



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

National Standard Advisory Committee Working Group Terms of Reference

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Working Group Terms of Reference

Working group for review and development of the National Standard for Organics and Bio-dynamic Produce (the National Standard).

1. Purpose

The purpose of the working group is to conduct a comprehensive review of the area specified within the members letter of engagement (specified area/s) of the National Standard, and to propose recommendations for their development and improvement.

2. Scope

The working groups scope of work shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Review the specified area/s of the formed workgroup.
- b. Identify areas for improvement based on current research, best practices, and stakeholder feedback.
- c. Ensure proposed changes are scientifically sound, practical, and acceptable to the industry.
- d. Parity and equivalence with international standards and importing country requirements.
- e. Develop recommendations for revision and enhancement, including new standards or guidelines if necessary.
- f. Provide a final report to the National Standard Advisory Committee (NSAC) on the working groups findings, recommendations, and proposed revisions.

3. Membership

The working group shall be comprised of a chairperson (member of the NSAC) and members with expertise in related fields to the specific area/s. Members should represent a broad range of perspectives and interests. The working group shall have, preferably, a minimum of 5 members.

4. Meetings

The working group shall hold regular meetings, as needed, to fulfill its duties and responsibilities. Meetings may be held in person, online, or by teleconference, depending on the availability and preferences of the members.

5. Reporting

The working group shall report its findings and recommendations to the NSAC in a timely and comprehensive manner. The final report shall include a summary of the working groups work, the proposed changes to the specified area/s and a rationale for the proposed revisions. Also, information on other issues, including unintended restrictions on trade and the reputation of the Australian organic exports industry.

6. Timeline

The working group shall complete its review and development of the specified area/s within a specified timeframe, to be determined by the NSAC and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries



and Forestry (the department). The working group should provide regular progress reports to the NSAC Chair to ensure that the work is completed in a timely and effective manner.

7. Conflict of Interest

Members of the working group must disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to the work of the working group. Conflicts of interest may include financial interests, personal relationships, or other factors that could influence the member's objectivity or impartiality. The department shall determine whether any conflicts of interest are significant enough to require the member to recuse themselves from the working groups work.

8. Resources

The NSAC and the department shall provide the necessary resources and support to enable the working group to fulfill its duties and responsibilities effectively. Resources may include administrative support, technical assistance, and access to relevant data and research.

9. Amendment

These terms of reference may be amended or revised by the NSAC or the department as needed, in consultation with the working group. Any amendments or revisions must be communicated to the working group in a timely and transparent manner.



APPENDIX A: Standard Operating Procedure

Overall, the working group should aim to conduct a thorough, transparent, and objective review of the area specified within the members letter of engagement (specified area/s) of the National Standard of Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce (the National Standard), with the goal of providing evidence-based recommendations that promote animal welfare, sustainability, and the organic and bio-dynamic farming sector's interests.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to provide guidance on how the working group will conduct its review of any specified area/s of the National Standard.

Working Group Formation:

Where the National Standards Advisory Committee (NSAC) has identified a need for a working group the NSAC will select a member to become the chairperson of that working group.

The NSAC will request authorisation from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) to form the working group and the proposed members.

The NSAC will identify appropriately qualified people to join the working group through an application process.

In forming a Working Group, the NSAC must ensure:

- a. The chairperson of the working group is to be a member of the NSAC.
- b. The chairperson of the working group is to seek nominations for potential members ensuring that the members represent a broad range of perspectives and interests and is to submit those nominations to the NSAC for approval.
- c. The working group shall have, preferably, a minimum of 5 members.

Define the Scope of the Review:

- a. Review the specified area/s in the National Standard.
- b. Identify areas for improvement in the specified area/s, based on current research, best practices, and stakeholder feedback.
- c. Develop recommendations for the revision and enhancement of the specified area/s.
- d. Consult with relevant experts, organisations, and stakeholders in the organic and bio-dynamic farming sector to ensure that the proposed changes are scientifically sound, practical, and acceptable to the industry.
- e. Communicate the proposed changes and seek feedback from the public and industry stakeholders.
- f. Provide a final report to the NSAC on the working groups findings, recommendations, and proposed revisions to the specified area/s.

Assign Roles and Responsibilities:

- a. Assign a chairperson to facilitate meetings and oversee progress.



- b. Assign specific tasks and responsibilities to each member of the group, such as research, drafting, editing, or presenting recommendations.

Set a Timeline:

- a. Establish a realistic timeline for completing the review and making recommendations.
- b. Schedule regular meetings to check progress, discuss findings, and make decisions.
- c. The chairperson is required to have the proposed timeline reviewed by the NSAC and the department.

Conduct Research and Analysis:

- a. Research best practices for organic and bio-dynamic related to the specified area/s.
- b. Analyse current regulations and standards related to the specified area/s in other countries, regions, or industries.
- c. Evaluate any research or data related to the health, welfare, and sustainability of organic and bio-dynamic practices of the specified area/s.

Draft Recommendations:

- a. Develop a draft of recommendations based on the research and analysis conducted.
- b. Ensure recommendations are clear, concise, and evidence based.

Review and Revise:

- a. Have each member of the group review the draft recommendations and provide feedback.
- b. Incorporate feedback and revise the recommendations as necessary.

Finalise Recommendations:

- a. Present the final recommendations to the NSAC and the department.
- b. Address any questions or concerns raised by the NSAC and/or the department.
- c. Submit the final recommendations for approval and implementation.

Evaluate and Improve:

- a. Monitor the implementation and impact of the recommended revisions to the specified area/s of the National Standard.
- b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the review process and identify areas for improvement in future reviews.

Amend the SOP:

- a. These terms of reference may be amended or revised by the NSAC and/or the department as needed, in consultation with the working group/s.
- b. Any amendments or revisions must be communicated to the working group in a timely and transparent manner.