

## CERES Policy

### Group Certification with 100% External Control

1	<b>Aims</b>	This policy establishes guidelines for group certification by CERES for organisations where CERES inspects 100% of growers externally.
2	<b>Background</b>	<p>There are clients who apply for organic certification of farmer groups, while the circumstances do not allow for a group certification as defined in our Policy 4.1.3. Such circumstances can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National legislation does not allow for group certification (e.g. Turkey)</li> <li>• The member farms are too big and do not fit in the definition of "smallholders" as explained in 4.1.3</li> <li>• The concerned crop is too risky for sample based inspections (e.g. bananas)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Normative framework</b>	
4	<b>Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Group:</b> The group can be self-organised (e.g. cooperative) or set up by a processing or trade company.</li> <li>• <b>Group certification:</b> Defined by the fact that there is only one contract.</li> <li>• <b>Certificate holder:</b> The entity to whose name the certificate is issued; should be a legal entity</li> <li>• <b>Subcontractor:</b> In the setup described in this policy, farmers are considered subcontractors of the certificate holder. For further details, see our Brief Info 3.2.36</li> </ul>
5	<b>Policy</b>	
5.1	<b>Conditions</b>	Regarding the conditions and respective reporting templates to be used, refer to WI 4.2.3.0.
5.2	<b>Contract</b>	The contract is normally signed between CERES and the group or certificate holder, while the certificate holder signs contracts with the members (see CERES document 7.4.1 for a model contract).
5.3	<b>Internal monitoring; training; responsibility</b>	<p>The procedure described here does not necessarily require a formalised internal control system (ICS, see Policy 4.1.3). However, since the certification contract is signed between CERES and the certificate holder, the latter is responsible for correct implementation of the standards by the members and must therefore monitor them.</p> <p>The certificate holder is also responsible for training member farmers. Training and monitoring must be recorded.</p>
5.4	<b>Farm inputs</b>	Preferably, the certificate holder should supply farm inputs. If members obtain inputs individually, the certificate holder must be aware of the risks, which are involved.
5.5	<b>Producer list and maps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complete, updated and transparent list of producers is one of the most essential requirements for group certification.</li> <li>• As a minimum, the list must include the following information for all farmers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete name</li> <li>○ Complete address</li> <li>○ Whole farm area</li> <li>○ Area of crop(s) to be certified</li> <li>○ Potential yield</li> <li>○ Really harvested quantities, at least for the last harvest</li> <li>○ Dates of the first and the last inspections</li> <li>○ Dates of the last use of chemical inputs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Certification status.</li> <li>● Besides, it is recommended that the producers' list is managed as a real database, including complete information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harvested and delivered quantities throughout the years</li> <li>○ Dates of all internal and external inspections performed</li> <li>○ Non-conformities, corrective actions, and their fulfilment.</li> </ul> <p>The group should establish privacy rules for access to this database. The information must be available for the certifier, but not necessarily for all group members.</p> </li> <li>● A regional map must be provided, highlighting locations of all farmers, wholesale points, storage rooms, and processing or packing units.</li> <li>● In addition, individual maps for each member must be provided.</li> </ul>
5.6	<b>Farm records</b>	<p>As opposed to producer groups with ICS, CERES requires farmers to keep basic records on farm activities, purchase of seeds and other inputs (if applicable). Sales records, waybills etc. can be kept either by the individual farmer, or by the certificate holder.</p> <p>Under NOP, a separate OMP for each farmer must be provided, if no ICS exists. Refer to WI 4.2.3.0 for more details.</p>
5.7	<b>Inspections, inspection reports</b>	<p>Inspections must cover all farms, all entities involved in post-harvest handling, and the certificate holder's office. Both individual reports for each member, and a summarised report for the group will be written.</p>
5.8	<b>Certificates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Under the EU Regulation (equivalent), only one certificate is issued</li> <li>● Under NOP, individual certificates must be issued to all farmers (as long as the group does not have a formal ICS).</li> </ul>
5.9	<b>Approval of new members</b>	<p>Only the certification body can approve new members.</p>
5.10	<b>Sanctions in case of non-compliance</b>	<p>In case of noncompliance by the members, the respective members will be sanctioned accordingly. However, when several severe non compliances occur in the group, this shows the certificate holder is not able to properly monitor subcontractors and can lead to suspension or revocation of the certificate as such.</p>
5.11	<b>Information to other CBs</b>	<p>If a member decides to leave the group and be certified individually, or join a different group certified by another certification body (CB), CERES is obliged to share relevant information with the other CB. The certificate holder cannot claim confidentiality of the information.</p>
5.12	<b>Other issues related to organic farming policies</b>	<p>For all other issues related to organic farming policies (e.g. parallel production, conversion, etc.), the respective policies for individual farmers apply, not the policy for group certification.</p>
6	<b>Related documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3.2.5.1 Brief information groups with 100% external control (Inf)</li> <li>● 3.2.36 Brief information on subcontracting (Inf)</li> <li>● 4.1.3 CERES Policy Group Certification (Pol)</li> <li>● 4.2.3.0 Which reporting format for which structure? (WI)</li> <li>● 4.2.3.5 Producer group inspections (WI)</li> <li>● 4.3.10 Crop OMP Short Version (F)</li> <li>● 4.3.15 OMP for producer groups with 100% external control (F)</li> <li>● 4.5.5 Short Inspection Report Crops (T)</li> <li>●</li> </ul>