

GUIDANCE ON VERIFYING AUTHENTICITY OF ISO/HACCP CERTIFICATES FOR AYUSH INDUSTRY

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0. INTRODUCTION

The world market is full of private certification bodies issuing certificates to industry and it is important to distinguish an authentic certificate from many unauthentic, fake or fraudulent certificates going around.

Many Ayush producers go for ISO 9001 or ISO 22000 or even HACCP or WHO GMP certificates from private certification bodies and end up with what would be called 'unauthentic certificates' which would not stand scrutiny.

1. CONTENTS OF AN AUTHENTIC CERTIFICATE

An authentic certificate should contain the following:

- a. Name and address of the organization certified
- b. Scope of certification describing its activities under certification – e.g. production, packing and sale of ayurvedic products like(broad list of products)
- c. Standard (or sometimes scheme or regulation) against which certification is granted e.g. ISO 9001 or ISO 22000 (standard) or FSSC 22000 or IndiaHACCP (schemes) *Note: In general guidance standards are not amenable to certification – these have to be formal, requirement standards or specifications. **Codex HACCP standard is a guidance and not amenable to certification***
- d. Date of issue and expiry of certificate
- e. Unique identification number of the certificate
- f. Name and address of the certification body (CB)
- g. Logo of the certification body
- h. Accreditation symbol indicating the name of the accreditation body (AB) which has accredited the certification body (in most countries, in the absence of any law requiring certification bodies to register, Which has now become the Global Accreditation Cooperation Inc Which has now become the Global Accreditation Cooperation Inc IAF Mark – indicating that the certificate is covered under the Multilateral Mutual Recognition

Arrangement (MLA) of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), which has now become the Global Accreditation Cooperation Inc, and hence is internationally equivalent and acceptable in the market. *PI note its an optional requirement.*

2. VERIFYING AUTHENTICITY

The easiest way to verify that you have an authentic certificate is to search for it in the global directory iafcertsearch.org which maintains database of ISO 9001/ISO 14001/ISO 22000 etc certificates globally. If your certificate is not on this website, you should question your certification body.

To check the validity of ISO 9001 or ISO 22000 etc certificates, you need to follow the steps given below:

- a. Get a copy of the certificate
- b. Check the standard for which the certificate is issued – ISO 9001:2015 or ISO 22000:2018 or any other standard with the year indicated
- c. Check whether the certificate has the logo of the certification body (CB) and the accreditation body (AB). If it does not have logo of the AB, its unaccredited certificate and even if legally valid, it would not be part of international system and the certification agency is not under any oversight. **Request your certification agency to issue an accredited certificate or change your certification agency.**
- d. If the certificate carries logo of AB also, check if the AB is part of the GACI system – its name can be checked from the website global-aci.org for each country. You can also check if the AB is signatory to Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) which would make the certificate internationally equivalent. If the AB is listed there, the certificate is likely to be genuine. If not, the certificate is not authentic and seek an authentic certificate under GACI system.
- e. Check whether it carries the logo of IAF; you can find the sample image of logos in IAF website. If YES the certificate is likely to be genuine and indicates its internationally equivalent. if NO the certificate may not be internationally equivalent because the AB is not signatory to IAF MLA. Note that use of IAF Mark is optional and its absence does not necessarily mean the certificate is not internationally equivalent.
- f. All CBs are authorized to issue certificates for Standards and Scope Sectors for which they have been accredited by the respective ABs.
- g. The national AB in India is NABCB. Currently, NABCB accredits CBs for many standards, which includes ISO 9001/ISO 14001/ISO 22000 etc.

- i. Go to NABCB website and click on 'Accredited CBs and IBs';
- j. You will be able to view the list of CBs accredited by NABCB for various standards. Are you able to find the name of the CB of your interest? If YES, go to next Step; if NO go to Step.
- k. Click on the name of the CB selected and look for the following two facts:
 - i. Whether the CB is authorized to certify for Scope Sector in which your activity falls; and
 - ii. The date on the certificate issued is within the date range of 'Valid from' and 'Valid upto'
 If it meets both these conditions, the certificate is VALID.
- l. It is likely that the CB is accredited by an AB of some other country as ascertained in Step d.
- m. In such a case, go to the AB's website as given on GACI website and repeat steps j to l by clicking on the name of the CB.
- n. Each CB has to provide a means of verifying its certificates on its website – you can use the mechanism to verify that the certificate is in CB's database especially if your certificate has been issued through a franchisee of a foreign CB.
- o. Some ABs also provide a means of verifying certificates issued under their accreditation – you can check on AB website.
- p. In case you still have doubt, refer the copy of the certificate to NABCB for verification at nabcb@qcin.org. It will help you verify even from foreign AB member of GACI.

3. VERIFYING HACCP CERTIFICATE

As has been mentioned in item 1 c. in case of HACCP certificate, there has to be a standard mentioned on the certificate – **mentioning Codex HACCP is not acceptable** and accredited certificate would not be available.

There being no common international HACCP standard, in India, Quality Council of India developed an IndiaHACCP certification scheme with a proper HACCP standard and structured certification process – pl see link <https://www.qcin.org/India%20GHP%20&%20India%20HACCP.php>

NABCB provides accreditation for the scheme and it is possible to get an authentic accredited certificate for HACCP in India.

In case a certification body offers HACCP certification, pl check:

- a. to which standard it certifies; if CB is not able to specify the standard, reject it
- b. if the CB says Codex HACCP – reject it
- c. if the standard quoted is a requirement standard, go to next step
- d. if it is accredited for the quoted standard and by which AB
- e. if the AB figures in the list as at step 2.d above in GACI system
- f. if yes, pl go ahead; if not reject the CB.

Kindly note that such certificates will not carry IAF Mark in any case since there is no common international standard endorsed by IAF for HACCP exclusively.