

## **Certification Scheme for Organic Farming**

### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, consumers have become more conscious of the benefits of healthy eating. They are more and more demanding in terms of quality, especially as concern fresh food and show yet greater preference for produce that are physically appealing, free of agro-chemical residues in addition to high gustative properties.

In response to the growing demand for quality fresh produce, organic and other natural farming systems are attracting increasing interest among the farming community as well as new promoters venturing in the fresh food production subsector.

Government policies are also geared to steer and further promote the shift from conventional farming to environmentally sustainable and safer mode of food production by facilitating access to State Land, technical as well as financial assistance.

### **2. Justification**

Albeit the string of advantages, organic and other natural farming systems are characterised by needs for tedious practices, heavy effort coupled with special inputs, which , unfortunately give relatively low output in terms of yield.

Farmers are therefore compelled to thrive hard to protect origin and genuineness of their produce to earn prime price as adequate compensation to effort put in to sustain exigencies of the production systems.

Certification has become today a key tool which can assures producers with adequate protection of their label, genuineness of their production systems for traceability as well as guaranteed market and prime price.

### **3. Purpose of the Scheme**

To facilitate access of small scale producers of organic farm products to internationally recognised organic certification systems which would enable their fresh farm products to be differentiated and formally labelled as genuine organic farm products on both domestic and foreign markets, thereby assuring them with a prime price as well as adequate

compensation for effort put in the production process.

#### **4. Details of the Scheme**

A cash grant of Rs 100,000 provided to beneficiaries for funding of costs associated with certification of fresh products produced on their own organic farms and payable by claim to the certifying body as follows:

- An amount representing 50% of the approved grant to be disbursed at start of the certification process;
- the remaining 50% paid at time of issue of the certificate; and
- Disbursement of grant shall be made directly to the certification body.

The certification body shall be accredited to perform certification according to ISO 17065 and shall be member of internationally recognised organic associations such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), Canada Organic Standards, EU Standards, or any other similar organisations.

#### **5. Beneficiaries**

Agro-based Companies as well as individual farmers engaged in production of food crops on commercial scale and conducted under recommended organic farming systems on either owned or leased lands of area ranging from a minimum of 1 arpent to a maximum of 5 arpents.

#### **6. Eligibility Criteria**

##### **Prospective applicants shall:**

- (a) hold valid Planters Registration Card issued by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund in case of individual farmers; or
- (b) valid Registration Certificate/Business Registration Card, whichever applicable, with agricultural production as main field of activity in case of Agro-Based Companies;
- (c) have proof of adequate financial resources for funding of the remaining amount required to settle the full cost quoted for the certification process, if applicable; and
- (d) hold title deed or valid lease agreement (Minimum 5 years) for land hosting the organic farm.

## **7. Mode of Application**

Farmer has to fill the appropriate application form and submit supporting document, wherever applicable, as follows:

- (a) Copy of Registration Certificate in case of Company or copy of SFWF Farmer's Registration Card in case of individuals;
- (b) Copy of Identity Card for members of Companies;
- (c) Proof of funding from a recognised financial institution, if applicable, (e.g. Updated letter from bank issued during the month when the application to benefit from the scheme is filed); and
- (d) Quotation(s) from the certifying body;

The Application Form is available at:

the Ministry of Agro-Industry & Food Security, at Level 9, Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, Port-Louis; **or**

can be downloaded on the Ministry's website: <http://agriculture.govmu.org>

The Application Form duly filled along with the relevant supporting document should be submitted to the Ministry at the address indicated above.

## **8. Special Conditions**

- Upon approval, an agreement will be signed between the Ministry and the beneficiary;
- The certification process and award of certificate shall be completed within a maximum period of two months after the first 50% disbursement of the grant provided under the Certification Scheme for Organic Farming;
- Beneficiary will have obligation to maintain standard of its organic production system after award of certificate of compliance to organic standards; and
- Prospective applicants will benefit from the scheme only once.

