

A photograph of a man in a purple polo shirt and dark trousers, wearing green rubber boots, standing in a field. He is using a long wooden stick to stir the contents of a blue bucket. The background is filled with green foliage and trees. A large white curved graphic element is on the left side of the image.

Guidelines

For Organic Certification of Individuals, Farms and Businesses Producing Organic Agricultural Products

September 2021

This publication was produced by ESAFF Uganda with financial support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Biovision Africa Trust through ESAFF Regional Office.

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▶ What is Organic?

ESAFF Uganda defines organic as a labeling for food or other agricultural products that have been produced.

Uganda Organic Standards (UOS) require the integration of cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. This means that organic operations must maintain or enhance soil and water quality while also conserving wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering are not used.



▶ What is Organic Certification?

Organic certification verifies that the farm and entity complies with the Uganda Organic Standards to allow one sell, label, and present products as organic. Ugocert administers these standards. Certification provides the consumer, whether end-user or intermediate processor, assurance of the organic product's integrity.



▶ Who Needs to be Certified?

A farm or business doesn't need to be certified in order to sell, label, or represent products as organic. However, you may not use the Ugocert organic seal on your products or refer to them as certified organic.



▶ What Types of Products are Eligible for Organic Certification?

Uganda Organic standards recognize four categories of organic production:

- 1). Crops:** Plants that are grown to be harvested as food, livestock feed, or fiber used to add nutrients to the field.
- 2). Livestock:** Animals that can be used for food or in the production of food, fiber, or feed.
- 3). Processed/Multi-Ingredient Products:** Items that have been handled and packaged.
- 4). Wild Crops:** Plants from a growing site that is not cultivated.



▶ How Does One Get Certified?

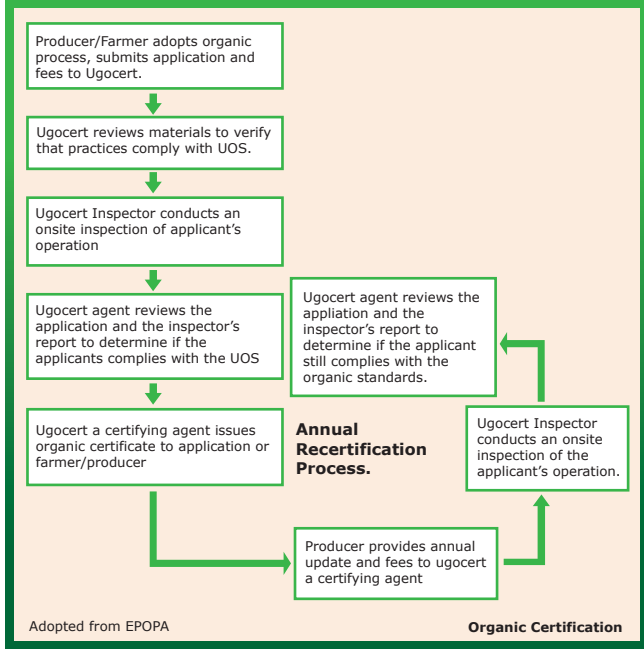
To become certified, one must submit an application for organic certification to Ugocert an accredited certifying entity in Uganda. This application must include:

- A detailed description of the operation to be certified.
- A history of substances applied to land during the previous three years.
- The names of the organic products grown, raised, or processed.
- A written Organic System Plan (OSP) describing the practices and substances to be used.

Ugocert first reviews the written application in order to ensure that practices comply with organic standards. Ugocert will also schedule a qualified inspector to visit your operation to verify that you are following your OSP, maintaining appropriate records, and meeting all requirements of the UOS. Afterward, Ugocert reviews the inspector's report.

If the written application and the inspection report show that your operation complies with the organic standards, the certifying agent will grant an organic certificate to your operation.

Figure 1: Organic Certification Process





▶ Transition Period

Any land used to produce raw organic commodities must not have had prohibited substances applied to it for the previous 3 years.

- Sell, label, or represent the product as **"organic."**
- Use the Ugocert organic or certifying agent's seal.



▶ Organic Certification Cost

Ugocert charges range between one million Uganda Shilling and above per annum per commodity depending on the size of the land. Additional costs may include; inspection, evaluation and transport costs for the inspector.



▶ What Does the Inspector Typically Look For?

On the farm, an inspector would observe the onsite practices and compare them to the OSP; assess the risk of contamination from prohibited materials; and perhaps take soil, tissue, or product samples as needed.

The inspector will also look at the following depending on your farm:

1). Crop inspection.

Fields, soil conditions, crop health, approaches to management of weeds and other crop pests, water systems (for irrigation and post-harvest handling), storage areas, and equipment.

2). Livestock inspection.

Feed production and purchase records, feed rations, animal living conditions, preventative health management practices (vaccinations and other medications used or planned for use), health records, and the number and condition of animals present on the farm.

3). At a handling or processing facility

An inspector would inspect your facility and compare their observations with your OSP. The inspector would evaluate the receiving, processing, and storage areas used for organic ingredients and finished products.



▶ **What Happens if an
Operation (Farmer,
Group or business)
Violates UOS?**

Punishments may include financial penalties for violation and/or suspension or revocation of an operation's organic certificate.

About ESAFF Uganda

Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda is a small scale farmer initiated and farmer-led movement formed to facilitate processes through which small-scale farmers' development concerns can be solicited, articulated and ultimately addressed through local, national, regional and international policies and programmes.

Developed and Printed with support from:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra





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