



AGRICERT

"CERTIFYING THE BEST YOU HAVE,
WHEREVER YOU HAVE IT"

REGULATION

INDEX

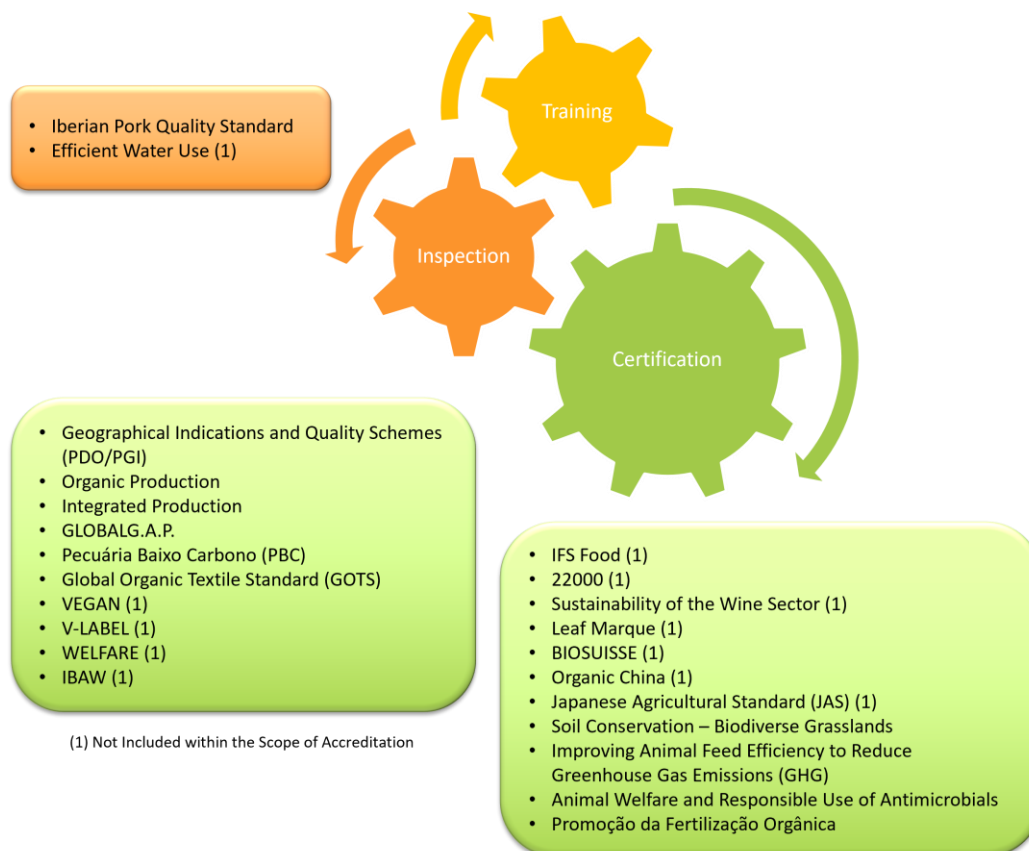
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I. INTRODUCTION

AGRICERT's main activities are training, inspection, and the control and certification of products and management systems. To this end, AGRICERT brings together a technical body with practical skills and theoretical knowledge suited to the nature of this activity.

AGRICERT is recognized as a Control Body by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, as an Inspection Body by the Junta de Extremadura, and is also recognized in the field of organic production in third countries directly by the European Commission.

AGRICERT is accredited by the Portuguese Institute for Accreditation (IPAC) for ISO 17065 under process reference C0022 and by the National Accreditation Entity (ENAC) for ISO 17020 under process reference 564/EI817.



II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

II.1. CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of information obtained during AGRICERT's activities is ensured at all levels of the organization.

Any shareholder, director, control agent, member of Committees, subcontracted persons/entities, own or external representatives providing services to or for AGRICERT, must sign a confidentiality declaration, committing to:

- 🌱 Respect the utmost confidentiality, and not disclose to any person or entity outside AGRICERT any information regarding the company's business, clients, suppliers, operations, facilities, finances, procedures, methods, or commercial and operational data, or any other aspect related to AGRICERT's activity, made known to them as a result of service provision;
- 🌱 Not use data obtained during the performance of their duties for purposes other than those defined by AGRICERT;
- 🌱 Maintain their confidentiality commitment even after the termination of their relationship with AGRICERT.

AGRICERT, in turn, guarantees full confidentiality in handling data relating to its human resources, administrative, cleaning, and security staff.

II.2 CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND IMPARTIALITY

AGRICERT ensures, at all organizational and operational levels, the absence of conflicts of interest and full impartiality. To this end, all technical staff, administrative staff, shareholders, directors, auditors, and subcontractors formally commit to:

- 🌱 Maintain the necessary independence of judgment to perform their functions with impartiality and integrity, without being involved in the design, supply, manufacturing, installation, technical direction, technical assistance, maintenance of items subject to control, or similar activities of competitors;
- 🌱 Report any situations that may potentially represent conflicts of interest or partiality due to previous or existing relationships with clients, in order to establish appropriate measures to prevent such conflicts or bias.

Whenever AGRICERT identifies or receives notice of a conflict of interest or partiality, management will analyze it according to these criteria and act to minimize the associated risks. The decisions taken will be communicated to the parties involved and duly recorded.

III. INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY COMPANIES

Operators must make available to AGRICERT all relevant information, namely the contract, declaration of changes, records of complaints, and corrective actions implemented in accordance with the applicable scheme requirements.

IV. CERTIFICATION STEPS

IV.1. APPLICATION

Applicants interested in benefiting from AGRICERT's services must contact the organization specifying the scheme or scope for which they are applying. Following the initial contact, AGRICERT will provide the application form. Applicants must provide all necessary information applicable to the scheme in question. The application is reviewed to verify that the scheme's prerequisites are met. If no impediment is found, AGRICERT will issue the annual budget. Once the applicant

confirms acceptance, the service contract will be sent, which must be signed and returned to AGRICERT.

If an impediment is identified during the application review, the operator will be informed in writing, allowing the applicant, where applicable, to take corrective/preventive measures to enable approval of their application.

Once the contract is signed, the process is assigned to a technician for the first control action.

IV.2. CONTROL ACTIONS AND OPERATOR MONITORING

Control actions are understood as all ordinary or extraordinary actions carried out by the technician to verify compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of a given scheme, such as control, inspection, audit, sampling, document verification, among others. These actions form the fundamental basis of the certification or inspection system, as they allow the verification of compliance with different production processes.

In general, operators are subject to the following audits/inspections:

Initial	Action triggered following the application
Monitoring	Action triggered to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of a given scheme, with the aim of renewing the certification documents.
Additional	Control actions, with or without prior notice, carried out within the certification cycle to consolidate the results of monitoring actions.
Extraordinary	Control actions not initially planned, carried out for investigation or to assess the implemented measures aimed at closing non-conformities.

The frequency of control actions varies depending on the scheme and is determined by the regulations or control plans applicable to each scheme. Sampling size and the incidence of additional control actions are defined by the scheme owner, in the applicable regulations or legislation.

In all control actions, the operator must provide access to documents, records, facilities, and production areas, as applicable, in order to verify compliance with the scheme requirements. Control actions must be carried out in the presence of the operator or their representative.

Following each control action, a report is provided listing all findings observed during the action. The results of the control action are archived in AGRICERT's IT system.

IV.3. ISSUANCE OR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates are issued by AGRICERT after the required control actions have been performed, attesting that the operator complies with the applicable scheme standards. This document specifies the products and/or processes in compliance with the scheme, in the name of the operator. The certificate is the property of AGRICERT and must be returned if requested.

IV.4. AMENDMENTS

The applicant is responsible for reviewing all information contained in their certificate. They have five (5) business days to request any amendment/correction. AGRICERT, in turn, has five (5) business days to make the necessary amendments.

During the validity of the certificate, the operator must inform AGRICERT of any changes likely to affect scheme requirements. It is AGRICERT's responsibility to determine whether the declared changes require additional or extraordinary control actions for the certificate to be amended.

Corrections or additions to a certificate after its issuance are registered through a modified certificate with a serial number increment, and, where applicable, a reference to the certificate it replaces.

IV.5. ACTIONS IN CASE OF NON-CONFORMITIES OR BREACHES

If a non-conformity or breach is detected during a control process, it must be communicated to the operator or their representative. All findings must be recorded in the appropriate document. At the end of the control action, the operator must receive a record of the detected non-conformities or breaches.

The measures and/or sanctions applied by AGRICERT are established in line with the guidelines of the scheme owner or the competent authority. These actions are subject to periodic review depending on changes to applicable regulations and standards.

IV.6. ANNULMENT, REDUCTION, SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATES

If a breach of scheme requirements is identified, AGRICERT will act in accordance with the legislation, regulations, or other applicable provisions that determine the measures and sanctions to be applied.

The actions to be taken may include:

- 🌿 Maintaining certification under specified AGRICERT conditions (e.g., extraordinary controls);
- 🌿 Reducing the scope of certification to remove non-compliant product variants;
- 🌿 Suspending certification pending the implementation of corrective actions by the client;
- 🌿 Withdrawing certification.

If certification is annulled (at the client's request), suspended, or withdrawn, the operator must remove all certification scheme references from labels, advertising, communications, and other public information.

Where applicable, the department head shall establish a deadline, according to scheme requirements, for products to bear scheme references.

The department head is responsible for notifying the operator of the decision and, if applicable, notifying competent authorities, scheme owners, or other relevant entities, and requesting the certificate's return in writing. The operator must also notify buyers of the product to ensure that scheme references are removed.

If sanctions applied are not complied with by the operator, AGRICERT may initiate legal proceedings and notify competent bodies. AGRICERT reserves the right to unilaterally terminate the contract with the infringing operator.

Management of certification granting, monitoring, extension, renewal, annulment, suspension, or withdrawal processes is the responsibility of the Certification Department Manager.

V. RULES FOR THE USE OF THE MARK

The right to use the certification mark is granted exclusively to organizations holding valid certification.

The certification mark must be used in accordance with the guidelines established by the Control Body and applicable standards. For more information, operators must contact AGRICERT to receive the relevant scheme information.

In the event of suspension, reduction of scope, or withdrawal of certification, the organization must immediately cease all use of the certification mark.

VI. COMPLAINTS/APPEALS

VI.1. Complaints

Complaints about AGRICERT's performance or services are considered whether received in writing or verbally.

Any staff member receiving a complaint must communicate it in writing to the Quality Manager for registration and action.

Complaints received are recorded on the complaint form available for download from AGRICERT's website.

They are subsequently analyzed by the Quality Manager and the department involved, who prepare an opinion. The reasons for the complaint and the supporting evidence are assessed. After analyzing all elements, AGRICERT decides whether or not to accept the complaint. If accepted, AGRICERT will, where necessary, take actions recorded in the complaint form, together with the date and person responsible for implementation.

The complainant is informed of the decision and any actions taken, within a maximum of 30 days.

If the decision taken by AGRICERT is not accepted, the operator/third party/individual may lodge an appeal, as described below.

Complaints concerning a company to which a certificate has been granted will only be considered if received in writing.

Operators are required to keep a record of all complaints they receive regarding product conformity. These records must be available whenever requested by the Control Body. Operators must take appropriate action regarding such complaints and any product deficiencies, documenting the corrective measures implemented.

VI.2. Appeals Committee

Any operator who disagrees with the nature of a sanction or any other decision may appeal within a maximum of 15 working days following notification. After this period, the operator is considered to have accepted the decision.

The appeal must be submitted by registered letter to the producers' association (for GI regimes), or directly to the Executive Director of AGRICERT, who will then convene the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee meets to analyze the appeal, review all procedures, and advise on whether to uphold or modify the decision. The decision will then be sent in writing within 30 working days to the producers' association (for GI regimes) or to the operator in the case of other schemes.

If AGRICERT verifies the continued use of references to the certificate, or failure to remove non-compliant products from the market, AGRICERT reserves the right to take legal action against operators and notify relevant entities, such as ASAE, competent authorities, or scheme owners.

If the operator disagrees with the new decision, they may request an opinion from the competent authority as a last resort.

The handling of appeals is a means of safeguarding and verifying AGRICERT's own quality system, highlighting its importance in the overall certification process.

The Appeals Committee is the body responsible for issuing opinions on appeals submitted by operators, which support the final decision.

Management of appeal processes is carried out by the Appeals Committee, whose members are appointed by the Executive Director.

VII. TECHNICAL AND SCHEME ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCTE)

This committee operates as a functional body of AGRICERT, with the aim of safeguarding impartiality.

It issues opinions on matters submitted by AGRICERT's Certification Manager and Executive Management.

In each Advisory Committee, the various sectors/interests relevant to the scheme in question are represented in a balanced manner.

VIII. PUBLICATIONS

On its website (www.agricert.pt), AGRICERT makes the following updated elements available:

- 🌿 Information on the authorities under which it operates;
- 🌿 List of certified products and respective operators;
- 🌿 Description of the control and certification system;
- 🌿 Standards regarding labeling;
- 🌿 Technical references for control and certification;
- 🌿 Information on the handling of complaints and appeals;
- 🌿 Other information when applicable.

IX. COSTS

Upon request by applicants/operators, AGRICERT provides the costs of its services. Costs are estimated using calculation tables that take into account different factors influencing audit time, namely: area, number of animals or crops, production sites, complexity of activities carried out, potential travel between sites, number of employees, among others.

X. ANNEX - FLOWCHART

