards, and the performance of CCOF México or other persons or organizations involved in certification activities. Complaints may

[59] ISO/IEC 17065 4.1.2.2.c.2 & 4.1.2.2.j

originate from consumers, inspectors, producers, handlers, distributors, brokers, government officials, or any other interested party.

Complaints or requests for investigation must be submitted in writing and supported by documented evidence. Upon receipt, CCOF Mexico acknowledges the complaint, conducts a timely, impartial, and confidential investigation based solely on documented evidence, and records the actions taken, the effectiveness of those actions, and the resolution of the matter. Whenever possible, the complainant is notified of the outcome in a confidential manner, and appropriate oversight authorities are informed of compliance proceedings and resulting actions, as applicable. Complaints may be submitted through CCOF's online complaint and feedback portal: www.ccof.org/ccofs-online-complaint-and-feedback-portal/.

All certified operators and applicants participating in the Mexico Compliance Program must maintain records of all complaints received that relate to compliance with applicable Mexico Compliance Program and LPO requirements. Such records must demonstrate that appropriate action was taken in response to each complaint and must be made available to CCOF upon request.

Certified operators are also required to immediately notify CCOF Mexico if they become aware that products they have grown, handled, processed, brokered, or sold have been contaminated with prohibited substances or materials. Failure or refusal by an applicant or certified operator to cooperate with a complaint investigation may constitute grounds for a notice of noncompliance and may result in denial or suspension.

Monitoring the Organic Marketplace

Surveillance of the marketplace is routinely monitored for the use of the name and seals described above in the section Use of Name and Trademarks, to evaluate product label claims for conformance with Mexican organic regulations and CCOF policies. If such monitoring finds misuse of the name and/or seals, or that product labels are noncompliant, CCOF Mexico takes appropriate action, including issuing a Notification of Noncompliance to the operator or reporting the finding to the appropriate regulatory authority, i.e. SENASICA.

Testing of Organic Products and Inputs[60]

Operators seeking certification must make all organic products and inputs available for examination, sampling or testing, by CCOF Mexico and/or any governing official with regulatory authority associated with SADER/SENASICA and the LPO regulations.

Pre-harvest or postharvest testing of any input or product to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic may be required when there is reason to believe that the input or product has come into contact with a prohibited substance or has been produced using excluded methods, such as genetically engineered organisms. Such tests must be conducted by appropriately designated representatives and at no cost to the operator.

CCOF Mexico takes samples from at least 5% of all certified operations annually. When residue testing detects prohibited substances at levels above 5% of the maximum limits established by COFEPRIS,[61] or other applicable tolerance levels as indicated by SENASICA, CCOF Mexico notifies SENASICA. CCOF Mexico also notifies the operator that the agricultural product must not be sold, labeled or represented as organically produced. An investigation of the operator or applicant may be conducted to determine the cause of the prohibited substance's presence.

Residue testing results are sent to SENASICA when they represent risk to organic integrity or presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).[62]

[60] ALOOA Article 22, 216, 244, 246, 257 Bis, 257 Ter, 257 Quater, 257 Quinquies

[61] https://siipris03.cofepris.gob.mx/Resoluciones/Consultas/ConWebRegPlaguicida.asp

[62] ACUERDO por el que se establecen los requisitos y especificaciones para la aprobación de órganos de coadyuvancia en la evaluación de la conformidad de las disposiciones legales competencia de la Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación a través del Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria (published in the DOF October 30, 2014), Article 16 VII

ADVERSE ACTIONS AND SANCTIONS[63]

It is the responsibility of applicant operators to understand and comply with all the applicable regulations or standards for certification. If operators do not understand the requirements for certification, they are encouraged to reach out for clarification.

Noncompliances

When an inspection, review, or investigation of an operator reveals that the applicant or operator is not in compliance with the Mexican organic regulations, a notification of Noncompliance is issued under the Mexico Compliance Program. The notification of Noncompliance includes:

A) A description of each Noncompliance;
B) The facts upon which the notification of Noncompliance is based; and
C) The date by which the operator must rebut or correct each Noncompliance when correction is possible.

Noncompliances may be issued for administrative issues, such as failure to pay invoices. Noncompliances are issued for activities that are a threat to the organic integrity of the organic product. All Noncompliances must be resolved and closed before an applicant is granted certification or an operator is granted renewal of certification. Noncompliances that are not adequately resolved result in additional adverse action.

Resolution of Noncompliance

An applicant or operator who has been issued a notification of Noncompliance may resolve the Noncompliance by:

A) Correcting the Noncompliance(s) as described in the Noncompliance must be provided with a description of the corrective actions taken and supporting documentation to demonstrate the effectiveness of the corrective actions.
B) Rebutting the Noncompliance(s) must be submitted in writing.

After the rebuttal is submitted, the correction or rebuttal of the Noncompliance(s) is reviewed to determine if the information submitted is sufficient to resolve the issues. If necessary, an on-site inspection to verify corrective actions or information provided in the rebuttal.

If the correction or rebuttal is sufficient to resolve the Noncompliance(s), the applicant or operator is notified that the Noncompliance(s) has been resolved. As applicable, certification is granted or renewed, and an LPO certificate is issued, as described in the Certification Review and Decision section above.

If determined that the correction or rebuttal is only partial or incomplete, the applicant or operator is notified of the Noncompliance issues that remain open and the date by which they must be addressed.

If the corrective actions or rebuttal is not sufficient to resolve the Noncompliance(s), or the applicant or operator fails to respond to the Noncompliance, the adverse action escalates by either denying certification or proposing suspension.

An operator that has been issued a Noncompliance may surrender their certification, correct the Noncompliance(s), and submit a new application provided that the new application includes a complete application, the notification of Noncompliance, and a description of the corrective actions taken with supporting documentation.

Denial of Certification[64]

When an applicant does not comply with requirements for LPO certification, nor to be placed within the LPO conversion period, the applicant receives written notification of denial of certification that states the reason(s) for the denial.

The notification of Denial of Certification states the reason(s) for denial and the applicant's right to:

A) Reapply for certification;
B) File an appeal.

[63] ALOOA Articles 206, 234
[64] ISO/IEC 17065 7.6.6; RLPO Article 17; ALOOA Article 215

Proposed Suspension
When an operator is issued a notification of Noncompliance under the Mexico Compliance Program, and the correction or rebuttal is unsuccessful or not completed by the specified due date, an operator is sent a written notification of Proposed Suspension of LPO certification. The notification of Proposed Suspension states:

A) The reasons for the proposed suspension;
B) The proposed effective date of such suspension;
C) The impact of a suspension on future eligibility for certification;
D) The right to rebut or correct the Noncompliance;
E) The right to file an appeal.

Delivery Receipt Requirement
The compliance notifications described in the sections above require delivery service confirmation of receipt. The operator's authorized email address or mailing address is used as the means for obtaining delivery receipt confirmation.

Suspension
If an operation has been issued a notification of Proposed Suspension and fails to resolve the issue through correction, rebuttal, or filing of an appeal, the operator is sent a written notification of Suspension of certification under the Mexico Compliance Program. Upon suspension, the operator must cease all claims to LPO certification and remove the term "organic" or its synonyms from all products to be sold in Mexico.[65]

To become certified under the Mexico Compliance Program after completion of the suspension period, the operation may re-apply following Section Two above. When applicable, a new conversion period must be completed.[66] Operations located in Mexico remain enrolled in the MCP during the suspension period if continuing in other CCOF certification programs.[67]

APPEALS

Any applicant or operator may appeal a notification of Denial of Certification or Proposed Suspension as applicable. Appeals must be filed in writing with CCOF Mexico and are handled by the Ad Hoc Appeals Committee.

All appeals are acknowledged upon receipt.

A decision to deny or suspend certification becomes final unless the decision is appealed in a timely manner. An appeal must be filed in writing within the time period provided in the notice or within 30 days from receipt of the notice, whichever occurs later. The appeal is considered "filed" on the date received.

All appeals must include a copy of the adverse decision and a statement of the appellant's reasons for believing that the decision was not proper or made in accordance with applicable LPO regulations, policies, or procedures. All written communications between parties involved in appeal proceedings must be sent to the recipient's place of business by a delivery service that provides dated return receipts.

An operator submitting an appeal should include in their appeal, in addition to the information described above, any relevant background information on the case, reasons to change the certification decision, and a suggested resolution to the issue. Appellants are strongly encouraged to submit complete information when making an appeal. Submission of new information after the initial appeal may delay scheduling of the adjudication meeting. In order to prevent spurious appeals and to help offset the cost of adjudication proceedings, the appellant must submit a fee with the appeal as described in Section Three.

The Ad Hoc Appeals Committee renders a final and non-appealable decision to sustain, deny or suspend LPO certification. Alternatively, they may sustain or deny an appeal regarding an adverse action. All appeals are reviewed, heard, and decided by persons not involved with the decision being appealed.

[65] ALOOA Article 234, 252
[66] ALOOA Article 11, 224
[67] LPO Article 2; RLPO Article 2, Fracción V; ALOOA Articles 2, 3

SECTION FIVE: POLICIES

USE OF CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS

Persons may be hired on a contractual basis, such as inspectors or on a sub-contractual basis; i.e., laboratories or inspection bodies. CCOF Mexico retains final authority and responsibility for certification decisions.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLIC INFORMATION, & DATA REPORTING

CCOF Mexico safeguards the confidentiality of any business-related information concerning any operator, products, or suppliers obtained during the course of certification. Proprietary information is not disclosed to third parties without the operator's written consent prior to release, except to the authorized representatives of SADER/SENASICA or where required by Mexican law or regulations.

Certificates, addendums, and any results of laboratory analyses for residues of pesticide and other prohibited substances conducted during the current and 3 preceding calendar years, unless the testing is part of an on-going compliance investigation, are only made public upon request.

Information about certified operators is reported to SENASICA as required and is made public at the Mexican agriculture's ministry's website at https://dj.senasica.gob.mx/SIAS/Statistics/Inocuidad/OperacionOrganicalNal. Operators cannot opt out of inclusion in this website.

Public information available at this website and/or upon request may include but is not limited to the following:[68]

- Business name
- Mailing Address
- Physical location of the operator
- Main contact first and last name
- Operator phone number, public-facing email, and website (when provided)
- Effective date of LPO certification
- Scope of LPO certification
- Names of products grown or processed of the operation; including, but not limited to, cultivated and certified hectares, location, and other details contained in the LPO certificate and/or addendum
- Status of LPO certification (including: certified, surrendered (voluntarily cancelled), suspended, or in conversion)[69]

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY

Certification services are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner and in alignment with our values of fairness, integrity, and accessibility. We certify operators that fall within the scope of our program, to the extent that our administrative capacity allows.

- Operators are not discriminated against based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or any other protected characteristic.
- Operators are not imposed undue financial or procedural burdens that could disadvantage applicants based on the size or type of their operation.
- Certification decisions are not influenced by an applicant's or operator's affiliations, associations within the food industry, or the number of previous compliance notices received.
- Retaliatory behavior by the operator does not influence certification decisions. All certification actions are based solely on compliance with organic standards and program requirements.

IMPARTIALITY

Certification services are structured and managed to prevent conflicts of interest by requiring all persons who review applications for certification, perform on-site inspections, review certification documents, evaluate qualifications for certification, or make certification decisions, as well as all parties responsibly connected to complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure report. All decisions to certify an applicant/certified operation are made by a person different from who conducted the on-site inspection.

[68] ISO/IEC 17065:2012 7.8
[69] ALOOA Article 213, 220

Any person with direct conflicts of interest, including contractors or subcontractors, are excluded from work, discussions, and decisions in all stages of the certification process, and the monitoring of applicants and operators for all entities in which such person has or has held a commercial interest, including an immediate family interest, pressures from financial or other issues or from the provisions of general consulting services, internal audits, quality management system consultancy for operators within a 24-month period prior to the application under the Mexico Compliance Program. Persons may also be excluded for having direct or indirect conflicts; such as self-interest, over-familiarity, intimidation, and competition. Other risks taken into account may also include and are not limited to: the objectives of the inspection, the type(s) of samplings performed during an inspection, the real and perceived impartiality, legal, regulatory and liability issues, the operator's organization and its operating environment, impact of the inspection on the operator and its activities, the health and safety of its inspection teams, perception of interested parties, misleading statements by the operator and the use of marks[70].

Operators are not certified if it is found that any responsibly connected party in the certification process has or has held a conflict of interest in the operator. If it is determined, within 24 months of certifying an operator to the Mexico Compliance Program that a person participating in the certification process had or has a conflict of interest, the application/renewal for certification must be reconsidered and, if necessary, a new on-site inspection performed or the applicant or operator referred to a different certification agency. Operators are not charged any costs for when conflicts require a reconsideration of application or certification decision, a new inspection or transferred to another agency.

Staff, contractors or subcontractors, or other personnel are prohibited from receiving payment, gifts, or favors of any kind, other than fees prescribed in Section Three from operators.

We do not engage in the marketing of certified products or promotion of individual products or give advice or provide consultancy services to applicants/operators or supply or design products of the type(s) it certifies. Applications are not solicited or based on the needs of individual buyers.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

We want to hear from you. To provide us feedback please visit www.ccof.org/es/ccofs-online-complaint-and-feedback-portal/

SECTION SIX: DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

For a complete list of definitions and terminology refer to the LPO regulations available at https://www.gob.mx/senasica/documentos/ley-de-productos-organico.

Adverse action- A noncompliance decision that adversely affects certification, including a proposed suspension or a denial of certification.

Applicant - Any person or operation applying to obtain LPO certification and be an Operator.

Authorized Representative – An individual designated by the operator to act on the operator's behalf regarding certification.

LPO Certificate- A written document evidencing that an operator has been certified to the Ley de Productos Orgánicos (LPO) and its implementing provisions.

Certification Review and Decision - The act of reviewing and evaluating an operator or applicant and determining compliance with the LPO regulations. This does not include performing an inspection.

Certification Committee – CCOF Mexico's Certification Committee for LPO certification. The Certification Committee is headed by a Certification Committee Coordinator who has at least three years of experience in the organic sector and is responsible for coordinating review of files and applications, and coordinating the timely issuance of recommendations.[71]

[70] ISO/IEC 17021 4.8, 5.2.1
[71] ALOOA Article 210

Conversion- Transition from conventional production to organic production during a specified period (3 years), during which the provisions governing organic production will apply.

Handling- To sell, process, or package agricultural products, except final marketing.

Marketing (Commercialization) - The display, offering, distribution, delivery, or other placement of organic products into commerce for commercial purposes.

Operator - A certified operation who performs crop or mushroom production, wild-crop harvesting, processing/handling or marketing, or portion of such operations.

Organic Plan - A plan of management of an organic production or handling operator that has been agreed to by the operator and CCOF Mexico, which includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling. The acronyms “OSP” and “PO” are used interchangeably to refer to the Organic Plan.

Processing- Activities such as cooking, baking, curing, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, beating, separating, extracting, slaughtering animals, cutting, fermenting, distilling, gutting, decapitating, preserving, dehydrating, pre-cooling, cooling, and freezing, or manufacturing processes analogous to those listed above; including the packaging, repackaging, canning, bottling, marketing, or containing food in containers.

Records- Any information in written, visual, or electronic form that documents the activities undertaken by an applicant or operator to comply with LPO regulations.

Unannounced Inspection- The act of examining and evaluating all or a portion of the production or handling activities of a certified operator without advance notice to determine compliance.