



INDICOFS



INDIAN COFFEE SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD AND CERTIFICATION SCHEME



COFFEE BOARD OF INDIA

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

No. 1, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001





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मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी एवं सचिव
कॉफ़ी बोर्ड

Kurma Rao M. IAS
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PREFACE

Indian coffee has, for generations, been cultivated through inherently sustainable practices under shade, with mixed cropping, organic recycling and minimal external inputs. This traditional farming system has sustained ecological balance, conserved biodiversity and strengthened farm resilience, making sustainability an integral feature of Indian coffee cultivation. While these strengths define Indian coffee, they have not always been adequately recognised or translated into commensurate benefits for growers in global markets.

It was in this context that the vision for a nationally articulated sustainability standard for Indian coffee was first conceived by Dr. K.G. Jagadeesha, IAS, former CEO & Secretary, Coffee Board. Recognising both India's natural advantages and the need for a structured national framework, the initiative was taken forward with the support of a small in-house team comprising Dr. Ashwinikumar and Dr. N. Surya Prakash. To provide direction and momentum, a Core Technical Committee was subsequently constituted to develop a scientifically robust, internationally aligned sustainability standard and a holistic certification framework suited to India's coffee production sector.

The growing global focus on sustainability, climate responsibility, traceability and emerging regulations such as EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), further underscored the need for a credible, transparent and nationally anchored approach. Accordingly, the Coffee Board developed the Indian Coffee Sustainability Standard (INDICOFS) and Scheme as a stakeholder-driven framework integrating environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability. INDICOFS was developed with scientific and technical guidance from the Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI), and aligned with internationally accepted sustainability principles, that are firmly rooted in Indian agrarian conditions.


In the process of development, the draft Sustainability Standard was posted in the public domain on the Coffee Board's website to facilitate wider consultation. The inputs received from coffee growers' associations, individual stakeholders, and certification bodies were deliberated and discussed by the committee in an open meeting, and included all relevant inputs to ensure that the Standard addresses the diverse aspects of India's shade-grown coffee landscape.

The introduction of INDICOFS marks a significant step in strengthening India's global position in sustainable coffee. It supports farms of all sizes in adopting improved practices, facilitates producer collectives, enables technology-driven traceability and enhances opportunities for market recognition for coffees grown in harmony with nature.

On behalf of the Coffee Board, I place on record my warm appreciation to Shri Anil Jauhri, Chairman, Ms. Keerthi D'Souza, Secretary and all the members of the Core Technical Committee for their expert guidance and to stakeholders across all sectors for their invaluable contributions, technical inputs, and unwavering commitment in shaping and finalising the Sustainability Standard aligned with the aspirations of the Indian coffee sector.

It is my earnest hope that INDICOFS will serve as a catalyst for a new phase of sustainability, resilience and global recognition for Indian coffee, while honouring the dedication of the growers who have protected and nurtured India's coffee landscapes for generations.




Kurma Rao M, IAS
CEO & Secretary
Coffee Board of India



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Coffee Board wishes to acknowledge and place on record the dedicated efforts of the Chairman and all the members of the Core Technical Committee, concerned officials and all the stakeholders from different segments of the coffee value chain, for their committed involvement and invaluable contributions in bringing out the INDICOFS standards and a holistic certification scheme.



INDICOFS

INDIAN COFFEE SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD AND CERTIFICATION SCHEME

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INDIAN COFFEE SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD AND CERTIFICATION SCHEME - OVERVIEW

This document outlines the **key components** of the Indian Coffee Board's certification scheme.

Introduction: This document provides a comprehensive overview of the Indian Coffee Board's certification scheme, detailing the various aspects crucial for ensuring sustainable and high-quality coffee production. It covers the foundational sustainability standards, the assessment and certification processes, and the requirements for the bodies involved in upholding these standards.

Following documents are part of the Coffee Board scheme that is established by Technical Committee of INDICOFS, the sustainability standard of the Coffee Board of India:

- 1. Sustainability Standards: INDICOFS**
- 2. Certification Process for Level 1**
- 3. Certification Process for Level 2 and 3**

- 4. System for Provisional Approval of Certification Bodies**

- 5. Additional Requirements for Certification Bodies**

- 6. INDICOFS Requirements for Accreditation Bodies**

- 1. INDICOFS Sustainability Standard:** This document defines the sustainability requirements for Indian coffee growers and establishes a three-level framework to support producers on their sustainability journey:

- Level 1 (Basic level): This level includes foundational requirements for growers, which will be evaluated by Coffee Board-nominated inspectors who will issue a certification upon successful assessment.
- Level 2 (Aspiring): This level involves criteria for

third-party verification to ensure compliance that goes beyond basic practices.

- **Level 3 (Benchmarked Performance):** This level sets advanced benchmarks for growers committed to implementing world-class sustainability practices.

The standard covers key Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) aspects, such as economic sustainability, resource utilization, crop production, environmental conservation, and human well-being.

2. Certification Process for Level 1: This document details the certification process for Level 1 certification. It describes the procedures that in-house Coffee Board inspectors will follow to assess small coffee growers who own less than 10 hectares of land.

3. Certification Process for Levels 2 & 3: This document outlines the certification process for the more advanced Level 2 and Level 3 standards. The certification process will be managed by approved third-party Certification Bodies and applies to both individual growers and collectives (groups).

4. Provisional Approval of Certification Bodies: This document outlines a temporary approval system for Certification Bodies (CBs), allowing them to begin operations under the INDICOFS scheme while they

work towards obtaining formal accreditation. This provisional approval is valid for one year.

5. Additional Requirements for Certification Bodies:

This document specifies additional requirements for CBs that build upon the international standard ISO 17065. Key additions include the necessity for a signed code of conduct to maintain integrity and measures to ensure impartiality by preventing conflicts of interest. It also defines competence criteria for auditors, requiring them to hold a degree in agricultural sciences and possess at least five years of relevant work experience in the field.

6. Requirements for Accreditation Bodies:

This document outlines further mandates for Accreditation Bodies (ABs) that will accredit the CBs, expanding on the ISO 17011 standard. ABs must uphold integrity, ensure their personnel are free from conflicts of interest, and meet specific competence criteria for assessors that align with those for CB auditors. Additionally, ABs are prohibited from providing training or consulting services related to the INDICOFS scheme to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

* * * * *



1.0

**INDICOFS –
SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD FOR
COFFEE GROWERS**

COFFEE BOARD

Disclaimer:

This document is part of INDICOFS, the sustainability certification scheme of the Coffee Board of India, launched during its centenary celebrations. This edition has been revised to incorporate stakeholder views as reviewed by the Technical Committee. All intellectual property rights regarding this document are owned by the Coffee Board of India; reproduction and distribution are permitted strictly for the purpose of its implementation

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FOREWORD

This document establishes the INDICOFS sustainability standards for coffee production in India, reflecting the vital social and economic significance of the coffee sector, which encompasses over 400000 small and marginal holdings. The sector is integral to the livelihoods of approximately two million individuals, and its farms are situated in high biodiversity regions, notably the Western and Eastern Ghats. These regions provide essential ecosystem services and are home to numerous major rivers, underscoring the critical role that coffee cultivation plays in environmental stewardship. Despite the adherence to sustainable agricultural practices that integrate social, economic, and environmental dimensions, the Indian coffee industry has not yet achieved the recognition commensurate with its quality and production methods. While there has been an increase in the global demand for sustainably certified coffee, it is estimated that only approximately 15% of India's total coffee output is currently certified under sustainable certification criteria. In response to the need for a coherent sustainability framework, the Coffee Board of India has developed INDICOFS, a set of sustainability standards tailored to the Indian context. These standards acknowledge the best practices implemented by Indian coffee farms and facilitate a structured approach for continual improvement, ensuring sustainability across the coffee value chain. INDICOFS is aligned with the Government of India's vision of promoting local voluntary sustainability standards and fostering human-centric development. The INDICOFS standards are designed to address the evolving landscape of coffee production, including critical issues related to trade, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of traditional farming practices. A key innovation of INDICOFS is its holistic integration of responsible production methodologies with practices that enhance climate adaptation and minimize ecological footprints. The implementation of INDICOFS will be managed by the Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI), functioning under the administrative control of Coffee Board of India, which is recognized as one of the oldest public coffee research institutions globally. This initiative is anticipated to provide a standardized approach to acknowledge the commitments of Indian coffee producers toward sustainable practices. This standard is expected to foster collaboration among coffee producers and stakeholders to promote a resilient and sustainable Indian coffee industry. Acknowledgement is extended to the contributors, including authors, scientists, and experts from CCRI, as well as various stakeholders whose insights were instrumental in the development of these standards. Their collective efforts are poised to guide the Indian coffee industry toward a trajectory of sustainable growth and recognition in the global market.

This sustainability standard for coffee production establishes a framework to enhance the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of coffee cultivation and production practices. It is designed to assist coffee growers, cooperatives, and collectives in adhering to recognized sustainability principles that align with global standards. The standard addresses critical Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) aspects essential for sustainable coffee farming. It recognizes the need for a structured approach to promote responsible agricultural practices and continuous improvement within the sector. In doing so, the standard contributes to the long-term viability of coffee farming and enhances the quality of life for communities involved in the coffee supply chain. Requirements set forth in this standard are categorized into three levels, thereby allowing producers to progress in their sustainability journey. Level 1 (Self-Assessment) provides foundational requirements for growers to evaluate their practices and identify initial improvement opportunities. Level 2 (Auditing) outlines criteria for third-party verification, ensuring compliance and facilitating the progression beyond basic practices. Level 3 (Benchmarked Best Practices) delineates advanced sustainability benchmarks, assessed by recognized auditing bodies, signifying a high level of commitment to sustainable practices. This standard also incorporates general disclosure requirements aimed at providing stakeholders with transparent, relevant, and comparable information about coffee production operations. Coffee growers and collectives are encouraged to implement these requirements rigorously, as they underpin ongoing efforts toward governance, stakeholder engagement, and operational accountability. By adopting this standard, coffee producers can demonstrate compliance with recognized sustainability benchmarks, enhance their marketability, and contribute to the global movement toward sustainable agricultural practices.

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1.0 Scope:

This document specifies the INDICOFS sustainability standards for coffee production in India, providing a framework for coffee growers, collectives and coffee processing units to enhance their practices in alignment with sustainable development principles. These standards provide a framework for sustainable coffee production, focusing on environmental, social, and economic practices. The standards support recognition in domestic and international markets while considering local contexts and biodiversity.

2.0 Normative References: None

3.0 Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations

1. **Adolescent:** means a person who has completed [fourteenth] year but has not completed eighteenth year;
2. **Adult:** means a person who has completed eighteenth year;
3. **Accountability:** state of being answerable for decisions and activities to the organization's governing bodies, legal authorities and, more broadly, its stakeholders
4. **Accreditation Body (AB):** An Authority that assesses and approves other organizations involved in providing certification, testing and calibration services.
5. **Adaptation to Climate Change:** Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.
6. **Agroforestry:** Integration of trees with crops to enhance biodiversity and microclimate. Land-use system in which woody perennials are grown in association with agricultural crops or livestock in a spatial or temporal arrangement.
7. **Baseline:** An initial data point or set of data used for comparison to measure progress or change over time.
8. **Certification:** Third-party attestation related to an object of conformity assessment, with the exception of accreditation.
9. **Certification Body (CB):** An independent, third party organization that assesses and certifies whether an entity's products, services or management systems meet specific standards.
10. **Child:** means a person who has not completed [fourteenth] year;
11. **Child Labour:** Work performed by a person younger than the minimum age specified by national law or international conventions, which is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or health.
12. **Collective:** Collective Group of small growers and producers with a legal status located in a geographically proximate area within a radius of 50 kms collaborating for sustainability. The collectives may have large farms as members whose total holding shall not exceed 25% of collective holding
13. **Compliance:** Conformance to relevant laws and voluntary standards initiatives.
14. **Conservation:** The management and protection of natural resources, including ecosystems, wildlife, and forests, to ensure their sustainable use and availability for future generations.
15. **Decentralized Traceability:** A system for tracking products through a supply chain using a distributed and often blockchain-based ledger, allowing for transparency and immutability of data among multiple parties.
16. **Deforestation:** Direct human-induced conversion of forest land to non-forest land.
17. **Ecosystem Services:** Benefit people obtain from nature, including the products of ecosystems and the processes that sustain human life and well being.
18. **Environment:** The natural surroundings in which an organism, population, or community is influenced by biotic (plants, animals and microorganisms) and abiotic (air, water, land, natural resources) factors for their survival and development.
19. **Environmental Management System (EMS):** Part of the management system used to manage environmental aspects, fulfil compliance obligations, and address risks and opportunities.
20. **Employer:** when used in relation to a plantation, means the person who has the ultimate control over the affairs of the plantation, and where the

affairs of any plantation are entrusted to any other person (whether called a managing agent, manager, superintendent or by any other name) such other person shall be deemed to be the employer in relation to that plantation; the person who has the ultimate control over the affairs of the plantation" means in the case of a plantation owned or controlled by—

- (i) a company, firm or other association of individuals, whether incorporated or not, every director, partner or individual;
- (ii) the Central Government or State Government or any local authority, the person or persons appointed to manage the affairs of the plantation; and
- (iii) a lessee, the lessee;

21. Ethical Labour Practices: Fair treatment, equal pay, safe conditions for workers.

22. Ethical behaviour: behaviour that is in accordance with accepted principles of right or good conduct in the context of a particular situation and is consistent with international norms of behaviour

23. Family: when used in relation to a worker, means—

- (i) his or her spouse, and
- (ii) the legitimate and adopted children of the worker dependent upon him or her, who have not completed their eighteenth year, [and includes parents and widow sister, dependent upon him or her;

24. Farm: An area administered as one unit which contains land planted with coffee plants (also referred to as estate)

25. Farm Boundary: Defined geographic and legal farm limits.

26. Farm Diary: Records of farm operations and inputs.

27. Financial Records: Documentation of economic transactions.

28. Forest Conservation: Measures to protect forests and biodiversity.

29. Gender equality: equitable treatment for women and men

NOTE: This includes equal treatment or, in some

instances, treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

30. Governance: System of directing and controlling

31. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Gases released into the atmosphere that trap heat, leading to the greenhouse effect and global warming.

32. Grower/s: Person/s engaged in coffee cultivation

33. Income Diversification: A risk management strategy that involves obtaining income from multiple sources to avoid over-reliance on one stream.

34. Interested party: stakeholder, intended user, person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or an activity.

35. Integrated Nutrient Management (INM): A holistic approach to agriculture that combines organic, inorganic and biological nutrient sources to optimise crop productivity.

36. Integrated Pest Management (IPM): A sustainable approach that uses a combination of methods such as prevention, monitoring and use of physical/mechanical, cultural and judicious use of pesticides to control pests & diseases

37. Labour Laws: Legal rules ensuring worker rights and safety.

38. Large grower/s: Coffee grower/s owning 10ha or more coffee farms.

39. Material issues: issues critical to stakeholders and impacts.

40. Monitoring and Surveillance: Ongoing checks for compliance and performance.

41. Native Species: Indigenous flora and fauna, vital for ecology.

42. Occupational Health and Safety: OH&S management system or part of a management system used to achieve the OH&S policy.

Note 1: The intended outcomes of the OH&S management system are to prevent injury and ill health to workers and to provide safe and healthy workplaces.

Note 2: The terms “occupational health and safety” (OH&S) and “occupational safety and health” (OSH) have the same meaning.

43. **Organic Matter:** Decomposed biomass benefiting soil health.
44. **Plantation:** means any plantation to which this Act, whether wholly or in part, applies and includes offices, hospitals, dispensaries, schools, and any other premises used for any purpose connected with such plantation, but does not include any factory on the premises to which the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948 (63 of 1948) apply;
45. **Plant Protection Chemicals (PPCs):** Approved agrochemicals for pest management.
46. **Poverty Alleviation:** Efforts reducing poverty in supply chain communities.
47. **Producer:** Person/entity growing coffee.
48. **Rapid Assessment:** Quick evaluation technique for field data.
49. **Remote Sensing:** Satellite or aerial reconnaissance supporting monitoring.
50. **Renewable Energy:** Energy from a renewable resource.
51. **Resource Efficiency:** Optimal use of energy, water, materials.
52. **Risk Management:** Coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risk.
53. **Stakeholder engagement:** activity undertaken to create opportunities for dialogue between an organization and one or more of its stakeholders, with the aim of providing an informed basis for the organization's decisions
54. **Supply chain:** sequence of activities or parties that provides products or services to the organization

NOTE: In some instances, the term supply chain is understood to be the same as value chain. However, for the purpose of this International Standard supply chain is used as defined above.

55. **Sustainability:** state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

56. **Sustainable Development:** development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
57. **Surveillance:** Systematic iteration of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity.
58. **Shade Canopy:** Multi-layered shade trees providing microclimate benefits.
59. **Social dialogue:** negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, employers and workers, on matters of common interest relating to economic and social policy

NOTE: In this International Standard, the term social dialogue is used only in the meaning applied by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

60. **Social responsibility:** responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour ; and is integrated throughout the organization and practised in its relationships
61. **Soil Health:** Soil status supporting biological activity.
62. **Traceability:** Ability to track product flow through the supply chain.
63. **Transparency:** openness about decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and willingness to communicate these in a clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner
64. **Value chain:** entire sequence of activities or parties that provide or receive value in the form of products or services

NOTE 1: Parties that provide value include suppliers, outsourced workers, contractors and others.

NOTE 2: Parties that receive value include customers, consumers, clients, members and other users.

65. Water Stewardship: Sustainable management of water resources.

66. Worker: means a person employed in a plantation for hire or reward, whether directly or through any agency, to do any work, skilled, unskilled, manual or clerical and includes a person employed on contract for more than sixty days in a year, but does not include—

- (i) a medical officer employed in the plantation;
- (ii) any person employed in the plantation (including any member of the medical staff) whose monthly wages exceed rupees ten thousand
- (iii) any person employed in the plantation primarily in a managerial or administrative capacity, notwithstanding that his monthly wages do not exceed ten thousand; or any person temporarily employed in the plantation in any work relating to the construction, development or maintenance of buildings, roads, bridges, drains or canals;

67. Worker Rights: Fundamental labour rights including fair treatment, non-discrimination, and freedom of association.

Abbreviations:

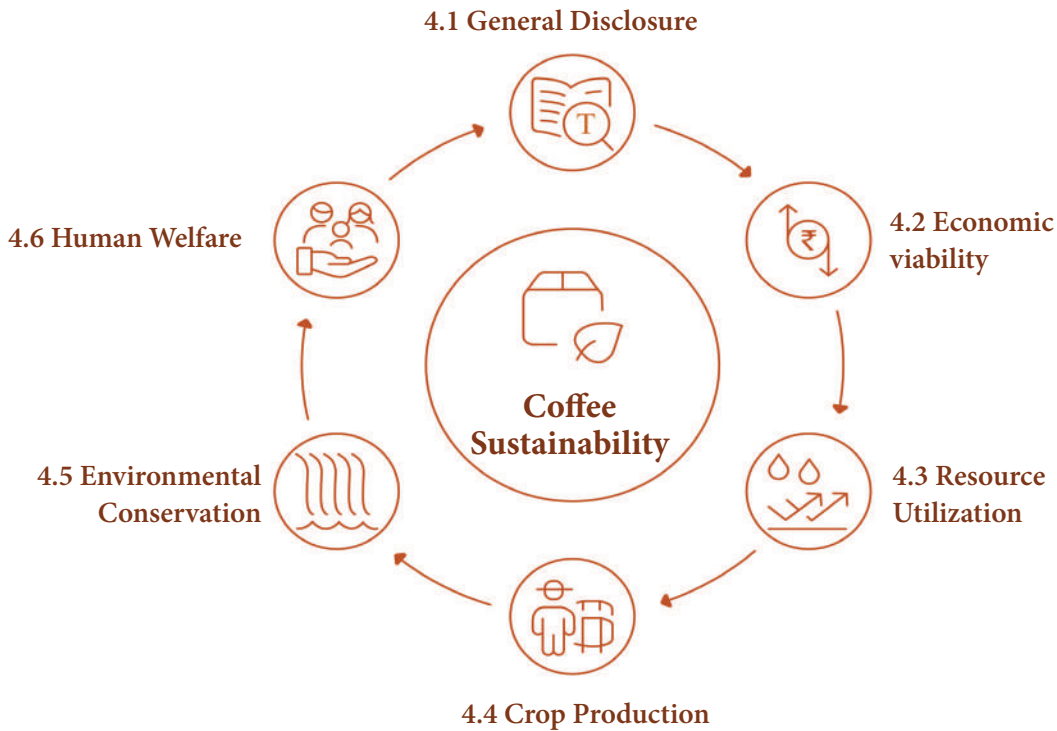
1. AGR – Agroforestry
2. CCRI – Central Coffee Research Institute
3. CPCB – Central Pollution Control Board
4. EMS – Environmental Management System
5. ESG – Environment, Social, and Governance
6. EU – European Union
7. FSI – Forest Survey of India
8. GDP – Gross Domestic Product
9. GHG – Greenhouse Gas
10. GMO – Genetically Modified Organisms
11. IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
12. IPM – Integrated Pest Management
13. INM – Integrated Nutrient Management
14. Kg – Kilogram
15. MSME – Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
16. NBSAP – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
17. NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
18. PPC – Plant Protection Chemicals
19. PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
20. RD – Research and Development
21. SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
22. UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
23. WC – Working Capital
24. WTO – World Trade Organization



4.0 Coffee Sustainability Standard INDICOFS Requirements

This standard defines the specific requirements of the sustainability standard, addressing key Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations for coffee growers and collectives.

The section aims to provide a structured framework for sustainable coffee production, promoting responsible practices and continuous improvement.



To facilitate effective implementation and assessment, the requirements are organised into three distinct levels:

- **Level 1 (Compliance Level 1):** These requirements are designed for checklist based assessment of coffee growers by Coffee Board nominated inspectors. They represent foundational practices that enable producers to evaluate their current performance and identify areas for initial improvement.
- **Level 2 (Compliance Level 2):** These requirements form the basis for auditing growers and collectives by Coffee Board - approved certification bodies. They establish a verifiable set of criteria to ensure compliance with the standard and drive progress beyond basic practices.
- **Level 3 (Compliance Level 3):** These requirements represent advanced sustainability benchmarks defined by the Coffee Board. Compliance with Level 3 is assessed by certification bodies approved by the Coffee Board, signifying a high level of achievement and commitment to leading sustainability practices.

4.1 General Disclosure

This section provides fundamental information about the farm or collective, setting the context for the subsequent sustainability-related disclosures.

General Principles: Providing standardised and comparable information about the farm or collective is essential for audit purposes to understand the operational context, governance structure, and sustainability approach. These principles enable informed assessments of the entity's sustainability performance and progress.

Recommendations: Farms and collectives shall maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the information required in the General Disclosure. This information should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its accuracy and relevance.

Standard:

General Disclosure Requirement	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Name of the Farm / Collective and name of the owner / authorised person	✓	✓	✓
2. Nature of ownership with identity proof	✓	✓	✓
3. Location Address	✓	✓	✓
4. Number of countries operated	✗	✓	✓
5. Customers served	✗	✓	✓
6. Scale of farming	✓	✓	✓
7. Significant changes	✗	✓	✓
8. Sustainability Strategy	✗	✗	✓
9. Sustainability process	✓	✓	✓
10. Governance	✗	✓	✓
11. Value Chain Mapping	✗	✗	✓
12. Employees and Workers	✓	✓	✓
13. Stakeholder Engagement	✗	✗	✓
14. Material Issues	✗	✗	✓
15. Management approach	✗	✓	✓



4.2 Economic Viability

General Principles: Achieving economic viability is crucial for the survival of farming operations. The growers/collectives should adopt integrated strategies to enhance incomes and manage costs through suitable planning and implementation of these strategies.

The sustainability of coffee farms and farmer collectives depends on the optimal organization of key production factors—such as natural resources, personnel, and funds—and on the efficient management of these resources by them.

Recommendations:

- Individual farms shall adopt formal documentation systems (As per the farm Diary) to record information relating to the farm and off-farm activities for crop production, processing, and trading. The farmer should analyse this information at different points in time to identify issues and opportunities.
- Assess the costs and returns from coffee farming by considering all direct and indirect costs. Identify the significant costs and analyse trends, including the causative factors. Evaluate the significant sources of farm incomes and their change over time.
- Examine ways of optimising costs and returns by considering resource utilization and transaction mechanisms.
- Collectives should adopt formal business management principles, efficient practices, and structures that would enable the constituents to realize the organization's objectives and deliver sustained outputs effectively.
- Assess the potential benefits from collective action, and if feasible, adopt collective bargaining practices to source inputs and trade in farm outputs.



4.2A Farm mapping



4.2B Farm data management



4.2C Farm diary



4.2D Farm management plan



4.2E Income diversification



4.2F Training records



4.2G Land rights



4.2H Collective mapping



4.2I Collective management plan



4.2J Contractual & Statutory Procedures



4.2K Organizational strengthening



4.2L Financial audit



4.2M Non-discrimination & resource availability



4.2N Member Services and Participation



4.2O Internal Inspections



4.2P Market Linkages & fair pricing



4.2Q Access to Insurance



4.2R Access to Technology

Requirements on Economic Viability

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>4.2A Farm Mapping: Growers owning an area of 4 hectares or less shall maintain a sketch of a farm map with boundaries on all sides of the farm, depicting one geographic coordinate point for identification of the farm and different blocks planted to coffee, buildings, and other infrastructure.</p> <p>Document: Sketch of the Farm with a single geocoordinate.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.2B Farm Data Management: Growers owning more than 4 hectares of farm shall maintain a farm map indicating borders, geo-coordinates in all directions, coffee blocks, location of infrastructure facilities like residence, farm pond, processing unit, drying yard, etc.</p> <p>Document: Farm map or Polygon if exporting to EU.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.2C Farm Diary: The grower and members of collectives shall maintain a Farm Diary for recording details of the farm, including cultural operations, inputs, labour engaged, wages paid, and production, for each year.</p> <p>Document: Farm Diary</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.2D Farm Management Plan: The grower shall prepare a farm management plan, which may include replantation/rejuvenation cycles, introduction of shade regulation as per the locally applicable laws, introduction of water harvesting and irrigation requirement, etc., for improving farm productivity.</p>	✗	✓	✓
<p>4.2E Income Diversification: The grower should consider options other than coffee growing for income diversification and improving livelihood.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.2F Training Records: The grower/key farm personnel should improve knowledge in specific areas of coffee farming through need-based training</p>	✗	✓	✓
<p>4.2G Land Rights: The grower shall have legal right over the land. In case of any acquisition of land, it shall be with free, prior and informed consent from the affected people.</p> <p>Document: Ownership document</p>	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Economic Viability for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
<p>4.2H Collective Mapping: The collective shall maintain a map of the project area and a database of its members' farms. The Collective maintains the polygon data of individual member farms and stores it in both physical/ electronic form for verification.</p> <p>Document: Printouts or electronic database</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2I Collective Management Plan: The collective shall establish and implement an appropriate growth plan for progressive improvements in improving productivity/ quality of coffee, infrastructure facilities, resource optimization, capacity building for family members and workers, biodiversity, etc.</p> <p>Document: Template - Collective Management Plan</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2J Contractual / Statutory Procedures: The collective shall establish, maintain, and implement procedures for the legal and other requirements related to the collective, including financials. Metric: Proportion of the group's patrons who have contributed share capital.</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2K Organizational Strengthening: The collective shall define, allocate, and document designated responsibilities, accountabilities, and delegate authorities to manage organizational strengthening and capacity building of members</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2L Financial Audit: The collective shall get a financial audit completed as per the prevailing laws and identify where improvement is needed.</p> <p>Document: Financial reports and other commercial documents</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2M Non-Discrimination and Resource Availability: The collective shall not engage in or support discrimination in creating opportunity. It should ensure the availability of resources essential for the capacity building of members and farm personnel.</p> <p>Document: Proceedings of meetings/programmes or similar documents</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2N Member Services and Participation: The collective shall define services and products for its members, furthering the sustainability of the group.</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2O Internal Inspections: The collective shall conduct periodic internal inspections, once in six months, to assess its level of conformance to INDICOFS standards and identify areas where improvement is needed. Document: Internal inspection reports</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.2P Market Linkages and Fair Pricing: Market Linkages and Fair Pricing requires the collective to establish effective connections to markets for selling their goods or services and to ensure they receive equitable and transparent pricing for their coffee reflective of quality.</p>	✗	✓
<p>4.2Q Access to Insurance: The collective shall encourage its members to seek appropriate insurance and shall educate them on the benefits of insurance for risk management</p>	✗	✓
<p>4.2R Access to Technology: The collectives shall endeavour to use digital platforms for market access and climate-smart agriculture technologies</p>	✗	✓

4.3 RESOURCE UTILIZATION, FARM INCOMES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

General Principles: Efficient and optimal utilization of natural resources, along with diversified production systems, would help sustain the farm's activities for long-term performance and secure related livelihoods.

The sustained operations of coffee farms are supported by net positive incomes realized from all farm outputs, including primary crops, inter-crops, and non-farming activities like agri-tourism etc. Positive incomes also encourage on-farm investments in Infrastructure, technology, and labour amenities. Farms that manage their costs better and utilize resources efficiently are more sustainable.

The implementation of context-specific and dynamic risk management strategies would enable coffee farms to address emerging challenges to crop production, farm incomes, and stakeholder welfare.

Growers

-  4.3A Land Characteristics
-  4.3B Ecosystem Alignment
-  4.3C Output Trend Analysis
-  4.3D Inventory of Resources
-  4.3E Resource Efficiency
-  4.3F Sustainable Sourcing
-  4.3G Access to Information & Technology
-  4.3H Climate Risk Assessment

Collectives

-  4.3I Group Sustainability Plans
-  4.3J Income Risk Reduction & Partnerships
-  4.3K Climate Risk Assessment
-  4.3L Collective Risk Management

Recommended practices:

- Coffee farms should implement a land utilization-cum-production plan along with strategies for natural resource conservation and management. The plan should reflect the periodic and annual cash flow requirements for maintenance and investments in farm infrastructure. Individual farms could prepare the plans independently, considering all contextual factors and crop production opportunities, or utilize the services of professionals. Collectives could assist their members to develop the strategy by using the services of resource persons, and also develop a plan for the collective (region).
- Farms could assess their on-farm natural resource endowments and implement various initiatives to conserve and build upon the endowments. Farmer collectives could assist their members in carrying out the resource assessments and evaluating sustainability.
- Farms, of all sizes, may undertake a climate risk assessment, including the dimensions of farm productivity, farming area, input use, soil, water, farm workers, climate extremes, and farm ecosystem. Based on the risk assessment, the farm could formulate a management plan that includes steps to reduce and overcome the risks. The collectives could also conduct risk assessments to address risks at the cluster/regional level.

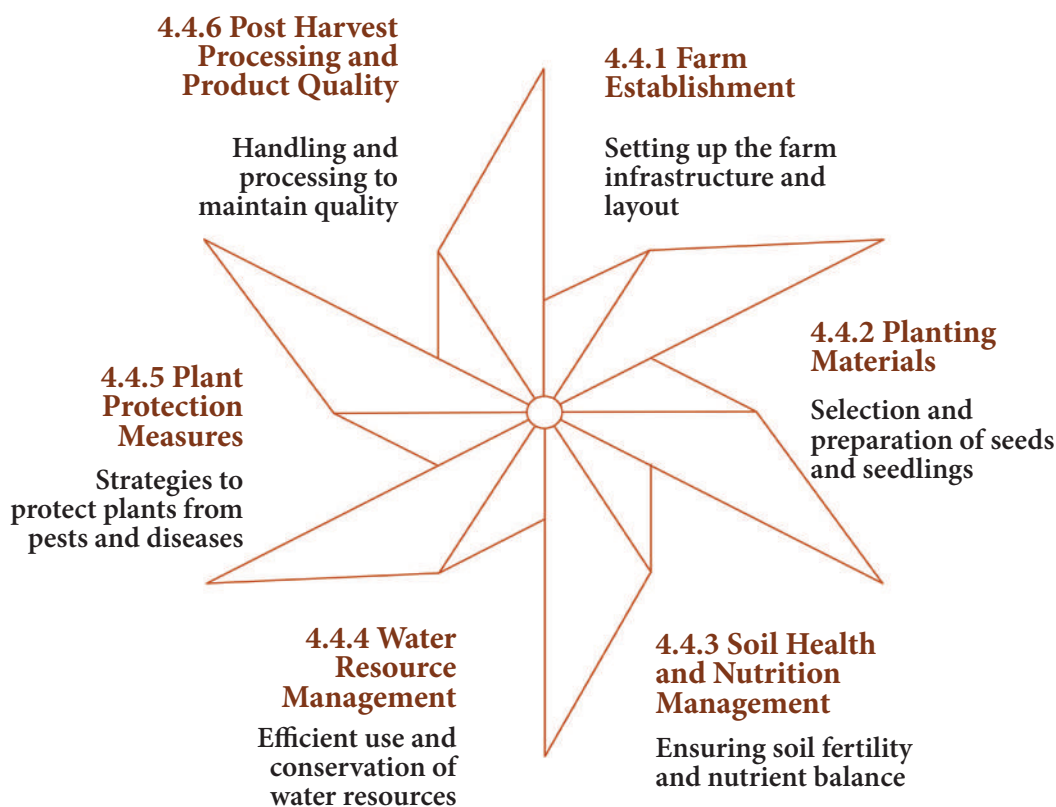
Requirements on Resource Utilization, Farm Incomes and Risk Management

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>4.3A Farm Land Characteristics: The grower shall maintain the characteristics of the farmland, including water sources, soil types, vegetation/ shade trees, wildlife, etc.</p> <p>Document: Farm map</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.3B Ecosystem Alignment: The grower shall regularly assess the factors affecting productivity and implement corrective/ ameliorative measures if required.</p> <p>Document: Farm Notes</p>	✗	✓	✓
<p>4.3C Output Trend Analysis: The grower shall systematically document the block-wise production details, factors affecting crop production, corrective measures adopted, and all relevant information related to crop management in the farm diary.</p> <p>Document: Production records, Analysis reports</p>	✗	✓	✓
<p>4.3D Inventory of Trees, Intercrops, and Private Forests: The grower shall maintain a block-wise record of the number and species of shade trees, intercrops, and any undisturbed private forests within the coffee farm.</p> <p>Document: Trees inventory record</p>	✗	✗	✓
<p>4.3E Resource Efficiency: The grower shall adopt practices to monitor and improve the efficient use of water (e.g., irrigation methods), energy (e.g., fuel for equipment), and inputs (e.g., fertilizer amounts, timing) on their farm.</p> <p>Document: Water footprinting</p> <p>Metric: Monitoring of specific water consumption per kg of coffee grown, except rainwater.</p>	✗	✓	✓
<p>4.3F Sustainable Input Sourcing: The grower should prioritize selecting and using farm inputs (like seeds, fertilizers, pest/disease control materials, etc) that are known to be sustainable, effective, safe, and appropriate for their specific farm conditions and local environment.</p> <p>Document: Farm diary</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.3G Access to Information and Technology: The grower shall actively seek information (from peers, extension services, radio, mobile apps, etc.) based on needs and adopt, where feasible for their situation, improved farming techniques, tools, or technologies that enhance productivity or sustainability.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>4.3H Climate Risk Assessment: The grower shall conduct climate risk assessments of its members' farms and implement risk management plans</p> <p>Document: Climate risk assessment reports and management plans</p>	✗	✗	✓

Additional Requirements on Resource Utilization, Farm Incomes and Risk Management for Growers’ Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
<p>4.3I Group Sustainability Plans: The collective shall develop annual sustainability plans that outline initiatives for both individual members and the group as a whole. When needed, it should support members in securing funds and adopting technology-based solutions to address resource constraints. Document: Template - Group sustainability plan</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.3J Income Risk Reduction and Partnerships: The collective shall help its members adopt production systems that lower income risks and boost farm incomes. It should also build partnerships with stakeholders to secure additional resources (financial and non-financial) to support sustainable farm initiatives. Document: Partnership documents</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.3K Climate Risk Assessment: The collective should conduct climate risk assessments of its members' farms and implement risk management plans Document: Climate risk assessment reports and management plans</p>	✓	✓
<p>4.3L Collective Risk Management: The collective shall establish and operate a system to proactively identify, assess, and implement coordinated strategies for managing priority shared risks—such as climate variability, widespread pest/disease outbreaks, market price fluctuations, and policy impacts—faced by its member growers.</p>	✗	✓

4.4 CROP PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS



4.4.1 FARM ESTABLISHMENT

General Principles: Sustainable coffee production should prioritize environmental protection, natural resource conservation, and biodiversity maintenance while achieving economic viability.

Recommended Practices

- Establish new farms only in regions/areas that are suitable for coffee cultivation.
- During land preparation for planting coffee, the clean felling of trees is prohibited. Selectively retain desired species of native shade trees.
- Do not undertake significant landscape changes in hilly regions, as these could lead to the destabilization of the terrain.
- Follow good agricultural practices (GAP) as embodied in this standard.

Requirements on Crop Production - Farm Establishment

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.1A Land Suitability: The grower shall establish the suitability of land for coffee cultivation while establishing a new farm.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.1B Tree Preservation: The grower shall preserve key forest trees on the farm and practice canopy management based on needs; the fallen or removed trees should be replaced. Metric: Knowledge of shade management in plantations.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.1C Land Management: The grower shall document an inventory of permanent native and semi-permanent shade trees, including their economic importance.	✗	✓	✓
4.4.1D Replanting: When replanting coffee blocks, the grower shall protect terrain and landscape. Metric: Knowledge of planting and care.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.1E Replanting Plan: The grower shall document and implement a strategic plan for replacing or improving unproductive plants/blocks.	✗	✓	✓
4.4.1F Deforestation: The grower shall maintain documentation of land-use history and traceability of deforestation-free coffee.	✗	✗	✓

Additional Requirements for Crop Production on Farm Establishment for Growers'Collectives

Requirements	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.1G EU Deforestation Regulations: The collective shall prepare comprehensive plans guiding the establishment/replanting of coffee blocks compliant with EU rules.	✓	✓

4.4.2 PLANTING MATERIALS

General Principles: To establish a productive and sustainable plantation, it is crucial to select high-quality planting material from authentic sources, ensuring genetic purity and integrity.

Recommended Practices:

- Select the appropriate variety of coffee plants based on their suitability for the growing region.
- Procure only certified seeds from the Coffee Board Research Department and other authorised sources.
- Do not use or introduce exotic coffee varieties without due approval from the regulatory authorities.
- Raise on-farm nurseries that adequately meet the farm's requirements. Alternatively, farm groups can raise group nurseries. For Robusta varieties, it is recommended to raise clonal nurseries.
- For nursery establishment, select an ideal location that considers factors such as water availability, shade conditions, and drainage conditions.

Requirements on Planting Materials

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.2A Selection: The grower shall select planting materials that are suited to their growing conditions, resistant to pests and diseases, and appropriate for the local climate.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.2B Sourcing: The grower shall source seeds/seedlings/clones from authorised suppliers unless he grows his own seeds/clones. The use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is strictly prohibited.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.2C Nursery Establishment: Nursery establishment shall progress from basic on-farm nurseries to optimized nursery management practices focused on producing high-quality seedlings and continuous improvement Document: Nursery records	✗	✓	✓
4.4.2D Nursery Management Knowledge: The grower shall know about nursery management, if applicable.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.2E Nursery Management Training: The grower/key farm personnel should improve skills in nursery management including clonal propagation and grafting techniques through need-based training Document: Training record	✗	✓	✓



Additional Requirements on Planting Materials for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.2F Group Nurseries: The collective should establish and manage on-farm and group nurseries to meet the planting material requirements of its members, ensuring these nurseries are verifiable and well-maintained.	✓	✓
4.4.2G Capacity Building: The collective shall organize capacity-building programs for members and nursery operators, focusing on best practices for planting material production and maintenance. Document: Training records	✓	✓
4.4.2H Genetic Diversity: The grower/ collective should, when selecting coffee planting materials for new plots or replanting, prioritize varieties that contribute to genetic diversity on the farm and are well-suited to local conditions, considering resilience to prevalent pests, diseases, and climate stresses (like drought or high temperatures)	✗	✓

4.4.3. SOIL HEALTH AND NUTRITION MANAGEMENT

General Principles: With soil being the primary resource from which plants derive their requirements of water and critical nutrients, managing soil health is essential for the healthy growth of plants.

Recommended Practices

- Regular testing and monitoring of soil pH should be conducted by all coffee farms, regardless of their size or the variety of coffee cultivated. Based on soil test data, corrective measures, as essential, should be adopted to achieve ideal levels of soil pH.
- Conduct training programmes, with a focus on experiential learning, for farm personnel on the identification of nutritional disorders and on soil sample collection for soil analysis.
- Practice balanced & integrated nutrition management (INM) in coffee plantations as per technical recommendations issued based on soil test data. While the application of recommended doses of nutrients is desirable, it is also necessary to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers by increasing the use of alternative sources, such as compost prepared from on-farm organic wastes and biofertilizers.
- In terrains with steep slopes, it is recommended to adopt contour planting or bench terracing to prevent soil erosion. In undulating terrains containing gentle slopes, it is recommended to open trenches or cradle pits in a staggered manner in between the coffee rows along the contour to minimize soil erosion.
- In all newly planted farm blocks, cover digging/scuffing and mulching should be practiced to suppress weed growth and conserve soil moisture. Digging shall be avoided on steep slopes. Additionally, green manure crops should be cultivated as cover crops in all newly planted blocks of the plantation to facilitate bio-mulching of the inter-space between coffee plants and suppress weeds.
- In established blocks, adopt only slash-weeding, either by manual methods or machines, for weed management, which adds weed biomass to the soil, thereby increasing the soil organic matter content.

Requirements on Soil Health & Nutrition Management

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.3A Soil Analysis: The grower shall get the soil analysed at least once every three years and implement soil pH corrective measures Document: Soil test reports	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3B INM Practices: The grower shall follow balanced and integrated nutrient management (INM) practices based on the soil test results.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3C Fertilizer Application: The grower should possess knowledge of correct method of application of fertilizers.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3D Soil and Moisture Conservation: The grower should adopt practices such as trenching and cradle pits in a staggered manner across the slope to conserve soil and retain moisture. These act as <i>in-situ</i> mini compost pits.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3E Cover Digging/Scuffling: The grower should adopt cover digging, scuffling, mulching, etc. in all newly planted blocks to suppress weed growth. Any soil disturbance is prohibited on steep slopes.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3F Weeding and Biomass Management: The grower shall adopt recommended cultural and mechanical weed management practices such as slash weeding or machine weeding, and utilise the resultant weed biomass for mulching/composting.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3G Use of Permitted Weedicides: Use of chemicals for routine weed control is prohibited. Only recommended, safer weedicides are permitted for controlling perennial weeds, preferably through spot applications. Weedicides shall not be sprayed within 100 meters of natural water bodies.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3H Weed management and its utilisation: The grower should have adequate knowledge of weed management practices and weed biomass utilization	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3I Biomass Composting: The grower shall ensure that the biomass generated on the farm is converted into organic compost and that this conversion is verifiable.	✓	✓	✓

Sustainability Requirements for Soil Health & Nutrition Management for Growers' Collectives

Sustainability Requirements for Planting Materials	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.3J Group Soil Testing The collective shall facilitate soil testing for its members' farms and may provide material inputs for amending soil pH.	✓	✓
4.4.3K Soil Management Training: The collective shall organize training programs on soil nutrient management and soil cultivation measures for its members and farm personnel. Document: Training calendar	✓	✓

4.4.4. WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

General Principle: Though coffee is predominantly cultivated as a rainfed crop, water is a critical input for achieving sustainable production. Water is required for various farm operations, including providing essential irrigation for the establishment of young coffee plants, inducing healthy blossom and fruit set in Robusta coffee, implementing plant protection measures, and on-farm wet processing to produce quality coffee.

Since coffee is typically grown in the catchment areas of major rivers, available water resources must be utilized judiciously to achieve sustainable coffee production without unduly impacting groundwater and the recharge of springs that feed the rivers.

Recommended Practices

- Establish and maintain adequate water storage infrastructure to meet the plantation's water needs. Groundwater tapping should comply with the local regulations prevailing in the area.
- Reduce water demand by crops by practicing soil mulching with organic materials to reduce soil evaporation, and by maintaining optimal shade canopy levels.
- Adopt efficient irrigation technologies (including sensor-based solutions) and equipment for enhanced water use efficiency. Do not over-extract water from any source.
- Detect and repair leaks in pipes and other distribution equipment to prevent the wastage of irrigation water.

Requirements on Water Resource Management

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.4A Organic Mulching: The grower shall adopt appropriate recommended measures to conserve the soil moisture.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.4B Water Storage and Extraction: The grower shall follow locally prescribed norms for the storage of rainwater and the extraction of groundwater. The grower shall know water usage norms as prescribed by the local authorities	✓	✓	✓
4.4.4C Waterway Protection: The grower shall implement measures to protect waterways from soil erosion.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.4D Efficient Irrigation: The grower shall employ efficient irrigation equipment, wherever applicable, and avoid excess irrigation.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Water Resource Management for Growers'Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.4E Capacity Building The collective group shall organize capacity-building programs on water management for its members and farm personnel. Metric: Number of training programmes conducted in the previous twelve months.	✓	✓

4.4.5. PLANT PROTECTION MEASURES

General Principles: Many pests and diseases attack coffee plants, affecting their productivity and survival. It is necessary to keep these pests and diseases at/ below economic threshold levels to achieve desired production, productivity, and quality of coffee.

The pest and disease management should involve an integrated approach involving growing resistant/tolerant plant varieties, maintaining plant vigour, prevention, creating congenial conditions for survival of natural enemies of pests and diseases, regular monitoring/ surveillance, and use of physical/cultural methods of control, biological agents, traps, and timely and judicious application of recommended plant protection chemicals.

Recommended Practices

- Cultivate resistant/ tolerant coffee cultivars and undertake cultural operations like weeding, pruning, and fertilizer application.
- Monitor pest and disease incidence regularly and follow timely control measures to avoid further spread.
- Maintain an optimum shade canopy, which creates unfavourable conditions for many major pests and diseases.
- Follow appropriate phyto-sanitation measures.
- Apply compost/farmyard manure enriched by bio-control agents to healthy coffee plants located in root disease-affected areas twice a year.
- Adopt cultural, mechanical, and bio-control strategies, with the use of Plant Protection Chemicals (PPC) being a last resort.



Requirements on Plant Protection Measures

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.5A Resistant Varieties: The grower shall select resistant/ tolerant coffee varieties recommended by Coffee Board Research Department for replanting and new planting purposes, wherever applicable	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5B IPM: The grower shall adopt integrated pest and disease management measures involving cultural, mechanical, biological methods, and judicious use of recommended PPCs (Plant Protection Chemicals).	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5C Monitoring and Surveillance: The grower shall monitor pests and diseases and determine appropriate interventions. The grower knows the identification of all critical diseases & pests of coffee and their control measures.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5D Banned PPCs: The grower shall not store or use the PPCs, banned by the Indian regulatory authorities or public/ multilateral organizations.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5E Selective Use of PPCs: The grower shall ensure very selective use of PPCs to specific plants and specific plant parts with minimal impact on non-target areas. <i>Document: PPC application record (it should also reflect PPC, if any, used in the intercrop raised)</i>	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5F Chemical Application: The grower shall ensure PPC application equipment is safe, regularly maintained, and suited for targeted application to prevent spills and losses.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5G PPCs and First Aid Training: The persons involved in the application of PPCs should be adequately trained in the safe handling of PPCs and in First Aid methods. They should also be provided with protective gear and First Aid Kits. <i>Document: Training record</i>	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5H PPC Usage Records: The grower should document all relevant details of PPCs used on the plantation, such as the name of the chemical, time of application, etc., in the farm notes/diary.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5I Plant Vigor: The grower should maintain plant vigor through appropriate nutrition based on soil/leaf analysis, sound soil health management, and timely cultural practices (such as proper pruning and shade regulation) to enhance the coffee plant's natural resistance.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5J Natural Enemies: The grower should adopt practices that conserve and promote beneficial insects and other natural enemies of coffee pests within the farm, primarily by minimizing broad-spectrum pesticide use and maintaining habitat diversity (e.g., through diverse shade trees and ground cover).	✓	✓	✓

4.4.5.K Physical/Cultural Control: The grower should prioritize physical and cultural control methods for managing pests and diseases when practical and effective, such as setting traps, manually removing infested plant parts (like CWSB-affected stems), or adjusting planting practices.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5L Biological Agents: The grower should consider and utilize recognized biological agents (like beneficial fungi, bacteria, or nematodes) available locally for controlling specific coffee pests or diseases, where they offer a viable alternative to chemical controls.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5M Shade Canopy: The grower should establish and manage a multi-strata shade canopy with diverse tree species appropriate for coffee cultivation regulating shade levels to optimize coffee health and create a less favourable microclimate for certain pests and diseases.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5N Phyto-sanitation: The grower should practice consistent phyto-sanitation by removing and destroying diseased plant material (leaves, berries, stems), managing alternative host plants for pests/diseases, and keeping the farm environment clean to reduce sources of infection and infestation.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5O Compost Application: The grower should regularly apply well-decomposed compost or other suitable organic matter to the soil to improve its structure, fertility, and biological activity, thereby enhancing plant resilience against stresses, including some diseases.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Plant Protection Measures for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.5P Efficient PPC Application: The collective shall conduct training and capacity-building programs for its members on Integrated Pest and Disease (IPM), safe handling of PPCs, and First Aid measures.	✓	✓
4.4.5Q Resistant Planting Material: The collective should make efforts to supply necessary inputs, such as pest- and disease-resistant planting materials, safer and recommended pesticides, traps, and bioagents, to support members in adopting IPM/IDM practices.	✓	✓
4.4.5R Efficient PPC Application Equipment: The collective should make efforts to provide efficient PPC application equipment and safety gear.	✓	✓
4.4.5S Responsible PPC Use: The collectives shall ensure that growers use responsible pesticides by strictly following label instructions regarding application rates, timing, pre-harvest intervals, and safe handling for any necessary and permitted pesticides, to minimize the potential for residues in the final product.	✗	✓

4.4.6. POST HARVEST PROCESSING AND PRODUCT QUALITY

General Principles: On-farm processing of coffee should be undertaken using only natural processes and should not contribute to environmental degradation.

Recommended Practices

- For wet processing, only natural fermentation or mechanical removal should be used to remove mucilage. The effluent generated from wet processing should be treated and disposed of as per the standards prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- The treated effluent can be recycled for irrigation by mixing with fresh water.
- The byproducts generated from on-farm processing, such as coffee pulp (skin) and cherry husk, should not be disposed of in the field without composting.
- Drying parchment or cherry coffee on bare soil should be strictly avoided. Use cemented/ tiled surfaces or polythene sheets for drying coffee.
- The coffee being dried should be turned frequently to ensure uniform drying. Avoid re-wetting parchment/cherry coffee.
- The parchment coffee or cherry coffee should be dried to the prescribed moisture level before storage.
- The use of used fertilizer bags for storing processed parchment coffee or cherry coffee at the estate level should be strictly avoided.
- Avoid storing coffee along with fertilizers and pesticides.



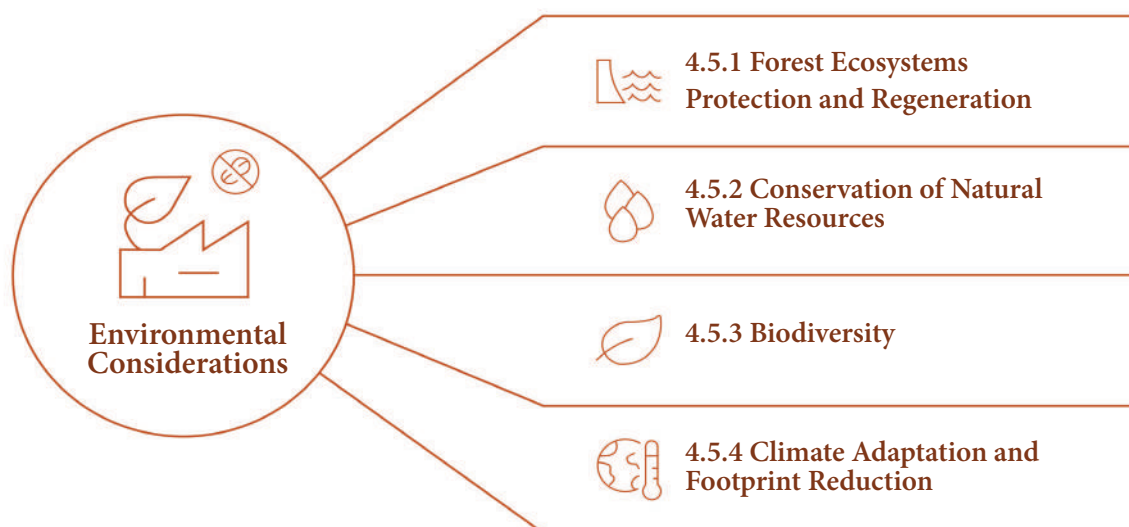
Requirements on post-harvest processing and product quality

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.6A Selective Picking: The grower should practice selective picking of ripe coffee fruits for wet processing and use picking mats for harvesting cherries for dry processing to ensure quality.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6B Harvest Containers: The grower shall use clean, washed bags/baskets for handpicking and transporting of coffee fruits to the pulper or drying yard to maintain hygiene and quality.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6C Infrastructure: The verified farm shall have access to the necessary Infrastructure for wet and dry processing of coffee.	✗	✓	✓
4.4.6D Machinery Hygiene: The grower shall maintain coffee processing machinery, including fermentation vats and post-wash soaking tanks, in a hygienic condition.	✗	✓	✓
4.4.6E Water Quality: The grower shall use clean water for coffee processing and post-wash soaking.	✗	✓	✓
4.4.6.F Uniform Drying: The grower shall ensure uniform drying of coffee by maintaining proper thickness of parchment/cherries on drying yards, regular raking, and covering beans during evenings.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6G Moisture Measurement: The grower shall use either the test weight method or a calibrated moisture meter to assess the moisture content of dried coffee.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6H Knowledge of Coffee Processing: The grower shall possess adequate knowledge of various steps of wet and dry processing of coffee and drying standards.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6I Coffee Storage: The grower shall store dried coffee in a clean, well-ventilated warehouse in clean gunny bags. No PPCs, odorous materials, oils, or lubricants are stored in the same space.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6J Waste Management: The grower shall treat the effluent generated during wet processing as per applicable norms prescribed by the Pollution Control Board. The hazardous waste, such as empty pesticide containers, shall not be reused and disposed-off suitably.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.6K Quality Testing: The grower shall be aware of quality parameters and should undertake coffee cup quality testing periodically.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Post-Harvest Processing and Product Quality for Growers’ Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.4.6L Effluent Recycling: The collective should encourage its members to recycle the treated effluent for irrigation purposes by mixing it with fresh water.	✓	✓
4.4.6M Waste Composting: The collective should encourage its members shall use processing waste like fruit skins and mucilage for compost preparation.	✓	✓
4.4.6N Group Training: The collective shall organize training programs on post-harvest processing and product quality for members and farm personnel.	✓	✓
4.4.6O Shared Infrastructure: The collective should provide shared Infrastructure for pulping, drying, and storage to meet its members’ needs wherever required.	✓	✓
4.4.6P Quality Testing: The collective shall offer coffee quality testing services and support members in on-farm improvements to enhance coffee quality.	✓	✓

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



4.5.1 FOREST ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION AND REGENERATION

General Principles: With coffee in India being cultivated under a multi-tier tree shade system with the trees and associated natural systems offering ecosystem services that are comparable to those provided by natural forests, it is essential that forest-like habitats and forests in the coffee-growing regions are conserved and, where applicable, regenerated, considering their positive feedback effects on the coffee production systems.

Recommended Practices

- Protect natural forestland by preventing encroachment, illegal occupation, and deforestation.
- Maintain a stable and growing population of native shade tree species in coffee farms.
- Ensure that illegal tree harvesting for timber or other uses is not undertaken on the farm. During

shade tree pruning, ensure that the optimal level of canopy is retained. Also, avoid over-extraction and unsustainable harvesting of non-timber products.

- It is desirable to avoid mono-shade with exotic tree species. The exotic shade tree population should be restricted to below 50% to ensure protection of ecosystem services.
- Where feasible, take up planting of native tree saplings to increase tree diversity and density.

Requirements on Forest Ecosystems Protection and Regeneration

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.1A No Conversion: The verified farm, or any portion thereof, shall not have been established after December 31, 2020, through deforestation. <i>Document:</i> Land ownership records and Farm Map	✓	✓	✓
4.5.1B Landscape Modification: The verified farm, or any part of it, shall not have been developed through large-scale landscape modifications, including clean felling of tree stands, levelling or significant alteration of natural topographies.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.1C Buffer Zones: The grower shall not have cultivated or processed coffee in buffer zones or areas designated as high-value conservation zones. <i>Document:</i> Farm Map	✓	✓	✓
4.5.1D Tree Pruning: The grower shall follow shade regulation as per the recommendations of the Coffee Board Research Department and avoid excessive pruning of tree canopies, ensuring that shade levels remain optimal for crop production at all times.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.1E Native Tree Species: The grower should maintain a sufficient population of native tree species. In cases of natural decay or loss, efforts are made to restore or increase the proportion of native trees across all farm sections.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.1F Chemical Use: The grower shall manage the storage, handling, and application of any permitted agrochemicals in a way that strictly prevents drift, runoff, or leaching into adjacent forest ecosystems, water bodies, or designated conservation zones.	✗	✓	✓
4.5.1G Conservation Plan: The grower should identify nearby natural forest areas or zones designated for conservation and implement measures such as maintaining buffer zones, avoiding encroachment etc. to prevent negative impacts and actively protect native vegetation and water sources within the farm. A formal documented 'Conservation Plan' shall be prepared by large estates and collectives.	✗	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Forest Ecosystems Protection and Regeneration for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.1H Regional Forest Management: The collective shall develop and implement a regional forest management plan that aligns with applicable forest regulations, supporting member initiatives to conserve and develop forest resources. <i>Document:</i> Template - Natural resource conservation plan	✓	✓

4.5.1I Legal Compliance: The collective shall ensure that all farm establishment, land use, and operational activities fully comply with all applicable national, state, and local laws and regulations concerning forest conservation, protected areas, wildlife protection, and land tenure rights.	✓	✓
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**For this section, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) 's definition of a Tree as – 'Any woody plant with a height of 4.5 feet and a diameter of 10 centimetres', AND the Conference of Parties (COP) 9-Kyoto Protocol's definition as the plant's potential to reach a minimum height at maturity in situ of 2 metres would be applicable.*

4.5.2 CONSERVATION OF NATURAL WATER RESOURCES

General Principles: The coffee-growing regions of India, distributed in the western and eastern ghats, act as watersheds for several streams and rivers that are a primary source of water for drinking, agriculture, and other uses for millions of people in downstream regions. Some of India's major dams are fed by these rivers, which flow through coffee farms, especially in the major coffee-growing regions of the Western Ghats. Therefore, coffee farms play a crucial role in conserving natural water resources.

Recommended Practices

- To allow free flow of streams through plantations.
- Creation of adequate and suitable rainwater harvesting and storage structures for storing the water for use in crop production and other uses. Channelize the flow of excess rainwater to natural streams
- Coffee processed effluents should not be allowed to flow/mix with natural water bodies
- The maintenance of adequate riparian buffers along water bodies would prevent the leaching/washing away of agrochemicals.

Requirements on Conservation of Natural Water Resources

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.2A Legal Compliance: The grower shall comply with all legal requirements, if any, for the extraction of surface and/or groundwater.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.2B Riparian Buffers: The grower shall maintain riparian buffers from the outer edge of water bodies, wherever applicable. No inorganic plant protection chemicals or fertilizers shall be allowed to mix with the water bodies. <i>Document: Farm Map</i>	✓	✓	✓
4.5.2C Water Storage: The grower should establish adequate water storage structures, with necessary approvals, ensuring these structures do not obstruct surface water flow or restrict equitable access for downstream users.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.2D Wastewater Treatment: The grower shall not release untreated coffee wash water (effluent) or other processing waste into farmland or water sources. Treated liquid waste, if discharged, must comply with applicable regulations prescribed by the Pollution Control Board.	✓	✓	✓

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.2E Household Wastewater: The grower shall ensure that untreated household and non-farm wastewater does not enter cropping areas or water sources.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.2F: Water-Efficient Pulping: The grower shall use water-efficient pulping equipment to minimize water consumption for coffee processing. Efforts must be made to reduce water usage across all stages of processing, including fermentation.	✗	✓	✓
4.5.2G Knowledge on Water Conservation: The grower shall know conservation of natural water resources and protection of water bodies.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on conservation of natural water resources for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.2H Micro-Watershed Approach: The collective, where appropriate, should adopt a micro-watershed approach to water management as part of its natural resource conservation plan. It must support members in adopting water-efficient technologies and processes to improve overall water use efficiency.	✓	✓
4.5.2I Community Washing Facility: The collective, if managing a community facility for coffee processing, shall utilize water-efficient equipment and implement measures to reduce, recycle, reuse, and recover water used in the coffee processing.	✓	✓

4.5.3 BIODIVERSITY

General Principles: With Coffee cultivation in India being undertaken in ecologically sensitive forested hill tracts, production activities must be carried out with a minimal ecological footprint, especially regarding any adverse impacts on the rich biodiversity of the regions.

Recommended Practices

- Maintain an inventory of biodiversity in coffee farms, focusing on endangered or at-risk species, and document trends in their incidence.
- Avoid monoculture shade tree stands, especially those of exotic tree species. Wherever possible, if essential, practice intercropping with fruit trees and other commercially beneficial plants.
- Conserve and develop the overall coffee agro-system by preserving shade trees, primarily native evergreen species. If feasible, develop and maintain habitats of high conservation value.
- Support the wildlife population by conserving corridors and preventing illegal practices such as the hunting of threatened and protected animals.
- Adopt farming practices that do not involve the application of broad-spectrum plant protection chemicals.

- Conserve and develop soil biodiversity.
- Use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited.

Requirements on Biodiversity

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.3A Wildlife Corridors: The grower shall conserve wherever relevant wildlife corridors and ensure the unobstructed movement of wildlife, avoiding fences or barriers that violate legal regulations.	✘	✓	✓
4.5.3B Hunting and Extraction: The grower shall prohibit and refrain from participating in the hunting or extraction of endangered plant and animal species.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.3C Diverse Shade Tree Species: The grower shall ensure that diverse shade tree species are maintained on the plantation to provide a mixed shade canopy. <i>Document: Inventory of trees</i>	✘	✓	✓
4.5.3D GMOs: The grower shall ensure that the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are not cultivated on the farm.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Biodiversity for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.3E Regional Action Plan: The collective should implement a regional biodiversity action plan (if made available by the concerned authorities) aligned with local conservation priorities. All actions taken by the collective and its members shall be recorded and verifiable. <i>Document: Follow-up action on regional biodiversity action plan</i>	✓	✓
4.5.3F Disturbance to Fauna: The collective shall not disturb the existing fauna, including the endangered species, if any, as well as their habitats	✓	✓

4.5.4 CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND FOOTPRINT

General Principles: Worldwide, weather extremes attributed to climate change threaten the livelihoods of millions of coffee producers, particularly smallholders and other actors along the supply chain. In India too, coffee farms are being increasingly exposed to the twin weather vagaries of rising temperatures and erratic rainfall, which have impacted coffee production and product quality. Therefore, it is imperative that synchronized steps be taken to support coffee farms in adapting to climate change and also contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing their carbon footprint. Along with initiatives in coffee farms, interventions should also be launched in all stages of coffee value chain to ensure the sector's contribution to global mitigation efforts. Such initiatives could also enable coffee marketers to differentiate their offerings for responsible consumers and reach niche 'green' markets..

Recommended practices

- Maintain an ideal two-tier mixed shade canopy and cultivate suitable intercrops that contribute to shade, soil fertility and carbon sequestration improving microclimate in coffee farms.
- Adopt soil erosion/landslide prevention measures such as contour planting, terracing, and staggered pits/trenching across the slope in coffee farms.
- Do not burn farm trash/residue.
- Utilise on-farm wastes/crop residues to prepare compost that contributes to improvements in soil texture and structure, and provides a reduction in the use of inorganic fertilisers, which are a source of emissions.
- Adopt drought mitigation measures, such as planting drought-tolerant varieties and using protective sprays, to reduce the need for supplemental irrigation, which in turn reduces the need for irrigation pumps powered by fossil fuels.

Requirements on Climate Adaptation and Footprint

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.4A Shade Canopy The grower shall maintain a mixed shade canopy, comprising native shade trees and temporary second-tier leguminous shade trees wherever applicable and suitable.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4B Inter-crops The grower should cultivate suitable inter-crops that provide additional revenue. Additionally, inter-cropping enhances shade, improves soil fertility, and creates a favourable microclimate.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4C Soil Erosion Control The grower shall implement soil erosion control measures, such as contour planting/ terracing at the time of establishing new plantations on slopes, and maintaining staggered pits (cradle pits/trenches) on sloped terrain in established coffee plantations.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4D Composting The grower shall practice on-farm composting using farm-generated waste, applying the resulting compost to crops to improve soil health.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4E Nitrogen Fertilizers The grower shall apply nitrogen fertilizers only in recommended quantities, based on soil analysis, while accounting for nutrients supplied through organic sources.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4F Drought Mitigation: The grower should adopt drought mitigation strategies, such as planting drought-tolerant varieties and utilizing recommended drought ameliorative measures, if the farm is located in areas prone to recurring droughts.	✓	✓	✓
4.5.4G Energy Efficiency: The grower shall use energy-efficient equipment for both on-farm operations and household energy use.	✓	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Climate Adaptation and Footprint for Growers' Collectives

Requirement	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.5.4I Community processing: If requested, the verified group shall provide community wet-processing services with adequate Infrastructure for effluent treatment.	✘	✔
4.5.4J Community Composting: The collective should operate community-level composting/vermi-composting units to process the byproducts arising from community-level processing and facilitate their distribution among its members.	✘	✔
4.5.4K Renewable Energy: The collective shall encourage growers to adopt and utilize renewable energy sources where feasible within their farming operations to reduce their carbon footprint and promote sustainable practices.	✘	✔
4.5.4L Energy Management: Growers shall implement energy-efficient practices in their farming activities to minimize energy consumption and reduce costs.	✔	✔
4.5.4M Emission Reduction: Growers shall implement practices that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from their farming operations to contribute to climate change mitigation.	✔	✔

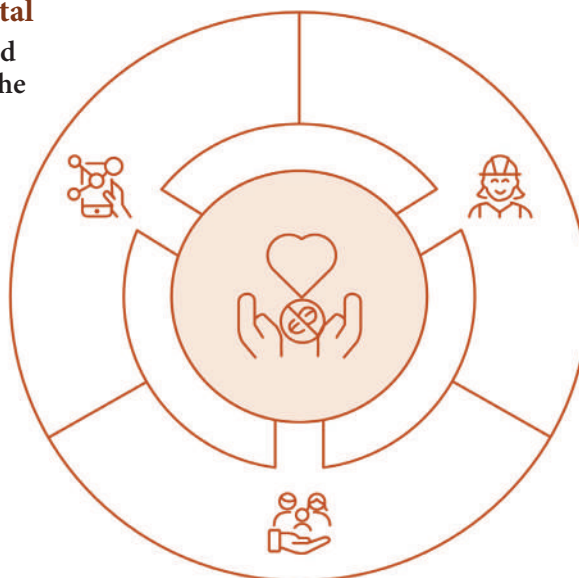
4.6 HUMAN WELFARE

4.6.3 Social Capital

Building trust and networks within the community.

4.6.1 Workplace Safety

Ensuring secure and hazard-free work environments.



4.6.2 Family Welfare
Supporting the well-being and stability of workers' families.

4.6.1 WORKPLACE SAFETY

General Principles: Considering that coffee in India is a highly labour-intensive crop with a predominance of women labourers and that coffee tracts are located in remote, hilly areas with poor access to emergency medical facilities, it is essential to implement adequate safety measures for farm workers.

Recommended practices

- Ensure compliance with all existing regulations regarding farm workers and well-tested practices to provide a safe workplace for workers and their family members.
- The farm personnel should be provided with adequate time for relaxation ensuring that personnel are not coerced or forced to work additional hours. Pregnant women and differently-abled persons should be provided with the requisite benefits as prescribed by law.
- Provide basic on-farm first aid facilities. Implement SOPs for handling emergencies in the workplace.
- Farms should provide safe and effective PPC application equipment and personal protective equipment. Workers should be trained on the safe usage of PPCs and First Aid in case of poisoning by PPC chemicals.
- Adequate washing stations should be made available.
- The workers should be insured against workplace hazards by enrolling them under the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923.
- Collectives should assist their members by offering standard facilities, such as shared equipment and healthcare services.



Requirements on Workplace Safety

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.1A Regulations: The farm shall comply with all applicable workplace safety and occupational hazard regulations.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1B Working Hours: The grower shall not compel personnel to work beyond the daily hours stipulated by local laws. If extended work hours are necessary, the grower shall adhere to applicable overtime regulations. Extended hours are voluntary, and workers shall not be coerced or threatened into working additional hours. The grower shall ensure one mandatory holiday after 6 days of continuous work.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1C First-Aid: The grower shall ensure that a first-aid kit is available at no cost on the farm.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1D Emergency Care: In case of accidents or emergencies, the grower shall provide on-farm first aid and arrange free transportation to health centers, if needed. Access to this facility shall not discriminate based on gender, designation, tenure, or worker status (migrant/local).	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1E PPC Handling: The grower ensures that farm workers use prescribed personal protective equipment (PPE) when applying plant protection chemicals (PPCs) to prevent inhalation, eye contact, or other accidental exposure. The grower shall create awareness among workers about the safe use of PPCs and First Aid measures.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1F Basic Amenities: The grower shall provide basic amenities, including safe drinking water, rest shelters for protection from rain and sun, toilets, etc.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1G Equipment Maintenance: The grower shall regularly maintain and service equipment to prevent accidents during use or storage. Only safe and fully functional equipment shall be provided to workers.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1H High-Risk Tasks: Workers performing high-risk tasks, such as pesticide spraying and tree pruning, shall be provided with protective gear. Workers below the age of 18 years shall not be engaged in such tasks.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.1I Workers Compensation: The workers shall be insured against workplace hazards by enrolling them under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923	✗	✓	✓
4.6.1J Childcare: Growers shall provide or facilitate safe childcare for workers children to ensure child well-being. Employing child labour is prohibited.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.1K Incident Records: Growers shall maintain a system to record, report, and investigate workplace incidents to ensure worker safety. This includes reporting procedures, incident records, investigations, confidentiality, and data analysis for the prevention and mitigation of incidents.	✗	✓	✓

Additional Requirements on Workplace Safety for Growers' Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.1L Group Training: The collective shall organize regular workplace safety training programs for members and their workers.	✓	✓
4.6.1M Human-Wildlife Conflicts: In regions prone to human-wildlife conflicts, the collective should implement local warning systems, either manual or automated, to prevent encounters between humans and wild animals.	✓	✓
4.6.1N Emergency Healthcare: If requested by members, the collective shall establish community emergency healthcare or first-aid services for the benefit of members and farm workers.	✓	✓
4.6.1O Shared PPE: If requested by members, the collective shall provide shared personal protective equipment (PPE) without discrimination among farms based on any criteria.	✓	✓

4.6.2 FAMILY AND WORKER WELFARE

General Principles: The workers engaged in coffee farming, as well as their family members, should have access to shelter, clean drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, and education for their children. The welfare of the workers shall also be covered under relevant statutory regulations as prescribed by the local government.

Recommended practices

- Comply with extant legal provisions related to labour and family welfare
- Ensure that the cash wages and non-wage benefits provided to workers are at least equal to or above the minimum wages.
- Provide adequate on-farm housing facilities that have basic Infrastructure for drinking water, electricity, etc.
- Do not hire child labour at any time for any on-farm or off-farm tasks. Encourage the children of workers to attend school and obtain a formal education.
- Assist workers in enrolling for governmental benefit programmes, and do not prevent workers from deriving governmental aid/assistance.
- The Collective should organize training programmes in labour laws and management for its members and ensure that all labour-related laws are complied with by all members.



Requirements on Family and workers welfare

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.2A Social Safety Laws: The grower shall adhere to all applicable social safety regulations regarding farm labour, child protection, women's safety and employment, wages, paid leave, non-cash benefits (if applicable), and insurance, etc.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2B Child Labour: The grower shall not employ child labour* for any farm activities at any time.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2C Self-Declaration: The grower shall submit a self-declaration affirming its stance against child labour, gender and other forms of discrimination, worker exploitation, forced labour, and violence. The grower shall demonstrate that the farm has not engaged in or supported such practices. Document: Declaration in Farm Diary	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2D Education: The grower shall actively encourage their children and workers' children in attending school and ensure that no farm activity hinders their education.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2E Legal Record: The grower shall have no record of convictions or charges related to child labour, worker exploitation, or violence against workers. Document: Declaration, if applicable	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2F Welfare Programs: The grower shall encourage workers to enrol in government or private welfare programs and insurance schemes and shall not restrict access to these benefits.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2G Housing: The grower shall provide safe, free-of-cost Housing with drinking water, electricity for the permanent workers as per the prevailing plantation labour laws, where applicable. Workers may choose to reside off-site.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.2H Medical Services: If necessary, the grower shall ensure access to primary medical services for its workers, in accordance with regional regulations.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2I Wages and Benefits: The grower shall pay wages and provide benefits equal to or greater than the rates stipulated by regulatory authorities or as per the collective bargaining agreements. Equal pay must be ensured for men and women performing the same tasks, including temporary or contractual workers.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.2J Labour Records: The grower shall document all details about farm workers, agreement (oral or written) with workers, wage payment, benefits extended, etc., in the farm diary, which is verifiable anytime	✗	✓	✓
4.6.2K Childcare facilities: The farms shall provide crèches or childcare facilities for infants brought to the premises by workers as per applicable law or any negotiated agreement.	✗	✓	✓

* For this section, child labour shall be considered as defined by the relevant and valid definitions of the concerned laws, rules, and notifications by national and regional regulatory authorities

Additional Requirements on family and workers welfare for Growers’ Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.2L Labour Management Vision: The collective shall adopt a jurisdictional labour management vision that promotes personal and family development opportunities for all workers, whether permanent or temporary, with equal opportunities for men and women.	✓	✓
4.6.2M Training Programs: The collective shall organize training programs for members' families and workers (permanent and temporary) on topics related to personal well-being, health, and employee-employer relations.	✓	✓

4.6.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL

General Principles: Indian coffee, predominantly cultivated by small and marginal farmers, requires the promotion and facilitation of initiatives that foster collective action and cooperation, aiming to achieve higher returns for the farmers while also promoting environmental protection and welfare of the people dependent on coffee production.

Recommended practices

- Encourage the membership and participation of farm personnel, workers, and family members in collectives and community organizations.
- Discourage and prevent discrimination based on gender, age, origins, etc., to provide the right to association and social participation.
- Participate in the activities of sectoral collectives and support collective bargaining to protect the interests of the collective's members and other stakeholders.
- Provide opportunities for building mutual trust, social bonds, and cohesion, and design ways to sustain social harmony.

Requirements on Social Capital

Requirements	Applicability		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.3A Freedom of Association: The grower shall respect, support, and uphold the right of all personnel to freely form, join, or not join worker organizations of their own choosing, including trade unions, without fear of penalty, intimidation, or reprisal. The grower shall also recognize the right to collective bargaining and engage with duly elected worker representatives in good faith.	✓	✓	✓
4.6.3B Membership Support: The grower shall safeguard the rights of his workers and their family members, particularly women and children, to voice and act upon their concerns, complaints, expectations, and aspirations without any restrictions based on gender, age, or other factors. Note: The expression “Family Members” is to be considered as provided for the Plantations Labour Act, 1951.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.3C Skill Improvement: The grower shall provide adequate platforms or opportunities for improving their skills in all matters related to coffee farming and processing.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.3D Voice and Action: Growers shall enable workers to express their views, participate in decision-making processes, and collectively take action. This includes maintaining open communication, supporting worker organizations, consulting with workers, providing accurate information, and respecting the freedom of association.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.3E Worker Feedback: Growers shall establish systems to gather, respond to, and use worker feedback to improve working conditions. This includes feedback channels, accessibility, clear procedures, data analysis, and providing feedback to workers on actions taken.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.3F Community Engagement: Growers shall engage positively with communities by maintaining respectful relations, communicating openly, minimizing negative impacts, contributing to local development, respecting cultural sensitivity, and establishing a grievance mechanism.	✗	✓	✓
4.6.3G Gender Equity and Social Inclusion: Growers shall maintain data to demonstrate that access and participation are available freely without any discrimination based on gender or social factors to ensure equity and inclusion. The growers shall implement measures to facilitate equity and inclusion.	✗	✗	✓

Additional Requirements on Social capital for Growers’ Collectives

Requirements	Applicability	
	Level 2	Level 3
4.6.3H Human Resource Development: The collective shall implement a human resource development strategy that offers ample opportunities for personal growth for farm workers and their family members.	✓	✓
4.6.3I Social Events: The collective shall organize events, training programs, and other activities, beyond those legally mandated, to foster social bonds and trust among members, farm workers, and other stakeholders.	✓	✓



2.0

INDICOFS CERTIFICATION PROCESS – LEVEL 1

Date of Issue: December 2025

Coffee Board

Disclaimer:

This document is part of INDICOFS, the sustainability certification scheme of the Coffee Board of India, launched during its centenary celebrations. This edition has been revised to incorporate stakeholder views as reviewed by the Technical Committee. All intellectual property rights regarding this document are owned by the Coffee Board of India; reproduction and distribution are permitted strictly for the purpose of its implementation

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0. Introduction

The scheme shall be operated by the Coffee Board, utilizing in-house qualified Auditors who shall inspect and provide a report to the Coffee Board for further review and issuance. The requirements are defined with the Coffee Act in mind, referring to large growers with 10 hectares or more. This document applies to small growers who have land of less than 10 hectares.

1.0 Scope

This document outlines the Certification process to be followed by auditors deputed by the Coffee Board of India under the INDICOFS Sustainability framework, operated by the Coffee Board of India, for the purpose of conducting Sustainability Certification of small coffee growers at Level 1 of the Scheme.

2.0 Normative References: None

3.0 Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations:

3.1 Applicant

Definition: Small coffee grower applying for audit and certification by coffee Board.

3.2 Appeal

Request by the person or organization that provides, or that is, the object of conformity assessment to a conformity assessment body or an accreditation body for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that object.

3.3 Complaint

Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body or an accreditation body, relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected.

In INDICOFS - These shall also include disputes regarding certification findings made by the applicant or the client.

3.4 Corrective Action

Action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and prevent reoccurrence

3.5 Auditor

Person or persons qualified and authorised by the Coffee Board to perform audit and report findings.

3.6 Non - conformity

Non-fulfilment of a requirement

3.7 Small Coffee Grower

Farmers or growers of coffee owning less than 10 hectares of land in total.

Abbreviations:

INDICOFS: Indian Coffee Sustainability Standard

NC: Non-conformity

CA: Corrective Actions

4.0 Description of the certification Process

4.1 Audit by Coffee Board Auditors

4.1.1 The Sustainability Certification shall be conducted at the applicant's risk, and the Coffee Board shall have no liability of any kind for any loss, disruption of business or damage caused during the audit.

4.2 Application for Certification

4.2.1 The grower will apply for certification in the format of the application prescribed by the Coffee Board and duly signed by the grower himself or any person authorised on his behalf.

4.2.2 The applicant shall provide all relevant documents as mentioned under Clause 4.1, authenticated and information/documents as may be required by the Coffee Board before or during the Audit.

4.3 List of Documents

The following documents, as applicable, shall be furnished by the applicant to the Coffee Board for Audit under the INDICOFS scheme:

- Proof of ownership

- Self-Assessment checklist
- Geo coordinates
- Farm map with geo coordinates

4.4 Information for Applicants

4.4.1 The INDICOFS Scheme shall be publicly available on the Coffee Board website and through other modes. The information includes the following:

- Reference to the Audit Criteria
- Procedure for obtaining the INDICOFS Certificate
- Application form
- List of documents required to be submitted by the applicant along with the application
- Information about the fees for application, initial Audit, and any other purpose, as applicable
- Documents describing the rights and duties of a certified grower
- Information on procedures for handling complaints, feedback, and appeals

4.4.2 The Coffee Board shall respond to all inquiries received from prospective applicants for INDICOFS certification with complete information to facilitate the registration of an application within seven working days of receipt of the query.

4.4.3 The Applicant shall declare (in the form of an undertaking) whether it has been an applicant earlier, and if yes, then shall provide the previous references. The Coffee Board may verify the information provided by the applicant if necessary.

4.4.4 The applicant shall, along with the application, declare any judicial proceedings relating to its farmland or compliance related to farming practices, any proceedings by any Regulatory Body/Court of Law/Local authority, and its status.

4.4.5 Audit is performed only against the current relevant audit criteria and the existing status of the grower. The Coffee Board shall review all applications

for the above and ensure that they are processed promptly.

4.4.6 The Coffee Board shall review all applications for audit for adequacy, and deficiencies observed, if any, shall be informed to the applicant within seven days of receipt of the application.

4.4.7 Applications complete in all respects shall be accepted and registered within 7 days of receipt with a unique identification number, acknowledged, and records maintained. In case the applicant discloses any proceedings under Clauses 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 above, the Coffee Board shall take cognizance of any proceedings during the audit.

4.4.8 Applications found to be deliberately providing false information or concealing information while their application is being processed shall be rejected after a due notice of 15 days and asked to apply afresh after a cooling-off period of one year.

4.4.9 Coffee Board shall reject or close an application under the following conditions:

- If an Audit is not carried out within three months of the registration of the application.
- Misuse of the INDICOFS Audit Report/Certificate;
- Evidence of any malpractice in relation to sustainability practices; and
- Voluntary withdrawal of application.

4.4.10 The application fee, if charged by the Coffee Board, may be refunded in whole or in part, based on the Coffee Board policy.

4.5 Certification Planning

4.5.1 The Coffee Board, based on the reviewed application, shall nominate an auditor to conduct the audit and communicate the name to the applicant.

- The auditor shall review the information provided by the applicant and schedule an audit in consultation with the applicant.
- The Audit shall generally be for one manday, excluding travel; however, depending on the number of locations, the audit, including travel, may exceed one manday.

- c. The applicant shall be given advance intimation of at least seven working days, indicating the purpose and audit schedule comprising the following, with timing, wherever applicable, against each item:
 - i. Date of audit
 - ii. Name of the auditor/team with contact numbers
 - iii. Items to be inspected/verified with methodology (Use of checklist)
 - iv. Opening meeting
 - v. Site visit
 - vi. Closing meeting to indicate observations, NCs, and duly acknowledged by the client.

4.6 Onsite Audit

4.6.1 The Coffee Board shall ensure that the first on-site audit is conducted during working days at a time when the most critical sustainability practices can be observed. The subsequent audit shall be planned to cover various stages of cultivation.

4.6.2 On-site audit shall not be planned in case any operations are not carried out during the off-season, for example, rainy season.

4.6.3 The ideal time for audit shall be close to the harvest period when maximum control points are verifiable based on visual observation/evidence of records.

4.6.4 Alternate time for audit may be considered on cogent grounds of logistics, non-availability of auditors, and time constraints.

4.7 Use of the Checklist

4.7.1 The audit shall be conducted with the help of the self-assessment checklist prepared in accordance with the INDICOFS Standard by the applicant.

4.7.2 The auditor shall fill in the entire checklist along with remarks giving objective evidence of compliance/non-compliance.

4.8 Audit Report

4.8.1 One copy of the audit report shall be handed

over to the applicant at the conclusion of the audit. The timelines for addressing the report's findings shall be agreed upon between the auditor and the applicant, but they shall not exceed three months.

4.8.2 Any non-compliance observed during audit, for which corrective actions (CAs) are taken on-site during audit, shall be reported as non-compliance with action taken to resolve it.

4.8.3 Resolution of Non-compliances: The applicant shall provide the action taken on the findings, along with the necessary evidence, to the Coffee Board within the agreed time frame.

4.8.4 The Coffee Board shall review the responses for their adequacy. If the responses are acceptable, the case will be processed for the grant of a certificate.

4.8.5 If the responses are not acceptable, the applicant shall be given one more opportunity to address the non-compliances; after this, the application shall be rejected.

4.9 Certification Decision

4.9.1 Once all the non-compliances are addressed, the case is reviewed by independent person(s) for deciding on certification. In case any deficiencies are observed, the case shall be referred back to address the deficiency and resubmitted for decision.

4.9.2 The certificate shall include:

- a. Identification of the issuing body, Coffee Board;
- b. Unique identification and date of issue;
- c. Date(s) of audit;
- d. Signature or other indication of approval, by authorised persons;
- e. The audit results, except where detailed in accordance with clause 4.8;
- f. A statement of conformity where applicable or required by the grower when no non-conformities are observed or non-conformities are addressed and verified by the Coffee Board's auditor(s).

5.0 Complaints and Appeals

5.1 Complaints to the Coffee Board (relating to Sustainability compliance measures)

5.1.1 Submission and Receipt

- a) Stakeholders submit complaints via
 - i. Online form on the Coffee Board website
 - ii. Email to sustainability-complaints@coffeeboard.org
 - iii. Registered post to Coffee Board Headquarters
- b) The Complaints Officer logs the complaint in the centralized Complaints Register and assigns a unique Complaint ID.
- c) Acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five working days, including the Complaint ID, a summary of the process, and an estimated timeline.

5.1.2 Public Disclosure of Process

- a) Publish a concise description of the complaint-handling process (channels, timelines, confidentiality, and appeal rights) on the Coffee Board website.

5.1.3 Preliminary Validation

- a) Within 10 working days of receipt of the application:
 - a. Confirm jurisdiction: The complaint relates to Coffee Board sustainability audit or certification activities.
 - b. Verify completeness: Required details and evidence are provided.
 - c. If incomplete, request the missing information within five working days and pause the timeline until the information is complete.

5.1.4 Referral to Grower

- a. Unless confidentiality precludes, the complaint summary should be forwarded to the grower within 7 days of validation.
- b. The grower's written response and any proposed corrective action plan should be requested within 10 working days.

5.1.5 Investigation & Evidence Gathering

- a) Within 20 working days of validation:
 - i. An independent Investigation Team (no members of the original audit team) should be appointed.
 - ii. All documentation, including audit reports, grower responses, and supporting evidence, should be reviewed.
 - iii. Conduct interviews or on-site reassessments, if necessary.
 - iv. Compile an Investigation Report detailing the findings.

5.1.6 Tracking & Recording

- a. Throughout Steps 1–5, the Complaints Register is updated with the status, actions taken, and dates.
- b. Maintain an audit trail of all communications and all decisions.

5.1.7 Decision Drafting & Approval

- a) Within 10 working days of completing the investigation:
 - i. An independent decision-maker (not involved in the audit or investigation) reviews the Investigation Report.
 - ii. Draft determination: substantiated, partially substantiated, or unsubstantiated with recommended corrective actions.
 - iii. The Head of the Sustainability Program reviews and approves the decision to ensure impartiality.

5.1.8 Communication of Decision

- a) Within five working days of approval: Issue a formal Decision Notice to the complainant and the grower, including:
 - i. Findings summary and final determination
 - ii. Required corrective or preventive actions
 - iii. Implementation timeline

- iv. Information on further appeal rights
- b) A formal Closure Notice is provided once the corrective actions are verified.

5.1.9 Implementation & Corrective Action

- a. The Audit Team oversees and verifies the implementation of corrective actions by growers.
- b. The Complaints Officer tracks progress and records completion in the Complaints Register.

5.1.10 Confidentiality & Public Disclosure of Outcomes

- a. In consultation with the grower and complainant, it is determined whether to publish an anonymized summary of the complaint and resolution.
- b. Any public disclosure must protect personal data and commercially sensitive information from being disclosed.

5.2 Appeals

5.2.1 The Coffee Board shall follow the following process to receive, evaluate, and make decisions on appeals:

5.2.2 Process of Appeal Submission

- a) Eligibility: Growers must submit an appeal within 30 calendar days of receiving an certification decision.
- b) Submission Channels:
 - i. Online form via Coffee Board's INDICOFS
 - ii. Email to appeals@coffeeboard.org
 - iii. Registered mail to the Regional Office
- c) Required Information:
- d) Grower identification and contact details
- e) Audit report reference number
- f) Specific grounds for appeal
- g) Supporting documentation (e.g., field records, third-party test results)
- h) Acknowledgments and Registration:

- i. The Appeal Reception Officer logs the appeal and issues an acknowledgment letter or email within five days.
- ii. A unique appeal reference number is provided for all subsequent communications.

5.2.3 Appeal Review

- a) Conducted by the Appeal Reception Officer within 10 working days to verify the following:
 - i. Completeness of the appeal submission
 - ii. Timeliness (within 30-day window)
 - iii. Jurisdiction over the matter (i.e., appealable decision)
- b) If incomplete, the appellant is notified of a request for the missing information within five working days.

5.2.4 Appeal Evaluation

- a) Evidence Gathering (15 working days):
 - i. The Appeals Committee requests additional information from the audit team and the grower or Certification Body, where necessary.
 - ii. An expert technical review or field re-audit may be commissioned at the grower's expense if justified.
- b) Committee Deliberation (10 working days):
 - i. The Appeals Committee convenes to review all materials impartially.
 - ii. Decisions are based solely on documented evidence, sustainability standards criteria, and regulatory requirements.

5.2.5 Decision Making and Communication

- a) The Appeals Committee issues a written decision within 10 working days of the evaluation's completion. The decision letter includes the following:
 - i. Summary of findings
 - ii. Final determination (uphold, modify, or overturn original decision)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Justification referencing specific sustainability standard clauses iv. Any revised corrective actions or sanctions v. Information on further recourse (e.g., escalation to an external review panel, if available) | <p>between units based on geographical location, size of the farming unit.</p> <p>7.2 The Coffee Board's fee structure shall be publicly accessible and also be provided on request.</p> |
|---|--|

5.2.6 Implementation and Follow-Up

- a) If the decision modifies or overturns corrective actions, the Sustainability Audit Team updates the grower's compliance record.
- b) Progress reports are reviewed periodically until full compliance is achieved.

5.2.7 Documentation and Record Keeping

- a) All appeal documentation—submissions, evidence, deliberation records, and decisions— are securely stored by the Records Management Section for a minimum of five years.
- b) Anonymized appeal statistics and lessons learned are reviewed annually by the Sustainability Committee of the Coffee Board to drive process improvement.

5.2.8 The Coffee Board shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of handling appeals. This process shall not result in any discriminatory actions.

6.0 Change of Location/Name/Structure

6.1 Any change in the farm structure may require a fresh audit as decided by the Coffee Board.

6.2 Any change in ownership/status of the farm unit shall be reported to the Coffee Board immediately by the applicant. It shall be the responsibility of the Grower to ensure continued compliance with the INDICOFS Scheme, which defines sustainability measures within the premises.

7.0 Fee

7.1 The fee charged to the Grower for the audit and certification shall not show any discrimination

3.0

INDICOFS CERTIFICATION PROCESS – LEVEL 2 & 3

COFFEE BOARD OF INDIA

Date of Issue: December 2025

Disclaimer:

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0. Introduction:

The certification process provides a credible, transparent, and tiered certification scheme that facilitates domestic and international market access for Indian coffee growers.

It is envisaged to roll out three-level objective-oriented assessment – Level 1 being administered in-house by the Coffee Board, while Levels 2 and 3 through approved Certification Bodies, aligned with ISO/IEC 17065 standard and INDICOFS scheme requirements. Additionally, Level 3 should be benchmarked against international sustainability standards.

1.0 Scope:

This document describes the process of certification applicable to all individuals/collectives seeking certification under INDICOFS Levels 2 and 3. It Covers Internal Control Systems, application procedures, certification audits, using structured checklists, issuance, surveillance, and recertification.

2.0 Normative references: None

3.0 Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations:

3.1 Applicant:

Small coffee grower applying for audit and certification by coffee Board.

3.2 Appeal:

Request by the provider of the item of audit to the certification body for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that item

3.3 Certification Body:

third-party conformity assessment body operating certification schemes

3.4 Complaint:

Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its product or service, or the complaints-

handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

3.5 Corrective Action:

Action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and prevent reoccurrence

3.6 Non - conformity:

Non-fulfilment of a requirement

3.7 Quality Management system:

Part of a management system with regard to quality

Abbreviations:

INDICOFS: Indian Coffee Sustainability Standard

NC: Non-conformity

CA: Corrective Actions

CB – Certification Body

QMS – Quality Management System

DRC – Directory of Registered Clients

4.0 Certification Levels (Certification Options for INDICOFS Certification)

Level 2 (Auditing): These requirements form the basis for auditing individual growers and collectives by evaluators of certification bodies approved by the Coffee Board. They establish a verifiable set of criteria to ensure compliance with the standard, aimed at complying with higher degrees of sustainability requirements than Level 1. The assessment is carried out based on a structured checklist.

Level 3 (Benchmarked Best Practices): These requirements represent advanced sustainability benchmarks defined by the Coffee Board. Compliance with Level 3 is assessed by certification bodies approved by the Coffee

Board, signifying a high level of achievement and commitment to leading sustainability practices.

4.1 Certification process under level 2 & 3 for Individual grower

4.1.1 Submission of Application:

Application can be made by any individual grower to an approved certification body, as per format prescribed by the approved CB containing at least the following information

- a) Name & address of the applicant
- b) Contact details - email and telephone number
- c) Details of the total area cultivated area, and survey number.
- d) Proof of ownership
- e) Self-Assessment checklist
- f) Geo coordinates
- g) Farm map with geo coordinates

4.1.2 The application shall preferably be made before the commencement of the coffee crop year.

4.1.3 Based on the information furnished by the applicant, the same is reviewed by a competent person for its completeness, and if found in order, a quotation is made to the applicant.

4.1.4 Once the applicant accepts the quotation, the certification agreement is signed by the applicant, and the application is registered with a unique number. The information in the agreement shall match the information in the application.

4.1.5 The completed application received shall be registered within one week of receipt.

4.1.6 Certification is granted only against the latest certification criteria, as defined in the INDCOFS standard.

4.1.7 Applications found to be deliberately providing false information or concealing information while their application is being processed shall be rejected after a due notice of 15 days.

4.1.8 Applications from farmers/applicants who have earlier either misused the Certification/certification mark, or whose earlier certificate was cancelled because of violation of terms and conditions/misuse of certification mark shall not be entertained within one year of cancellation of the certificate by any CB.

4.1.9 Applications from farmers/applicants found to be misusing the Certification/Certification Mark while their application is being processed for grant of certificate, shall not be processed any further, and rejected after giving a due notice of 15 days. Fresh applications from them shall be treated as per Clause 5.1.9 given above.

4.1.10 Requests for the grant of certificates from ex-applicants shall be processed as for a fresh applicant, and the entire procedure for the grant of certificates shall be adhered to.

4.1.11 Certification Bodies shall reject or close an application under the following conditions:

- a) If Onsite Audit is not conducted within six months of the registration of the application for reasons attributable to the applicant.
- b) If the follow-up audit carried out after the applicant has confirmed the necessary corrective actions is not satisfactory.
- c) Lack of competent personnel overseeing production activities.
- d) If the applicant shows no progress towards the completion of corrective actions within three months of the onsite audit and six months of registration of the application.
- e) Misuse of certification or certification marks.
- f) Evidence of malpractice and
- g) Voluntary withdrawal of the application.

4.1.12 In the event of a closure/rejection of an application, the application fee submitted with the application may be refunded as decided by the certification body.

4.1.13 Internal self-assessment

4.1.14.1 The individual farmer/collective shall carry out internal self-assessment once a year, either by self or under the guidance of an appropriate person, using the checklist referred to in Clause 4.1.14.2.

4.1.14.2 This exercise shall be carried out prior to the scheduling of the external audit by the approved CB.

4.2 Audit process for individual growers

4.2.1 A single stage Onsite Audit shall be carried out by a competent inspector (s).

4.2.2 The CB shall communicate the composition of the team and duration of the Onsite Audit to the applicant to verify any conflict of interest and any objections to the team composition by the applicant should be examined on merit. In case the farm is certified to any other sustainability standard the CB may give consideration to such certificate to calculating the duration of the audit on a case to case basis.

4.2.3 Timing and date of the Onsite Audit shall be decided in consultation with the applicant and intimated by way of an audit plan, detailing the audit schedule, and obtaining the concurrence of the applicant.

4.2.4 The ideal time for audit shall be close to the harvest period when maximum control points are verifiable based on visual observation/evidence of records.

4.2.5 Alternate time for audit may be considered on cogent grounds of logistics, non-availability of auditors, and time constraints.

4.3 Audit checklist

4.3.1 The audit team shall carry out an onsite audit of the applicant using the checklist within three months of the registration of the application.

4.3.2 Any nonconformity observed during the process shall be discussed and intimated in writing, under acknowledgement for submission of corrective action.

4.4 Compliance Criteria

4.4.1 The criteria comprise two compliance levels applicable to control points/clauses. Compliance is indicated by “Yes” or “Compliant” and “No” for “Non-compliant.”

4.4.2 The level of compliance is determined by achieving the following:

- a) Major – 100% compliance with all applicable control points. If there is any non-compliance, it must be addressed, verified, and closed. If necessary, an onsite visit may be conducted for verification.
- b) Minor – 100% compliance with all applicable control points. If there is any non-compliance in minor, the corrective action plan shall be obtained and accepted for verification in the next audit.

4.5 Issue of Certificate

4.5.1 The certification body shall grant certification after ensuring the following:

- a) Satisfactory resolution of non-conformities raised
- b) Complete compliance with the Certification Criteria as stated in 5.4.2
- c) Certification scheme requirements
- d) There shall be no conditional grant of certificate

4.5.2 On grant of certification, the Certification body shall furnish a preview of the certificate for

confirmation of the contents and thereafter issue the final certificate, as per the prescribed template.

4.5.3 The effective date of certification shall not be before the date of the decision to grant the certification.

4.5.4 Scope of certification

4.5.4.1 Scope is linked to the location where the product is produced. A certificate is issued to the registered individual farmer/legal grower. The narrative of the scope is incorporated in the certificate template referred to in Clause 5.6.2.

4.5.4.2 The certified locations cannot be separated into certified growing areas and other growing areas of the same product that are excluded from certification.

4.6 Validity of Certificate

4.6.1 The certificate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of the decision to grant the certificate, subject to annual surveillance audits.

4.7 Surveillance audit

4.7.1 Surveillance audits of the certified sites shall be carried out at least once a year, using the same checklist as referred to in 5.2.2, ensuring that the gap between two surveillance audits does not exceed one year. The Certification Body may allow a grace period of one month based on valid grounds, beyond which delays shall lead to suspension of the certificate. Surveillance should be timed around the harvest time of coffee crops under certification to facilitate the observation of maximum control points. The frequency of surveillance audits may be increased based on risk.

4.7.2 During the surveillance audit, the evaluators shall check and report on the following:

- a) Status of compliance to the requirements of the certification criteria
- b) Internal self-assessment reports

- c) Handling and disposal of nonconforming products
- d) Actions taken on nonconformities observed during the previous audit
- e) Redressal of complaints, if any
- f) Information on the production of produce and the names of consignees to whom certified produce has been supplied.

4.7.3 If any nonconformity is observed, the same shall be categorized as “Major” or “Minor.” The nonconformity report shall be provided to the client in writing, generally on-site, for correction and corrective action.

4.7.4 The CB may increase the frequency of surveillance with duly recorded justification for reasons such as investigation of complaints, any doubts about continuing adherence to prescribed standards, etc.

4.7.5 If the surveillance audit results in an infructuous visit for any reason, the CB shall conduct another surveillance audit. Such additional audits may be charged to the certified grower, as decided by the Certification Body.

4.8 Suspension of certification

4.8.1 The certification body shall issue a notice of at least 15 working days for the suspension of certification to the grower. In the case of serious failures, notice may not be required.

4.8.2 A Suspension is caused when:

- a) Unsatisfactory performance during two consecutive surveillance audits on account of any of the aspects cited in Clause 5.8.2 above.
- b) A suspension may also be issued to the grower who voluntarily asks for it for failure of the grower’s products.

4.8.3 After the Suspension period is served, a time span not exceeding six months is allowed for taking

corrections and corrective action. If the suspension is voluntary, the period for corrections and corrective actions set by the grower must be agreed upon by the CB and not exceed six months.

4.8.4 During the period of suspension, the grower shall be prevented from using the logo/trademark, license/certificate, or any other type of document that has any relation to certification.

4.8.5 The grower shall be advised to undertake a root cause analysis and identify the necessary corrective actions for resolving the same.

4.8.6 The certification body shall revoke the suspension only when corrective actions have been taken and verified to the satisfaction of the certification body.

4.8.7 Suspension shall not exceed a period of six months. If the cause of the suspension is not resolved within the specified time span, the certification shall be cancelled.

4.8.8 The CB shall update the status of suspension on its website.

4.9 Cancellation of certification

4.9.1 A Cancellation shall be issued when:

- a) A grower cannot show sufficient corrective action after the suspension period of 6 months has elapsed.
- b) A nonconformity leads to doubt about the integrity of the product.
- c) Major contractual non-conformities are detected.
- d) Certified client contravenes the terms and conditions of certification and provisions of certification scheme, such as suspension of certificate, inadequate corrective actions, and lack of compliance to criteria for certification.

4.9.2 A Cancellation of the certification shall result in the total prohibition of the use of the logo/

trademark, license/certificate.

4.9.3 A grower that has had a cancellation shall not re-submit for certification until 12 months after the date of cancellation.

4.9.4 The certification body shall cancel the certification at the request of the certified client if the operation(s) in the certified client's premises can no longer be carried out due to natural calamities such as floods, fires, earthquakes, etc., or closure of operations.

4.9.5 The CB shall update the status of cancellation on its website.

4.10 Recertification

4.10.1 The certification body shall send the recertification notice to the certified grower at least four months prior to the expiry of the certificate validity period.

4.10.2 The certified grower shall apply for recertification in the prescribed format along with the fee, if any prescribed by the CB, at least three months before the expiry of the certification.

4.10.3 The certification body shall review the performance of the certified client grower who has sought recertification with respect to compliance with certification criteria during the certification cycle prior to a decision on the recertification, based on:

- a) The surveillance audit reports
- b) Handling and disposition of nonconforming products
- c) Any suspension of certificate during the previous validity period
- d) Corrective actions taken
- e) Complaints, if any received

- f) Adverse information, if any
- g) Satisfactory performance of the certified client

4.10.4 There shall be no conditional recertification.

4.10.5 When the performance of the certified grower is not satisfactory, the certification body shall withhold the recertification, clearly stating the reasons and giving time for effecting corrective actions. The verification and decision on recertification shall be made within three months of the expiry date.

4.10.6 The corrective actions shall be verified generally on site unless the CB can verify the same off site prior to recertification.

4.10.7 The recertification shall be effective from the date of the expiry of the previous certificate, and the intervening period shall be treated as a period of suspension and clearly stated on the certificate. The certified grower shall not claim certification or use the certification during this period.

4.10.8 In case the certified grower does not complete actions satisfactorily within three months, from the date of expiry of the previous validity period..

4.11 Change of Ownership/Name

4.11.1 In the event of change of Ownership, the new owner shall submit proof of change of ownership, besides shall also submit acceptance to the agreement for Certification with the CB regarding the operation and payment of fees. The same process shall be followed when an existing applicant undergoes a change in ownership. Such changes should not require a visit to the site.

4.11.2 In case of a name change, the applicant/certified grower shall inform the CB of the name change with supporting documentary evidence, and if satisfied, the CB shall endorse the new name in the application/certificate/update the changed status in the CB's Directory of Certified Growers.

4.12 Certificate

4.12.1 The CB shall provide a certification document to the certified client as per the template approved by the Coffee Board, subject to changes from time to time (current sample template attached for the present).

4.12.2 The effective date of a certification document shall not be before the date of the certification/recertification decision.

4.12.3 The formal certification documentation shall include the signature of the individual(s) of the certification body assigned such responsibility.

4.13 Fee

4.14.1 A fee shall be charged to the grower for various activities of the scheme, without any discrimination between units, geographical location, identical parameters of levying fee structure.

4.14.2 The CB's fee structure shall be displayed on the CB's website, be publicly accessible, and be provided on request.

4.13.3 CB shall notify and obtain written consent to its fee structure from the entities after acceptance of the offer letter and certification agreement made by the CB. When the fee undergoes a change, the same shall be communicated to all applicants and clients certified under this scheme of certification for their acceptance.

5.0 Certification Process for collectives (Groups) Level 2 & 3

5.1 General Requirements:

- a) Under both levels, two options shall be available for certification: option 1 for individual farmers (with or without QMS) and option 2 for collectives.
- b) The certification process under both levels shall be routed through third-party Certification Bodies approved by the Coffee

Board.

- c) Self-assessment requirements must be complied with based on the structured checklist devised for both the levels and options, prior to scheduling of external assessment wise Certification Bodies.
- d) The certification process under both levels shall be aligned with the ISO/IEC 17065 requirements.

their locations

- e) Completed application against all columns

5.2.5 Provisions given under clause numbers 5.1.2 to 5.1.13 under the certification process for individual farmers also apply.

5.3 Audit process

5.3.1 Provisions of clause number 5.2.1 to 5.2.6 pertaining to the audit process of individual farmer of level 2, shall apply.

5.3.2 The CB shall review internal audit reports generated by qualified internal inspectors using the prescribed checklist.

5.3.3 QMS audit by approved CB - External Quality Management System (QMS) Audit by approved Certification Body-One announced external audit shall be carried out annually by the approved CB of the registered collective. The CB shall audit the QMS of the Producer Group facility using the prescribed QMS checklist.

5.3.4 All control points of the QMS checklist must be complied with by the collective as these or not pre-classified as Major or Minor.

5.3.5 External collective member audit by certification body:

- a) External Collective Audit by an approved certification body (CB) shall select producers by taking a random sample that, as a minimum, is the square root of the total number of registered growers within the collective/group. For the first audit, the square root of the growers in a collective / group must be inspected in full by the CB. The numbers may be increased based on the risks.

- b) For subsequent audits, the sample size for

5.2 Application for Group certification

5.2.1 A collective can apply for certification to an approved Certification Body, as per the prescribed format. A collective that enables the application of a Quality Management System across the entire group of registered farmer members complies uniformly with the INDICOFS requirements. The collective registered members must be legally responsible for their respective production locations. (take this to requirements of collectives)

5.2.2 The collective applying for certification must be recorded for the collective to become registered. This information will be used to supply the registered party with a unique client number, which will serve as a unique identifier for all certification activities. Thus, a collective shall have two sets of unique client numbers: one for the collective and the other for the individual members of the collective.

5.2.3 Farmer Registration Acceptance

a) For the registration to be accepted, the collective shall execute the Certification Agreement with the CB and a Client number, as well as any registration number the CB may assign and agree to pay the certification fee.

5.2.4 The following documents must accompany the application:

- a) Quality Manual and other related documents
- b) Proof of legal grower
- c) Evidence of statutory compliances if any
- d) List of total number of registered farmers and

audit may be reduced to half of the initial sample size subject to non-observance of NC's or the same level of initial sample size may be maintained if there have been NCs previously. The sample farmers selected in earlier audits should be precluded from future audits, with the objective of covering the maximum number of members of the collective over a period of time.

- c) The Audit shall be carried out as per the same checklist used for internal assessment.

5.3.6 Provisions of 5.2.2, 5.4.1, and 5.4.2, referred to in the certification process of individual farmer of level 2, shall also apply.

5.4 Grant of certificate

5.4.1 Upon fulfillment of the following requirements, certificate compliance shall be issued as per the approved template subject to changes from time to time:

- a) Satisfactory operation of the collective facility.
- b) Complete compliance with the Certification Criteria (INDICOFS) based on the audit report of sampled farmers.
- c) Satisfactory resolution of raised nonconformities.

5.4.2 A list of all the farmer members of the collective shall be issued by way of an Annexure appended to the certificate.

5.4.3 The effective date of certification shall not be before the date of the decision to grant the certification to the collective.

5.4.4 Surveillance

5.4.4.1 Surveillance audits of the certified sites shall be carried out at least once a year, using the same checklist as the one used in the initial announced

audit, ensuring that the gap between two surveillance audits does not exceed one year. The Certification Body may allow a grace period of one month based on valid grounds beyond which delays shall lead to suspension of the certificate. The surveillance should be timed around harvest time of coffee crops under certification, to facilitate observance of maximum control points.

5.4.4.2 During the surveillance audit, the evaluators shall assess, at a minimum, the following aspects:

- a) Status of compliance with the requirements of the certification criteria
- b) Internal audit reports /audit
- c) Handling and disposal of nonconforming products
- d) Actions taken on nonconformities observed during the previous audit
- e) Redressal of complaints if any

5.4.4.3 If any nonconformity is observed, the same shall be categorized as either a Major or Minor in respect of the audit checklist, whereas in respect of the QMS audit, all control points are required to comply with non-conformities, dealt by furnishing a separate NC report. The nonconformity report shall be provided to the client in writing, generally on site, for correction and corrective action. The details will be reported in the surveillance audit report.

5.4.4.4 The certification body may increase or decrease the frequency of surveillance audits based on the performance of the organization.

- a) Unannounced Audits: During the validity period of a certificate, the CB will carry out an unannounced audit on a number of producers in the producer group equivalent to 10% of the audit sample size inspected in the previous announced audit.
- b) Only if the producers inspected externally have no non-conformities raised in that unannounced surveillance audit, the following

regular announced Audit by the CB will be reduced to 10% of the original farmer sample size, provided the findings from the Quality Management System audit carried out at the following regular announced audit are also favorable to this reduction.

- c) If there are non-conformities raised in the unannounced audits, in the following regular announced audit, justification must be given for inspecting only the minimum (square root) sample size, and not an increased sample size.

5.4.5 Suspension: The provisions of clause number 5.9 will apply, except that a Partial Suspension may be issued to the group, whereby one producer is suspended and not the whole group. A nonconformity is detected at one producer in a producer group, and after the CB investigates by increasing the sample size to determine the seriousness of the nonconformities within the producer group, it is decided that the one producer is non-compliant.

5.4.6 Cancellation: The provisions of Clause 5.10 shall apply.

5.4.7 Re-certification: The provisions of Clause 5.11 shall apply.

5.4.8 Change of Ownership/Name

- a) In the event of change of Ownership, the new collective shall submit proof of change of ownership / change of farmer members, besides shall also submit acceptance to the agreement for Certification with the CB regarding the operation and payment of fees. The same process shall be followed as and when an existing applicant undergoes a change in ownership. Such changes should not require a visit to the site.
- b) In case of a name change, the applicant/certified client shall inform the CB of the name change with supporting documentary evidence, and if satisfied, the CB shall endorse

the new name in the application/certificate/ update the changed status in the CB's Directory of Registered Clients (DRC).

5.4.9 Fee: The provisions of Clause 4.14 shall apply.

6.0 Complaints & Appeal

The certification body shall establish the process of complaints and appeal and ensure the same is accessible by the applicant/stakeholders.

4.0

SYSTEM FOR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATION BODIES

COFFEE BOARD OF INDIA

Date of Issue: December 2025

Disclaimer:

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SYSTEM FOR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATION BODIES

0. Introduction:

INDICOFS, The Sustainability Certification Scheme of Coffee Board, envisages that independent, competent Certification Bodies (CBs) shall ultimately evaluate and issue certification against the INDICOFS standard prescribed under the Scheme owned by the Coffee Board for Level 2 and 3 certifications. To operate under the Scheme, the CBs shall primarily comply with the requirements specified in ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and the additional requirements prescribed by the Coffee Board. The CBs would not get an applicant and would not be able to offer their process for witnessing as part of the accreditation process to the accreditation body to get accreditation or to get the relevant scope added in their accreditation, if already accredited, unless they are approved under the Scheme. Furthermore, to launch the Scheme, it is necessary that some CBs are available at the beginning. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a procedure for provisional approval of CBs under the Scheme until they can get the scope added in their accreditation or get formally accredited from the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) or any other recognized Accreditation body (AB) hereafter as per ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and get approved by the Coffee Board. This document sets out the requirements to be fulfilled by CBs desirous of operating under the Scheme, pending formal accreditation and approval.

1.0 Scope

1.1 This document defines the criteria and process for CBs to obtain provisional approval to operate under the INDICOFS Certification Scheme, pending formal accreditation by NABCB/any other AB as per ISO/IEC 17065 for the Scheme owned by Coffee Board .

1.2 This approval shall be valid for one year, within which the approved CBs shall have to obtain formal accreditation from NABCB/any other recognized AB and the approval of the COFFEE BOARD.

2.0 Criteria For Approval

The CBs desirous of undertaking certification under this Scheme shall meet the criteria prescribed in Clauses 3 and 4 of these documents.

3.0 Administrative Requirements

3.1 Legal entity: The CB shall be a legal entity in the economy in which it is located or shall be a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for all its assessment and certification activities. A governmental certification body is deemed a legal entity based on its governmental status. A CB that is part of an organization involved

in functions other than certification shall be separate and identifiable within the organization.

3.2 Organizational structure: The CB shall define and document the duties, responsibilities, and reporting structure of its personnel and any committee(s) and its place within the organization. When the CB is a defined part of a legal entity, the documentation of the organizational structure shall include the line of authority and the relationship with other parts within the same legal entity.

3.3 Integrity: The certification body (CB) shall always maintain integrity. It shall implement systems and measures to require all its personnel, internal and external, and subcontractors to maintain integrity. The certification body's system for maintaining integrity shall include measures such as having a Code of Integrity and Conduct, which is required to be signed by all individuals (internal and external) involved in CB's activities, a policy on gifts, guidelines for handling situations when offered inducement, etc. Note 1 Integrity is defined as the quality of being honest and having consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

3.4 Independence: The certification body shall be independent and neither owned by nor linked to any entity engaged in prohibited activities as detailed in ISO/IEC 17065 or this document.

3.5 Impartiality:

3.5.1 The CB shall be and ;perceived to be, impartial.

3.5.2 The CB shall be structured and managed to safeguard impartiality.

3.5.3 The CB and its staff shall not engage in any activities that may conflict with their impartiality.

3.5.4 The CB shall act impartially in relation to its applicants and certified clients.

3.5.5 The CB shall have a process to identify, analyze, evaluate, monitor, and document the threats to impartiality arising from its activities, including any conflicts arising from its relationships on an ongoing basis.

- a. This shall include threats that may arise from its activities, relationships, or the relationships of its personnel. If there are any threats to impartiality, the CB shall document and demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such threats and document any residual risk. The demonstration shall cover all potential threats that are identified whether they arise from within the CB or from the activities of other persons, bodies or organizations.
- b. The top management of the CB shall review any residual risk to determine if it is within the level of acceptable risk. When a relationship poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, certification shall not be provided.
- c. The risk assessment process shall include the identification of and consultation with appropriate interested parties to advise on matters affecting impartiality, including openness and public perception.

NOTE 1 Sources of threats to the impartiality of the CB can be based on ownership, governance, management, personnel, family relationships, shared resources, finances, contracts, training, marketing, and payment of a sales commission or other inducement for the referral of new clients.

NOTE 2 One way of fulfilling the consultation with the interested parties is by using an impartiality committee set up by the CB.

3.5.6 The CB shall not impart education and/or training on sustainable coffee-related subjects within the same legal entity.

3.5.7 The CB shall have a process to ensure that its personnel are free of any conflict of interest and do not engage in consulting or have any other association with entities covered under the scope of this Scheme.

3.6 Confidentiality: The CB shall ensure the confidentiality of information obtained during its certification activities by having a suitable system.

Information gathered shall not be used for any commercial or other purposes other than that to support certification of applicants

3.7 Liability and financing

3.7.1 The CB shall be able to demonstrate that it has evaluated the risks arising from its certification activities and that it has adequate arrangements (e.g., insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations in each of its fields of activities and the geographic areas in which it operates.

3.7.2 The CB shall evaluate its finances and sources of income and demonstrate that, initially and on an ongoing basis, commercial, financial, or other pressures do not compromise its impartiality.

4.0 Technical Requirements

4.1 Personnel:

4.1.1 The CB shall have, as part of its organization, personnel, either employed or on contract, with sufficient competence to manage the process of certification of sustainable coffee under this scheme.

4.1.2 The CB shall have defined processes for selecting, training, and formally authorizing auditors and for selecting technical experts, if needed, used in this activity.

4.2 Competence: Qualifications, Training and Experience for Sustainability Auditors

- a. a. Bachelor's degree or higher in agricultural sciences from a recognized institution
- b. b. Work experience of at least 5 years in agriculture-related activities
- c. c. Training in ISO 19011-based auditing.
- d. d. Knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices

Note: Professional experience in sustainability auditing in any of the schemes such as Rainforest Alliance, 4C, Fair Trade, or equivalent is acceptable as evidence.

4.2.1 Personnel records: The CB shall maintain up-to-date personnel records, as per the requirements of the Scheme, for each of its personnel involved in its assessment and certification activities.

4.3 Certification process

4.3.1 The CB shall manage the certification process as per the documented 'INDICOFS Certification Process' prescribed under the Scheme.

4.3.2 The CB shall maintain records to demonstrate that the certification process has been effectively implemented.

4.3.3 The CB shall ensure that the requirements of the Scheme are met at any point in time.

4.3.4 The CB shall certify sustainable coffee only under the INDICOFS Scheme, following the rules prescribed under the Scheme.

4.3.5 The CB shall have a written agreement with the clients for the use of the certificate issued to them.

4.3.6 The CB shall have a process to handle appeals by applicants/certified clients against any of its decisions.

4.3.7 The CB shall have a process to handle complaints from any stakeholder.

4.4 Certification agreement: CBs shall have a legally enforceable agreement for the provision of certification activities with clients. In addition, CBs shall ensure that their certification agreement requires that clients comply with the specific requirements of the Scheme and allow access to the scheme owner, if it so wishes.

4.5 Responsibility for Decision on Certification

4.5.1 The CBs shall be responsible for, retain authority for, and not delegate decisions relating to the issue of certificates, including granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding, and reducing the scope of the certification, and suspending or withdrawing the certification.

4.6 Publicly Available Information

4.6.1 The CB shall maintain a website to provide information about the INDICOF Scheme and its certification activities under the Scheme.

4.6.2 The CB shall maintain and make publicly available, without request, information describing its certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending, or withdrawing certification and about the certification activities and geographical areas in which it operates.

4.6.3 The CB shall make publicly available, without request, information about registered applications and certificates issued, suspended, or withdrawn.

4.6.4 The CB shall provide means of verifying any specific certificates on its website.

4.6.4 The CB shall make its processes for handling appeals and complaints publicly available without requests.

5.0 Approval Process

5.1 Application:

5.1.1 Any organization interested in approval as a CB under the Scheme shall apply to the COFFEE BOARD in the prescribed application format along with the prescribed application fee. The applicant shall also enclose the required information and documents, as specified in the application form.

5.1.2 The filled in application form for approval shall be duly signed by the CEO/authorised representative/s of the organization seeking approval.

5.1.3 On receipt of the application form, it shall be scrutinized by the Scheme Secretariat at the COFFEE BOARD, and if found complete in all respects, shall be processed further.

5.2 Assessment process:

5.2.1 On review of the application for completeness, an assessment team comprising a team leader and member(s)/technical expert(s) shall be nominated by the COFFEE BOARD for assessment at the applicant's

office and other locations, if required. Under normal circumstances, the assessment at the head office will take two man-days. If the CB is already accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012, the man-days may be reduced.

5.2.2 The names of the members of the assessment team along with their CVs shall be communicated to the applicant, giving it adequate time to raise any objection against the appointment of any of the team members, which will be dealt with by the COFFEE BOARD on merits. All assessors/experts nominated by the COFFEE BOARD shall have signed undertakings regarding confidentiality, impartiality, and conflict of interest.

5.2.3 If necessary, the COFFEE BOARD may decide, based on the report of office assessment or otherwise, to undertake witness assessment(s) of the actual evaluation or any part of the assessment/certification process by the applicant.

5.2.4 The assessment team leader shall provide an assessment plan to the applicant in advance.

5.2.5 The date(s) of assessment shall be mutually agreed upon between the applicant and the COFFEE BOARD/assessment team.

5.2.6 The Office assessment shall begin with an opening meeting to explain the purpose and scope of the assessment and the methodology of the assessment. The actual assessment process shall cover a review of the documented system of the organization to assess its adequacy in line with the criteria specified in this document. It will also involve verification of the implementation of the system, including scrutiny of the records of evaluators' competence and other relevant records and demonstration of evaluators' competence through means such as interviews. In short, it shall be an assessment to verify the technical competence of the applicant for operating under the Scheme.

5.2.7 At the end of the office assessment, through a formal closing meeting, all nonconformities and concerns observed in the applicant's system as per the assessment criteria and the assessment team's recommendation to the COFFEE BOARD shall be conveyed to the applicant.

5.2.8 Based on the report of the assessment and the action taken by the applicant on the nonconformities/concerns, if any, the COFFEE Board shall decide on granting provisional approval to the applicant as a CB under the Scheme.

6.0 Validity Of Provisional Approval

6.1 The provisional approval shall be valid for one year.

6.2 The CB shall obtain formal accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17065 from NABCB/any other recognized AB within one year of provisional approval by the COFFEE BOARD to formalize its approval.

6.3 The provisional approval shall be subject to suspension/withdrawal with due notice of 15 days in the event of any non-compliance with the requirements of the Scheme.

6.4 The approved CB shall inform the COFFEE BOARD without delay about any changes relevant to its approval, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to:

- a. Its legal, commercial, ownership, or organizational status
- b. The organization, top management, and key personnel
- c. Main policies, resources, premises, and scope of approval
- d. Other matters that may affect the ability of the CB to fulfill the requirements for approval.

The COFFEE BOARD shall examine such information and decide on the issue on merits with or without an on-site verification.

6.5 The CB shall send data of the certificates issued, suspended, or withdrawn to the COFFEE BOARD quarterly. The data shall be submitted in the specified format for maintaining the registry of certified clients

6.6 The COFFEE BOARD shall witness an audit by an approved CB at least once within the period of validity.

6.7 Any extension of the validity of the provisional approval shall be based on a written request for justifiable reasons and shall involve office or witness assessment or both, as decided by the COFFEE BOARD.

7.0 Fee

7.1 The following fee structure shall be applied:

- a. Application fee INR 15,000/-
- b. Manday Charges INR 20,000/-
- c. Annual fee INR 50,000/-

7.2 In addition, the CB shall pay to COFFEE BOARD an amount of INR 500/- for each certificate issued by the CB.

7.3 COFFEE BOARD at its discretion may revise/levy any other fee necessary with due notice to the CBs

5.0

INDICOFS REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

Additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065

Date of Issue: December 2025

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Additional Requirements for Certification Bodies undertaking Certification under the INDICOFS Certification Scheme as per ISO/IEC 17065

Introduction: This document prescribes the additional requirements to be followed by the certification bodies undertaking Certification under the INDICOFS certification scheme. The additional requirements are indicated by the prefix 'A' with the clause number of ISO 17065 for ease of understanding. All provisions of ISO/IEC 17065:2012 shall apply

A1. Purpose

A1.1 This document specifies the additional requirements for certification bodies involved in Certification under the INDICOFS Certification Scheme. These requirements are in addition to those specified in ISO 17065, “Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services,” and the relevant certification scheme, to be recognized by the Scheme Owner under the provisions of the INDICOFS Certification Scheme.

A2. Scope

A2.1 This document specifies the additional criteria/requirements for certification bodies operating under the program.

Note: The term “shall” used throughout this document indicates that the provisions are mandatory. The term

“should” is used to indicate guidance that, although not required, is provided as a means of meeting approval criteria. If the certification body uses an alternative means to meet the requirements, it must provide suitable and adequate justification.

A2.2 It is also intended that these additional criteria shall be used by the accreditation bodies operating under the scheme for the assessment of certification bodies engaged in Certification of Indian Coffee for recognition of the sustainability efforts undertaken during growing under the INDICOFS certification scheme.

A2.3 For ease of use, the structure of this document has been aligned with that of ISO/IEC 17065:2012. Additional requirements have been specified, where applicable, against each requirement in the standard (ISO/IEC 17065:2012). These requirements are in addition to those specified in ISO/IEC 17065:2012. For all other elements, the existing provisions apply.

A4. General Requirements

A4.01 Integrity

The certification body (CB) shall maintain integrity at all times. It shall implement systems and measures to require all its personnel, internal and external, to maintain their integrity. The certification body’s

system for maintaining integrity shall include measures such as a Code of Integrity and Conduct, which must be signed by all individuals (internal and external) involved in the CB's activities, a policy on gifts, guidelines for handling situations when offered inducements, and so on.

Note 1: Integrity is defined as the quality of being honest and having consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

A4.02 Independence

The certification body shall be independent, neither owned by nor linked to any entity that is engaged in prohibited activities as detailed in clauses 4.2.6 and 4.2.7 of ISO/IEC 17065.

4.1 Legal and contractual matters

A4.1.1 Legal responsibility

A4.1.1.1 The CB shall be a legal entity in the economy in which it is located or shall be a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for all its certification activities. It shall be registered under the applicable national law so that it can function legally, make decisions independently, and sue and be sued in its own name. A governmental certification body is considered a legal entity based on its status. A CB that is part of an organization involved in functions other than certification shall be separate and identifiable within that organization's structure.

A4.1.1.2 The CB shall be responsible for meeting national or other legal requirements in the countries where it operates, with specific reference to the certification activities undertaken.

A4.1.2 Certification agreement

A4.1.2.1 Certification agreements between a certification body and its clients shall be in the form of legally enforceable written contracts and shall be signed either at the time of registration of the application or on the grant of certification if a signed declaration is taken in application.

A4.1.2.2 The certification body shall ensure that its certification agreement requires the client to comply with at least the following:

A4.1.2.2 a) These requirements shall be complied with at all times during the validity of the certification and also beyond, as applicable;

A4.1.2.2 c1) It shall include making all necessary arrangements for the conduct of evaluation/audits/inspections, including providing documentation and records, and access to relevant facilities, equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and clients' subcontractors and all other specific scheme requirements.

A4.1.2.2 c2) Investigation of complaints or other stakeholder comments;

A4.1.2.2 c3) Allow the Scheme owner and AB to conduct any audits/inspections, either as observers during CB audits or directly as part of their own surveillance;

A4.1.2.2 d) Only make claims regarding certification consistent with the certification scheme requirements and scope of certification, and following the issue of the scope certificate;

A4.1.2.2 i) Conform to the requirements of applicable rules and any other requirements specified by any scheme owner when referencing its Certification or using marks of conformity in communication media such as documents, brochures, or advertising;

A4.1.2.2 Additionally, certification agreements shall specify that the organization:

A4.1.2.2 l) accept that the certification body may conduct semi-announced audit, unannounced audits, and/or confirmation visits, for the purpose of monitoring the organization's conformity with applicable requirements of this standard and the certification scheme requirements;

A4.1.2.2 m) accept that the accreditation body or any other entity that has recognized its Certification also has the right to conduct audits of the client, including semi-announced audits, unannounced audits, and confirmation visits, for monitoring certification body conformity with certification scheme requirements;

A4.1.2.2 n) allow the certification body to exchange information with other accredited certification bodies and authorised accreditation bodies as per the specific certification scheme requirements, as part of its ongoing evaluations;

A4.1.2.2 o) inform the certification body of any other certifications and certification body relationships that share the same scope;

A4.2 Management of Impartiality

A4.2.1.1 The CB shall be, and perceived to be, impartial in relation to its applicants and certified entities.

A4.2.3.1 The CB shall document any residual risks. The demonstration shall cover all potential threats that are identified, whether they arise from within the CB or from the activities of other persons, bodies or organizations.

A4.2.3.2 The CB shall have a process to eliminate or minimize risks to impartiality if internal audits/in-house training of any entity/client are carried out in a related body that is linked to the CB by common ownership, etc.

A4.2.3.3 The CB shall have a process to identify, analyze, evaluate, monitor, and document the threats to impartiality (actual and perceived) arising from its activities, including any conflicts arising from its relationships, activities, or relationships of its personnel, on an ongoing basis.

A4.2.3.4 The certification body shall establish rules and procedures to prevent or minimize threats of conflicts of interest. Any actual or perceived interest in an action that results in or has the appearance of resulting in personal, organizational, or professional gain is considered a conflict of interest.

A4.2.4.1 The CB and its personnel shall not engage in any activities that may present an unacceptable risk to its impartiality.

A4.2.4.2 Top management shall review any residual risk to determine whether it is within the level of acceptable risk.

When a relationship poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, then Certification shall not be provided.

A4.2.4.3 The risk assessment process shall include the identification of and consultation with appropriate interested parties to advise on matters affecting impartiality, including openness and public perception.

A4.2.4.4 If a conflict of interest between certification personnel and an organization is found after an audit has occurred, another unbiased person shall be assigned to determine whether it has affected the certification process and to complete the remainder of the process, if applicable.

A4.2.6 h) The CB and its personnel shall not provide consulting, education, and/or training in the area related to the conformity assessment scheme or this program within the same legal entity.

A4.2.7.1 Please refer to Clause A4.02 of the additional requirements.

A4.2.12 a) The certification body shall require personnel, committee, and board members to declare existing or prior associations with an organization subject to Certification. If such an association threatens impartiality, the certification body shall exclude the concerned person from work and discussions.

A4.2.12 b) an individual auditor shall not audit the same organization in more than two consecutive years;

A4.2.12 c) Personnel shall not be allowed to assess their work.

4.3 Liability and Financing

A4.3.2.1 The certification body shall evaluate its finances and sources of income and demonstrate that on an ongoing commercial, financial, or other pressures do not compromise its impartiality.

4.5 Confidentiality

A4.5.1.1 If requested, the certification body shall share information about its erstwhile client with another CB. This is specifically applicable in the event that a CB's client applies to another CB after suspension or withdrawal or otherwise wishes to transfer their certificate.

4.6 Publicly available information

A4.6.1 Information provided by the certification body to any client or to the marketplace, including advertising must be accurate and not misleading.

A4.6.2 The CB shall maintain a website to provide

information about the Scheme(s) and its certification activities under the Scheme(s), including the following:

- a) The CB shall publicly disclose detailed information about registered applications and certifications granted, suspended, or withdrawn under the Scheme.
- b) The certification body shall ensure that the applicants and certified organizations are aware of the relevant documents and shall provide any public documents upon request.

A4.6.3 The information specified in 4.6 a) above shall also be available on its website.

A.4.6.4 Any additional requirements specified in the certification scheme shall be complied with.

5.0 Structural requirements

5.2 Mechanism for Safeguarding Impartiality

A5.2.1.1 The mechanism for safeguarding impartiality shall be a formally appointed committee. The committee shall not have any operation-related responsibilities. If the committee is given any other responsibility, it should not conflict with its mandate. All records demonstrating the requirements specified in Clause 5.2 must be maintained.

6.0 Resource Requirements

6.1.2 Management of competence for personnel involved in the certification process

A6.1.2.1 b) Take responsibility for ensuring that training and qualification requirements are met for all empanelled personnel (auditors/inspectors) and personnel of the outsourced entity, unless it is an accredited CAB;

A6.1.2.1.1 Auditors/inspectors/evaluators and other personnel, including application reviewers, technical reviewers, and/or decision makers, shall meet the minimum qualifications prescribed by the scheme owner, subject to the following for auditors/inspectors/evaluators (howsoever named).

A6.1.2.1.2 Auditors shall have the following qualifications:

- a. Bachelor's degree or higher in agricultural sciences from a recognized institution;
- b. Work experience of at least 5 years in agriculture-related activities
- c. Training in ISO 19011-based auditing .
- d. Knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices

Note: Professional experience in sustainability auditing in any of the schemes like Rainforest Alliance, 4C, Fair Trade, or equivalent is acceptable as evidence.

6.2 Resources for evaluation

6.2.1 Internal resources

A6.2.1.1 If the divisions, within the same legal entity, performing above evaluation activities, for example, inspection division, audit divisions, are not under direct control of the certification division, then many of the requirements as specified in clause 6.2.2.3, 6.2.2.4 b), 6.2.2.4 e), as applicable, 4.2.11, 4.2.12 and other impartiality requirements under clause 4.2 as appropriate, shall apply, There shall be some internal documentation which will specify how this arrangement/process shall work)

A6.2.1.2 For INDICOFS Certification: Internal resources may include a separate inspection division, as applicable

6.2.2 External resources (outsourcing)

A6.2.2.2.1 The certification body shall not outsource any activity to non-independent bodies (i.e. bodies which are not independent from the organization being audited Ref: *ISO17065* 6.2.2.2)

A6.2.2.4 g) Ensure that the outsourced resource is

1. Competent to perform the outsourced work consistent with the requirements set out in these procedures for the certification body and its personnel are
 - not involved with the operation, process, or product that is subject to Certification in any way that may compromise impartiality; and
 - committed to the policies and procedures defined by the certification body.

A6.2.2.4 h) Monitor the performance of outsourced resources, including a minimum annual evaluation and ongoing monitoring of work (e.g., through the certification decision process).

7.0 Process requirements

7.1 General

A7.1.1.1 The following exceptions to the certification requirements are permitted if adequately justified:

1. These shall be permitted only if they are allowed in the relevant certification schemes.
2. The certification body shall obtain prior approval from the scheme owner for each exemption.
3. The certification body should have clear criteria and procedures for requesting and tracking exemptions.
4. Exemptions shall be of limited duration and shall be resubmitted for approval, as applicable.

7.2 Application

For application, the certification body shall obtain all necessary information to complete the certification process in accordance with the relevant certification scheme.

7.3 Application review

A7.3.1.1 All Certification scheme requirements shall be followed.

7.4 Evaluation

A7.4.2.1 The certification body shall assign personnel with the necessary competence to perform each evaluation task that it undertakes with its internal resources (see 6.2.1). All certification scheme requirements must also be followed. Additional requirements, as given below, shall also be observed in respect of audit (or evaluation) teams.

- a) If an auditor/inspector is not fluent in the operating language of the auditee, the auditor/inspector shall be accompanied by an interpreter.

- b) An interpreter is needed for worker interviews if the auditor/inspector and workers do not share a common language, even if the management staff can communicate directly with the auditor.
- c) An auditor/inspector in training or technical expert may also act as an interpreter.
- d) When translators or interpreters are used in audits they must be independent of the organization being evaluated.
- e) In all cases, the names and affiliations of the translators and interpreters will be included in the audit reports.
- f) When technical experts are used in audits, they shall be independent of the organization being evaluated. The names, qualifications, and affiliations of the technical experts should be included in the audit reports.

A7.4.4.1 In the case of any regulations applicable to sustainable coffee production, the audit shall verify that the client has the necessary regulatory approvals, has a system in place to meet the regulatory requirements, and provides evidence of meeting such requirements. The audit report shall categorically report on the verification of the system for verifying regulatory compliance. The certification body shall audit a sample of the regulatory requirements to confirm that the system is effective.

A7.4.4.6 The certification body shall follow the requirements given in the certification scheme regarding the classification of non-conformities. The certification body can define major and minor NC, if required and if not specified in the scheme.

A7.4.9.1 The audit report shall include the following elements:

A7.4.9.1.1 The certification body shall provide a written report for each audit to the client. The audit team may identify opportunities for improvement but shall not recommend specific solutions. The certification body shall maintain ownership of the audit report.

A7.4.9.1.2 The audit/team leader shall ensure that the audit report is prepared and shall be responsible for its content. The audit report shall provide an accurate,

concise, and transparent record of the audit to enable an informed certification decision. It shall include or refer to the following:

- a) identification of the certification body.
- b) the name and address of the client and the client's representative
- c) the type of audit (e.g., initial, surveillance, recertification, or special audits);
- d) the audit criteria;
- e) the audit objectives;
- f) the audit scope, particularly the identification of the organizational or functional units or processes audited and the time of the audit;
- g) Any deviation from the audit plan and its reasons.
- h) any significant issues impacting the audit program;
- i) identification of the audit team leader, audit team members, and any accompanying personnel;
- j) The dates and places where audit activities (on-site or off-site, permanent or temporary sites) were conducted.
- k) Audit findings reference to evidence and conclusions, consistent with the requirements of the type of audit;
- l) Significant changes, if any, that affect the management system of the client since the last audit;
- m) Any unresolved issues, if identified.
- n) Where applicable, whether the audit was combined, joint, or integrated;
- o) A disclaimer statement indicating that auditing is based on a sampling process of the available information.
- p) recommendation from the audit team
- q) The audited client effectively controls the use of certification documents and marks, if applicable.
- r) verification of the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken regarding previously identified nonconformities, if applicable;
- s) A conclusion on the appropriateness of the certification scope: The scope of Certification shall not exceed the scope of products/services for which recognition is granted to the client.
- t) Confirmation that the audit objectives have been fulfilled.
- u) information on the system for compliance to regulatory requirements and details of audit of regulatory requirements to provide reasonable assurance that the organization complies with applicable regulatory requirements, if the product/service is regulated.[9]

A7.4.9.1.3 The inspectors/auditor(s) shall submit the audit report and supporting documentation promptly, providing sufficient time for review and the final certification decision.

A7.4.9.1.4 Final reports shall be provided to the organization. If the audit checklist is not included in the audit report, it should also be provided to the organization.

A7.4.9.1.5 The certification body shall document the measures applied to verify the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken by the clients to meet the requirements.

7.5 Review

A7.5.1.1 The review shall include a review of the report by a qualified certification individual or a committee consisting of at least one person with the competence described below, as well as the criteria specified in the certification scheme.

A7.5.1.2 The person assigned to the review shall have competence in terms of knowledge and skills concerning the certification scheme and the technical areas of the scope applied for.

7.6 Certification decision

A7.6.1 The certification body shall retain the final responsibility for issuing, maintaining, reissuing, suspending, and withdrawing scope certificates.

7.8 Directory of certified products

A7.8.1 Additional requirements

- a) The certification body shall maintain a website to provide information about the scheme.
- b) The certification body shall make publicly available on its website information about applications registered and certifications granted, as well as those that are suspended or withdrawn.
- c) Upon request from any party, the certification body shall provide the means to confirm the validity of a given certification.
- d) All requirements specified in the certification scheme must be followed.
- e) In addition, refer to the additional requirements specified in Clause 4.6.

7.9 Surveillance

A7.9.1.1 Each certification scheme defines the criteria and processes for surveillance activities. In all such cases where the validity of a statement of conformity is permitted for a prescribed period, surveillance shall be applicable.

7.10 Changes affecting Certification

A7.10.1.1 All Certification scheme requirements shall be followed.

7.11 Termination, reduction, suspension, or withdrawal of Certification

A7.11.1.1 The certification body shall inform the Coffee Board and the accreditation body.

7.12 Records

A7.12.1.1 All certification scheme requirements shall be adhered to.

7.13 Complaints and appeals

A 7.13.1.1 The certification body shall respond to all information and complaints it receives directly or through any media regarding fraudulent products or services following its complaints process. If fraud or other misrepresentation is found to exist, the certification body shall initiate the process for withdrawal of the certificate (ref 7.11)

8.0 Management System requirements

8.2 General management system documentation (Option A)

A8.2.1.1 Only Option A is applicable.

8.4 Control of records (Option A)

A8.4.2.1 record retention time shall be a minimum of five years or as per the certification scheme or regulatory requirements, whichever is shorter.

8.6 Internal audits (Option A)

A8.6.2.1 The internal audit program shall include the requirements of all conformity assessment schemes for which the certification body is accredited or has applied for accreditation.

A8.6.4 a) The personnel carrying out internal audits shall also have thorough knowledge of the certification scheme requirements and audit criteria, including base knowledge of the product/process/service under review and the technical specifications.

6.0

INDICOFS REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES

Additional Requirements to ISO/IEC 17011:2017

Date of Issue: December 2025

COFFEE BOARD OF INDIA

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INDICOFS REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES

Additional Requirements for Accreditation Bodies undertaking accreditation of INDICOFS Certification Bodies as per ISO/IEC 17011

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document prescribes the additional requirements to be followed by the accreditation bodies undertaking accreditation for INDICOFS Certification Scheme, in addition to compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, to obtain recognition by the Scheme Owner, the Coffee Board of India, under the Sustainability Certification of Coffee.

2.0 Additional requirements

The additional requirements are indicated by prefix A with the clause number of ISO/IEC 17011 for ease of understanding. All provisions of ISO/IEC 17011:2017 shall apply, in addition to those given in this document.

A1. Purpose

A1.1 This document specifies additional requirements for accreditation bodies involved in the accreditation of certification bodies for Indian Coffee certification under the INDICOFS Certification Scheme for sustainable coffee. These requirements are additional to the requirements specified vide ISO/IEC 17011 and the INDICOFS certification scheme to be recognized by the scheme owner, the Coffee Board of India.

A2. Scope

A2.1 This document specifies the additional criteria for the accreditation bodies operating under the INDICOFS Certification Scheme.

NOTE: The term “shall” used throughout this document indicates provisions that are mandatory in nature. The term “should” is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided as a means of meeting the requirements of the approval criteria. In case the accreditation body uses an alternative means of meeting the requirements, it would have to provide suitable and adequate justification.

A2.2 For the sake of ease of use, the structure of this document has been aligned with the structure of ISO/IEC 17011:2017. Against each requirement in the standard (ISO/IEC 17011:2017), additional requirements are described, where applicable. These requirements are in addition to those specified in ISO/IEC 17011:2017. In respect of all other elements, the existing provisions shall apply.

A3. Terms and definitions

A3.1 Impartiality - presence of actual or perceived objectivity

A 3.2 Integrity - the quality of being honest and having a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

A4. General Requirements

A4.01 Integrity

The accreditation body (also known as AB) shall always maintain integrity. It shall implement systems and measures to require all its personnel, internal and external, to maintain integrity. The accreditation body's system for maintaining integrity shall include measures such as having a Code of Integrity and Conduct, which is required to be signed by all individuals (internal and external) involved in CB's activities, a policy on gifts, guidelines for handling situations when offered inducement, etc.

A4.02 Independence

The accreditation body and the legal entity of which it is part shall be an independent body neither owned by nor linked to any entity engaged in prohibited activities as detailed in ISO/IEC 17011 and this document.

4.1 Legal entity

A4.1.1 For each Standard for which it offers accreditation services, the accreditation body shall define any necessary limits (e.g., geographical) to its own operations and shall not take on assessments that it does not have the capacity to complete.

A4.1.2 The official language of the Coffee Board is English. The accreditation body shall translate any of its documents and records requested by the Coffee Board into English on request, at the accreditation body's expense. All regular reporting by the accreditation body, as required, shall be submitted in English. In matters involving interpretation, the English version shall be treated as final

4.2 Accreditation agreement

A4.2.1 The accreditation bodies shall require the CBs to allow the Coffee Board and its nominated representatives to conduct direct assessments of CBs or certified clients or to accompany AB assessments as observers and shall respond to any non-conformities that arise from such assessments.

NOTE: The Coffee Board may conduct direct assessments for CBs whenever needed. Direct assessments may include document reviews of completed assessments, shadowing of a remote or on-site assessment of a certification body, and/or shadowing a certification body audit without the accreditation body present.

4.3 Use of Accreditation Symbols and Other Claims of Accreditation

A4.3.1 Fully conforms to the requirements of the scheme(s) for which it has been granted accreditation

A4.3.2 The Accreditation Body shall monitor the use of Mark(s) for the Schemes for which it has accredited a conformity assessment body during its assessments and otherwise.

4.4 Impartiality Requirements

A 4.4.1 Top management shall review any residual risk to determine whether it is within the level of acceptable risk. When a relationship poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, certification shall not be provided.

A4.4.1.1 The AB or an individual shall be prohibited from the following activities:

- a. Training and consultancy for CABs for any conformity assessment activity covered under this Scheme.
- b. Education and/or training in the INDICOFS certification scheme or any other training related to this scheme within the same legal entity.

A4.4.1.2 The AB shall not be linked to any other entity imparting education and/or training and/or consulting related to the INDICOFS certification scheme.

A4.4.14 The accreditation body shall establish rules and procedures to prevent or minimize threats of conflict of interest. Any actual or perceived interest in an action that results in or has the appearance of resulting in personal, organizational, or professional gain is a conflict of interest. In particular,

- a. The accreditation body shall require personnel, committee, and board members

to declare existing or prior association with an organization subject to certification or a certification body subject to accreditation. Where such an association threatens impartiality, the accreditation body shall exclude the person concerned from work, discussions, and decisions at all stages of the potential conflict of interest.

- b. If a conflict of interest between accreditation personnel and a certification body or organization is found after an assessment has occurred, another unbiased person shall be assigned to determine if it has affected the accreditation process and to complete the remainder of the process, if applicable.
- c. Personnel shall not be allowed to assess or review their own work.

A4.4.2 In case an accreditation body, or the legal entity of which it is part, owns conformity assessment schemes, it shall implement measures that provide accreditation to any CAB, having its own or participating in a similar scheme, without discrimination.

5.0 Structural Requirements

A5.1 An Accreditation Body shall have formal rules for taking feedback from interested parties providing feedback on the accreditation process and management of finances of the accreditation body.

6.0 Resource Requirements

6.1 Competence of personnel

A 6.1.1 Competence of personnel for INDICOFS Certification Scheme – The assessors shall meet the following minimum qualifications: -

- a. Bachelor's degree or higher in agricultural sciences from a recognized institution
- b. Work experience of at least 5 years in agriculture-related activities
- c. Training in ISO 19011-based auditing.
- d. Knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices

Note: Professional experience in sustainability

auditing in any of the schemes, such as Rainforest Alliance, 4C, Fair Trade, or equivalent, is acceptable as evidence.

- e. Demonstrated knowledge of the following:
 - i. Accreditation body's procedures.
 - ii. The general context of the certification body to be assessed.
 - iii. The general production methods and processes applicable to the organizations/sector to be assessed.
 - iv. Issues and risks specific to the sectors and countries of the organizations to be audited; and
 - v. The preparation of written assessment reports that are clear, accurate, and complete, and articulate the audit findings in relation to the Standard and other applicable requirements.

Note: The above competence can be demonstrated by an individual or team appointed for the assessment of the CAB.

A6.1.1.2 The accreditation body shall ensure that personnel assigned with accreditation for INDICOFS Certification Scheme participate in all mandatory trainings (e.g., courses, webinars, calls) and in-person accreditation meetings nominated and/or provided by Scheme Owner or as and when organized by AB.

A6.1.1.3 All personnel involved in the accreditation process shall have undergone internal or external training on the applicable requirements of INDICOFS Certification Scheme and demonstrate that the assessors have the knowledge of INDICOFS Certification Scheme.

A6.1.1.4 The accreditation decisions shall be taken by an individual or a group having knowledge of

- a. Assessment principles, practices, and techniques.
- b. General management system principles and tools.
- c. The requirements of the certification standard and/or scheme.
- d. Domain knowledge of the technical scope, for example, sustainability in Coffee growing for which review and decision is being taken.

6.4 Outsourcing

A6.4.1 Outsourcing shall be limited to the following:

- a. Internationally recognized accreditation bodies (e.g., signatories of the IAF Multilateral Agreement) approved under these schemes for CAB and Labs.
- b. Specialized organizations to induct sustainability in coffee expertise in the AB

A6.4.2 The accreditation body shall take responsibility for managing the competence of personnel involved in all outsourced activities unless the subcontractor is a recognized accreditation body for the applicable Standard(s) and scheme(s).

A6.4.3 When acting as a subcontractor for another recognized accreditation body, the accreditation body shall take responsibility for conforming to all applicable requirements included in the scope of the subcontracting and shall not further subcontract services to another entity.

A6.4.4 Accreditation decisions shall not be outsourced.

7.0 Process requirements

7.1 Accreditation Requirements

A7.1.1 The general requirements for accreditation shall be the relevant Standard(s), relevant provisions of the conformity assessment scheme, if applicable, documented system of the conformity assessment body for the relevant Standard(s)/Scheme, and any other applicable documents.

7.2 Preparation for Assessment

A7.2.1 Selection of team for assessment

A7.2.1.1 A qualified assessor or assessment team shall perform the document review, office assessments, and all witness assessments. If an appropriately qualified assessor is not available, suitably qualified technical experts shall be used.

A7.2.1.2 The witness assessment team should have industry- or sector-specific experts, if needed.

A7.2.1.3 When translators or interpreters are used in assessments, the translators and interpreters

shall be independent of the certification body and (if applicable) the organization being evaluated. The names and affiliations of the translators and interpreters should be included in the audit reports.

A7.2.1.4 When technical experts are used in assessments, they shall be independent of the CAB and the organization being evaluated. The team leader shall not be involved in any type of conformity assessment activity relevant to the INDICOFS Scheme being assessed. The names, qualifications, and affiliations of technical experts, their individual assignments, and the time for which they were present shall be included in the assessment reports.

A7.2.1.5 In case of accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, the AB shall evaluate all locations taking decision for grant of accreditation and square root of all locations handling key activities (application review, auditor nomination, man-day calculation, etc.). All offices/locations shall be evaluated during the accreditation cycle, where key activities are undertaken.

A7.2.1.6 The accreditation body shall identify key offices/locations for the Scheme, which shall include all offices other than the headquarters/main office that take responsibility for certification decisions or for issuing certificates, as well as any other offices that the accreditation body considers to be critical to the certification body's systems for the Scheme, including team nomination. The AB should have justification for selection of Key offices/location

7.3 Review of Documented Information

A7.3.1 Upon receipt of an application form from a CAB, the accreditation body shall conduct a document review of the CAB's documented systems (all levels of documents) offsite prior to office assessment. This shall result in a comprehensive report covering all the requirements of the applicable standard. The first review should be completed within one month of the receipt of the application form and documents for review. The accreditation body may then recommend a grace period based on these requirements.

7.4 Assessment

A7.4.1 For the assessment of certification bodies, the following additional requirements apply:

A7.4.1.1 The accreditation body shall include the following elements in its initial assessment:

- a. Document review.
- b. On-site assessment of the headquarters/key office/location of the applicant certification body. In case any key office/location is excluded, justification shall be provided to the Coffee Board.
- c. Witness assessment
- d. Repeat sampling of the same files should be avoided as much as possible.

A7.4.1.2 The accreditation body shall include, at a minimum, the following elements in its surveillance assessments:

- a. On-site assessment of the headquarters / 20% key office/location of the certification body once every year.
- b. Witness assessment is performed at a representative organization for each applicable standard/scope once every year.
- c. On-site assessment of 100% of the key offices/locations over five year cycle, distributed approximately evenly during that timeframe.

NOTE: A single key office/location may be visited more than once during a five-year period if the accreditation body identifies high risk. The above represents the minimum assessment level; the accreditation body may choose to conduct additional assessments. Office assessments may include remote evaluation and may be conducted remotely in the case of virtual offices of a certification body.

7.5 Accreditation Decision Making

A7.5.1 The accreditation body shall retain the final responsibility for granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, suspending, or withdrawing accreditation. The delegation of accreditation decisions to other entities is not permitted. However, external resources can be used in decision-making if they are suitably contracted to comply with the accreditation body's systems.

7.6 Accreditation Cycle

A7.6.1 Yearly surveillance of the offices of the CAB and witness assessments, where applicable, are mandatory.

7.7 Suspending, Withdrawing, or Reducing Accreditation

A7.7.1 If the scheme owner withdraws approval of any conformity assessment body for its Scheme, the accreditation body shall reduce the scope of accreditation to exclude the relevant Scheme.

8.0 Management system requirements

A8.1 Only Option A shall be applicable

9.0 Control of records

A9.1 Record retention time shall be a minimum of five years or as per the certification scheme or regulatory requirements, whichever is less.

10.0 Internal audits

A10.1 The Internal Auditor(s) responsible for auditing the INDICOFS Certification Scheme-related accreditation activities shall have a background in sustainability and be knowledgeable about the applicable scheme(s) and standard(s). If an internal auditor with relevant competence in the INDICOFS certification scheme (e.g., sustainability experience for coffee growing) is not available, an appropriately qualified and experienced technical expert shall be part of the team.





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