

Dear GLOBALG.A.P. scheme manager,

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1 TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

This technical communication is uploaded to the GLOBALG.A.P. document center and the CB Extranet. It is also sent to the scheme managers of each approved and provisionally approved certification body (CB), to the technical committees, to the hosts of the national technical working groups, to the GLOBALG.A.P. Advisory Board, to accreditation bodies that have signed a memorandum of understanding, and to all benchmarked scheme and checklist owners. You can ask us to add selected persons to the mailing list or to send these technical news releases to all your registered staff by sending your request to Valentin Pazachev at pazachev@globalgap.org.

Several of the chapters included have been previously communicated to you and have been added with little or no changes. These are marked with *Previously communicated: XX Month XXXX*. Chapters with new information have been marked with (New) next to the title.

2 INTEGRATED FARM ASSURANCE

2.1 Integrated Farm Assurance version 6 updates (New)

Obligatory date

We hereby remind you that the obligatory date for Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) version 6 is 1 January 2024. This obligatory date is linked to the audit date.

The last possible audit date for the IFA v5.2 subscopes fruit and vegetables, flowers and ornamentals, and hops, and the aquaculture scope is 31 December 2023. The IFA v6 GFS obligatory date will be communicated as soon as this edition is Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) recognized. IFA v5.4-1-GFS will remain valid until the end of a transition period after IFA v6 GFS is GFSI-recognized.

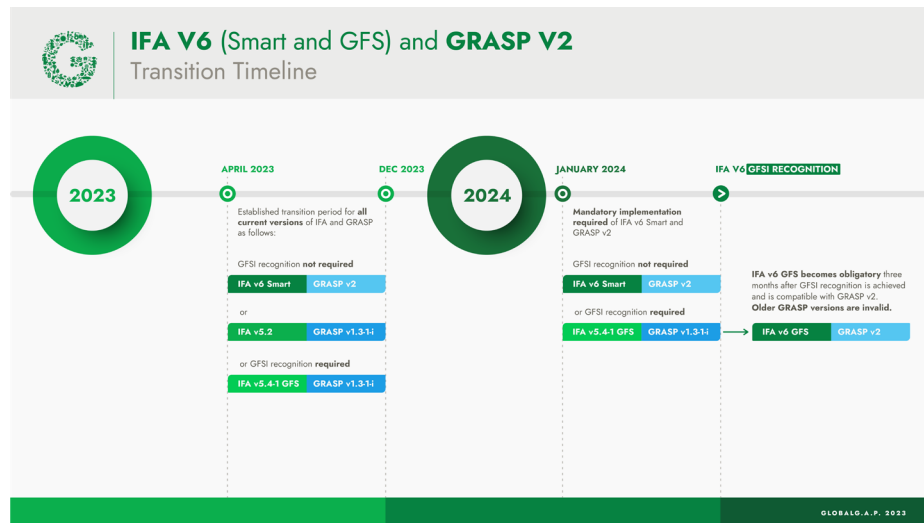
The IFA v5.2 subscopes plant propagation material and combinable crops will remain valid and CB audits may be conducted against them after 1 January 2024.

The IFA v6 product categories plant propagation material and combinable crops have entered their public consultation periods. The first public consultation period for IFA v6 for plant propagation material and IFA v6 for combinable crops closed on 17 March 2023. The second public consultation period for these product categories is scheduled to run from 31 July to 22 September 2023.

We kindly ask you to review the new normative documents and add your comments.

IFA v6 for tea will be published at a later date. IFA for livestock will be phased out as communicated in TN 03/2022.

The following is an updated timeline for IFA v6:



Adding products, producer group members and/or production sites to existing IFAv5.2 certificates

Where the purpose is the extension or maintenance of an existing valid IFA v5.2 certificate, further CB audits against this version will be allowed after 1 January 2024 in the following situations:

- When adding additional products to the certificate of a producer certified to IFA v5.2
- When adding new producer group members and/or production sites to the certificate of an Option 2 producer group/Option 1 multisite producer with a quality management system (QMS) certified to IFA v5.2 (whether above or below the 10% threshold for adding new producer group members/production sites before requiring further CB audits)

Regarding initial CB audits where there is no existing valid IFA v5.2 certificate: No CB audits against this version will be allowed after 1 January 2024.

Extension of IFA v5.2 certificates for certificate holders that register for IFA v6 for the next growing cycle

If a certificate holder requests an extension for their existing valid IFA v5.2 certificate and wants to register for IFA v6 for the next growing cycle, the CB may extend the IFA v5.2 certificate in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

When the IFA v6 certificate is issued via Validation Service, the IFA v5.2 certificate validity shall be shortened in the GLOBALG.A.P. database. To do this, CBs shall contact customer_support@globalgap.org to de-accept the IFA v5.2 cycle in the GLOBALG.A.P. database once the IFA v6 certificate has been issued.

We suggest collecting the GLOBALG.A.P. Numbers (GGNs) of as many of your clients that need to be de-accepted as possible and sending the list to the above email address as an Excel file with the following data:

- GGN
- Product ID
- Scheme ID

The new IFA v6 certificate shall have a validity of 12 months, minus the extension period granted for the IFA v5.2 certificate, meaning that the new IFA v6 certificate shall have the same valid to date with the IFA v5.2 certificate. The IFA v5.2 extension fees will only be credited once this process is complete.

This process also applies to certificate holders with existing valid IFA v5.4-1-GFS certificates that are registering for IFA v6 Smart or IFA v6 GFS for the next growing cycle.

Add-on review

We are currently working to align our add-ons with IFA v6 (with the exception of the GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP) version 2 and the GLOBALG.A.P. Farm Sustainability Assessment (GGFSA) version 3, which have already been aligned and are available). We plan to release the new versions of the add-ons soon and make them all obligatory from 1 January 2024. This obligatory date is linked to the audit date.

In-house trainers

As already communicated, all already approved and new in-house trainers (IHTs) shall attend a full IHT training per scope (online or in person) and pass the respective test. The deadline for IHTs to become trained is *31 December 2023*.

QMS auditors

All new and approved CB QMS auditors shall attend QMS auditor training (online or in person) and pass the test by *31 December 2023*. All already approved CB QMS auditors shall attend an update QMS auditor training, and new CB QMS auditors shall attend a full CB QMS auditor training before conducting their first QMS audit against IFA v6. Please bear in mind that update QMS auditor trainings will *only be offered* by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat until the end of 2023.

Correction in the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – rules for certification bodies, section 5.2 d) on QMS auditor training:

We hereby communicate a correction to this section. Because of a mistake, it currently reads:

“All previously approved CB QMS auditors carrying out QMS audits for version 6 shall pass a QMS auditor version 6 training and test *once it is available in their working language*.”

The text should read:

“All already approved CB QMS auditors shall attend an update QMS auditor training, and new CB QMS auditors shall attend a full CB QMS auditor training and pass the respective test (in one of the available languages) before conducting their first QMS audit against IFA v6.”

As already mentioned, update QMS auditor trainings will only be offered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat until 31 December 2023.

Farm auditors (inspectors)

CB farm auditors (previously called inspectors) shall complete the necessary GLOBALG.A.P. farm auditor online tests for the *relevant scope within three months* of their release in their working language. The working languages are triggered by registration in CB-AT.

The languages in which the CB farm auditor online tests are currently available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy for IFA v6 and in which the CB farm auditor tests are available after CB farm auditor training are:

Training product	Languages
IFA v6 for plants CB farm auditor online test	English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Greek, Portuguese, Dutch, Chinese, Polish
IFA v6 for aquaculture CB farm auditor online test	English, Spanish
CB QMS auditor tests (proctored test taken after the CB QMS auditor training)	English, Spanish

2.2 GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines – quick-start package for producers (New)

Version 1.0-1 of the GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines was published on 4 July 2022 and became obligatory for all stakeholders, excluding producers, from 1 June 2023. Producers will be required to convert to the new trademarks policy when they officially transition to IFA v6.

As one of the normative documents for IFA v6, the trademarks policy stipulates that producers shall have their compliance with the trademark rules checked by CBs as part of their first, and all future, IFA v6 audits or audits against other *new* standard versions.

To assist CBs in their support of producers, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat developed a package of information that can be shared in parts or in whole to guide producers in their transition to the new trademarks policy.

This package can be found on the CB Extranet, and includes the following:

- The complete GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines
- Producer quick start guide (new)
 - Communicates the key aspects of the trademarks policy in a condensed format
- The GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines FAQ (new)
 - Provides answers to the questions that we have most frequently been asked by industry stakeholders since the launch of the trademarks policy
- The GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks (logo, GLOBALG.A.P. word image)
 - Note that the trademarks shall only be provided to producers following their transition to IFA v6 (or other new standard versions). A complete package containing all the GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks can be found on the CB Extranet.

2.3 GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines – amendment to sections 5.3 and 5.4 (New)

The seals for benchmarked scheme or checklist owners now reference the *version of the GLOBALG.A.P. standard* to which the scheme or checklist has been benchmarked, instead of the year. The GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use: policy and guidelines will be updated at a later date. The name of the benchmarked scheme or checklist owner shall be listed in the boilerplate text that shall always accompany the seal.

2.4 Deadline for accreditation for IFA v6 Smart

Previously communicated on 3 May 2022

As previously communicated in TN 02/2022, CBs will need to get accreditation for IFA v6 at scope level. CBs shall be accredited for IFA v6 Smart by 31 December 2023 at the latest.

If not, after January 2024, the CBs will remain “provisionally approved” and will be allowed to issue a limited number of nonaccredited certificates (to a maximum of 20 producers per scope) starting the calculation from that date.

Both the IFA v6 Smart and IFA v6 GFS editions require accreditation, but both can be achieved in one audit. Accreditation body (AB) witness audits for IFA v6 GFS will also cover IFA v6 Smart.

The GLOBALG.A.P. general regulation state:

“In the case of version updates (e.g., v6.1 to v6.2) or in case of new versions (e.g., v6 to v7) the CB shall demonstrate that changes have been implemented, for example by providing the AB with a gap analysis, evidence of CB auditor training to the new version, copies of amended procedures, and an internal audit report. The AB shall assess the adequacy of these materials prior to granting an update to the accreditation schedule. The AB conducts a CB witness audit following the AB’s own assessment cycle. A new CB office assessment and/or new witness assessment is not a precondition for [the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat to grant] an update to the accreditation schedule.”

The certificates issued by the CB will be accredited or nonaccredited depending on each AB’s process. CBs shall consult their AB about this. Some ABs ask for evidence to be submitted about how the changes in the new version are addressed, evaluate this evidence, and allow the CB to issue accredited certificates. Other ABs, however, consider all certificates nonaccredited until the full assessment process has been finalized. Please note that nonaccredited certificates shall *not* have an accreditation mark.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will allow CBs that are provisionally approved for IFA v6 Smart to issue an unlimited number of nonaccredited certificates for IFA v6 Smart.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will allow CBs already approved for IFA v5.4-1-GFS to issue an unlimited number of nonaccredited certificates for IFA v6 GFS.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat does not require a new office assessment from the AB as a precondition for the CB’s accreditation for IFA v6.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat will be applying for International Accreditation Forum (IAF) evaluation. The IAF mark *cannot* appear on the certificate until the IAF evaluation has been successfully completed.

2.5 IFA v6 in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems

Previously communicated on 6 April 2023 and on 4 May 2023

We recently introduced our new GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems to support the implementation of IFA v6 and the associated add-ons.

To ensure a smooth transition to the new GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems, we offered all CBs a GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems training. This training is *mandatory* for CB scheme managers and/or CB IHTs. Optionally, one additional user per CB (e.g., CB administrator or IT personnel) who will be working with the new GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems may also attend.

This training is free of charge for up to two participants per CB. Additional participants (max. one person per CB) will be charged €125.

The training sessions are offered in English, Spanish, German, and Italian.

The following sessions are still available for booking:

Date	Time (UTC+2)	Time zone	Language	Registration link
29/8/23	9:00 a.m.–3:45 p.m.	UTC+2	Italian	https://t.ly/SKRK
6/9/23	9:00 a.m.–3:45 p.m.	UTC+2	Italian	https://t.ly/iRha

The aim of this training is to introduce you to the new GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and demonstrate their functionalities.

Please note:

To allow all participants to be able to practice during the training sessions, we request all participants to log in to Beta Audit Online Hub (AOH) and Beta Validation Service using their GLOBALG.A.P. training database credentials prior to the training. If you have not received your login credentials, please contact your scheme manager.

If a participant is not a qualified auditor, e.g., CB assistants or administrators, their company administrator must invite them as a CB assist (name and email address) and assign them the AOH role “Auditor/Assessor/CB assist (only for Smart audits)” to grant them sufficient access to Beta AOH.

Follow the change password procedure to activate the account.

Once they have been invited using the above process, the CB assist can create a new Smart audit and assign auditor(s), a reviewer, and certification committee members as registered for the respective CB. The CB assist can conduct the audit up to the status "Audit done, pending results" after which the reviewer needs to take over, review, and change to the next status.

After the training, CBs will be able to complete the Smart audit process for an IFA v6 audit in AOH and issue an IFA v6 certificate in Validation Service.

The training covers the following scenarios:

- Option 1 individual producers:
 - Registering sites and product handling units (PHUs) in Validation Service (via web interface and Excel upload sheet),
 - Recording an audit in AOH (via web interface and Excel upload sheet)
 - Registering all audit information (auditor, audit type, standard version, product, company data, audit details, travel distance, duration, sites audited, etc.)
 - Creating customized checklists
 - Registering GRASP related information
 - Filling out IFA and GRASP checklists online and offline (how to download and upload)
 - Recording non-conformances
 - Closing non-conformances
 - Making certification decisions
 - Creating audit reports
 - Sharing audit reports
 - Issuing IFA v6 certificates and GRASP letters of conformance via Validation Service

- Option 2 producer groups (in addition to the above):
 - Adding producer group members in Validation Service
 - Recording in AOH:
 - Residue monitoring systems (RMS)
 - Producer group member information
 - Creating multi-reports

2.6 CB QMS auditor approval for IFA v5 (New)

While we are in the transition period before IFA v6 becomes obligatory, some CBs are seeking to qualify new CB QMS auditors for IFA v5. Those CB QMS auditors seeking IFA v5 approval shall register and attend the full IFA v6 CB QMS auditor training and pass the proctored CB QMS auditor test for IFA v6.

Once they have passed the test, they shall contact the CB Admin team (cb_admin@globalgap.org) to achieve approval in the GLOBALG.A.P. database as a CB QMS auditor for IFA v5 auditor as well, as we no longer offer IFA v5 training.

2.7 Reminder regarding audit sampling rules for Option 2 producer groups/Option 1 multisite producers with QMS following a CB transfer (New)

We hereby remind CBs about the rules that apply when an Option 2 producer group or an Option 1 multisite producer with QMS transfers to a new CB. The sample to audit during the subsequent CB audit cannot be reduced in this case. At least the square root of the actual number of registered producer group members/production sites shall be audited. This rule applies to legal entities registered for IFA v5 and/or IFA v6.

2.8 CB training on the RMS checklist v6 (New)

In the framework of the IFA v6 Smart and IFA v6 GFS principles and criteria (P&Cs) for plants, the producer has the option to participate in an RMS audited by a CB. The producer complies with the P&Cs referring to residue analysis by participating in an audited RMS. RMS participation is available for all IFA v6 certification options:

- Option 1 single site producers and multisite producers with or without QMS
- Option 2 producer groups

In AOH, the RMS P&Cs are integrated into the QMS checklist and will be available to the CB auditor by default. If a producer group does not operate an RMS for its members, the CB auditor can mark the RMS section as N/A in the checklist.

If the RMS is operated by an independent service provider, the RMS checklist shall be registered in AOH.

As communicated in TN 04/2022, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat has published the RMS checklist for IFA v6, which will become obligatory on 1 January 2024.

We hereby inform CBs that we have developed a *self-paced training for the RMS checklist v6*. This training is currently available in English and will soon be available in Spanish too.

This is an optional training for CB IHTs and CB auditors to help them better understand the rules, definitions, and sampling levels. The training is free of charge and CB auditors/IHTs can access it through the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy by registering with their credentials.

2.9 IFA standard for livestock announcement (New)

Following TN 03/2022 and our decision to discontinue the IFA standard for livestock, we would like to inform you about the status of the process we initiated to connect the companies that have been using this standard with a solution which aims at offering continuity.

Following the communication of our decision, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat initiated a process in which several companies offered alternatives for livestock producers and other stakeholders who are interested in continuing with a certification based on the principles of IFA.

This process included collecting information about the various companies and their proposals, and discussing their projects with them.

At the end of this process, the decision was made to connect our livestock stakeholders with the initiative offered by DEFHESA (<https://defhesa.org>), who will offer a product that is similar to IFA.

DEFHESA is an association of companies and professionals representing all stages of the livestock supply chain that has the objective of promoting the sustainable production of livestock products (meat, dairy) by joining efforts and aligning them with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Since the decision was made, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and DEFHESA have been working on designing the next steps to help livestock stakeholders learn more about this initiative and the opportunity to become involved in it.

DEFHESA has also been preparing a plan to facilitate the transition to the new system for those producers interested in continuing with the certification of their production processes beyond 2023. This plan will be communicated by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and DEFHESA in a timely manner.

In the meantime, we confirm that certification to IFA for livestock will remain possible until 31 December 2023 and that all certificates issued this year will have a validity of 12 months.

In addition to the current GLOBALG.A.P. communication channels, DEFHESA has created a customer support email address to solve any question about the transition process, the future of the standard, and capacity building needs: customersupport@globalslp.org (Global S.L.P. (Smart Livestock Practices): www.globalslp.org)

2.10 About structural and nonstructural findings (New)

We hereby communicate to CBs clarifications about the concept of structural and nonstructural findings. This is not only related to GLOBALG.A.P. standards and add-ons, but to all QMSs, and is independent of the compliance levels for P&Cs/control points and compliance criteria (CPCCs) (Major Must, Minor Must, Recommendation).

Structural finding: A non-compliance/non-conformance is identified repeatedly among several producer group members/production sites sampled during CB farm audits.

The CB auditor identifies that a systematic implementation problem exists and further investigation of the QMS is needed. This may or may not lead to a non-conformance being raised for QMS P&Cs/CPCCs, depending on the results of the CB auditor's investigation.

When a structural non-conformance exists, corrective actions shall be implemented by:

- All producer group members
- A greater number of producer members than those where the negative findings were detected
- Or other producer group members than those where the negative findings were detected

If a non-compliance is repeatedly detected, but it is under 5%, it may remain open.

Nonstructural finding: This is nonsystematic non-compliance/non-conformance and is identified in specific producer group members/production sites. Corrective actions are related to the producer group member/production site that was audited.

2.11 Clarification for IFA v6 for flowers and ornamentals: P&C FO 04.03.04 (New)

This P&C has three requirements:

- a) At least 10% by volume of substrates used in production are alternatives to peat.
- b) The producer has a plan to continuously reduce the amount of peat used.
- c) The producer has a plan to use only peat that comes from responsible sources.

Clarification: Requirement c) “a plan to use only peat originating from responsible sources,” is clarified in the criteria and specifies that responsible sources means certified “grown under certification.”

An example of such certification is Responsibly Produced Peat (RPP). In countries where such certification schemes are not available, this specific requirement c) will be N/A.

2.12 Clarification of CB inspector/farm auditor and CB QMS auditor witness (New)

This is a clarification about the situation of CB inspectors/farm auditors or CB QMS auditor witnesses during their sign-off process. In these audits (or inspections) the qualified CB inspector/farm auditor/QMS auditor who conducts the witness audit is *still* responsible for this audit. This person’s name shall therefore be registered as the responsible CB inspector/auditor for the respective CB inspection/audit in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. This applies for all GLOBALG.A.P. standards and add-ons where witnessing is required during the sign-off process.

2.13 Transition tool for IFA v5.4-1-GFS to IFA v6 GFS now available (New)

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat has created a transition tool to ensure a seamless transition to IFA v6

We are pleased to announce the launch of the IFA v6 transition tool for the aquaculture scope and the fruit and vegetables product category, a checklist designed to facilitate a smooth transition from previous versions of IFA to IFA v6. This valuable resource will assist producers in aligning their current programs with the updated requirements outlined in the latest version of the standard. We aim to provide CBs with essential information about this tool to support their clients in the certification process.

What is the IFA V6 transition tool?

The IFA v6 transition tool serves as a support tool for producers as they navigate the transition to IFA v6. By mapping the requirements in IFA v5 and IFA v6 side by side, this checklist enables producers to identify gaps in their current programs and make necessary adjustments. It provides a percentage breakdown of the Major Must, Minor Must, and Recommendation CPCCs/P&Cs based on the user’s responses, helping producers understand the areas that require attention during the transition process. It is important to note that this tool is intended to complement other supporting documents and is not designed to be a comprehensive training tool for all aspects of IFA v6.

Other IFA v6 supporting documents

To familiarize yourself with the changes and updates in IFA v6, we recommend visiting the [IFA v6 web page](#) and reviewing the [Summary of changes: IFA v5 to v6](#) as well as the presentation titled [IFA v6: What’s new?](#) These resources provide a high-level overview of the changes introduced in the latest version of the standard, ensuring a better understanding of the transition process.

What the transition tool is *not*

It is important to clarify that the use of the IFA v6 transition tool is *not* obligatory. While it displays aligned requirements side-by-side, it does not provide a comprehensive and detailed list of all the specific changes and differences between the versions. Additionally, it does not highlight specific differences in the requirements. The tool's primary purpose is to assist producers in aligning their current programs with the new requirements and identifying areas of improvement during the transition process.

How can the transition tool be used?

Producers preparing for IFA v6 audits or still undergoing audit cycles under IFA v5.2 or IFA v5.4-1-GFS can leverage the tool to ensure a smooth transition. During internal audits, producers can use the tool to respond to the upcoming requirements of IFA v6, identify gaps in their current programs, and take corrective actions to align with the new version. CBs are encouraged to inform their clients directly about the availability of this tool to facilitate a seamless transition.

The IFA v6 transition tool will soon be available in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center. We believe that this tool will be an invaluable resource for producers in their journey towards IFA v6 certification.

3 PRODUCE HANDLING ASSURANCE VERSION 1.2

3.1 Validation Service currently not available for PHA

Previously communicated on 23 March 2023

Validation Service will temporarily not allow Produce Handling Assurance (PHA) certificates to be generated, starting *26 April 2023*. The certificate generation process and the certificate templates will be updated during this time.

Why are these changes occurring?

IFA v6 Smart and IFA v6 GFS were launched in Validation Service this year. With the introduction of IFA, the workflow for issuing PHA certificates needs to be changed. It is therefore necessary to redesign the PHA certificate to better fit the IFA structure and simplify the user experience. This will also fix some existing issues. We will disable certificate generation and make it available again once development and testing are complete.

We are delighted to share that PHA v1.2 will have a professional upgrade for PDF certificates sent to clients, including some bug fixes.

What happens next?

We will inform you of the exact date on which Validation Service will be available for certificate generation as soon as we know, however, we may not know in advance. If certificate generation is necessary in the meantime, the CB may choose to issue a paper certificate using the template provided in the PHA v1.2 general regulations. The CB shall ensure that the date of certification decision is recorded, either by entering the report and date of certification decision in AOH or by keeping internal records. The CB shall also ensure that all PHA certificates issued as paper certificates during this maintenance period are entered in Validation Service *no later than one month* after the system is restored.

We understand the inconvenience that this system maintenance will cause, however, we feel confident that the system will perform better and that CBs, companies, and the supply chains will be much more satisfied with the final certificates for PHA and IFA.

4 GLOBALG.A.P. CHAIN OF CUSTODY

4.1 GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody version 6.1 obligatory since 1 July 2023

Previously communicated on 13 March 2023

GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody (CoC) version 6.1 was published in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center on 8 November 2022. CoC v6.1 became obligatory on *1 July 2023*. *All CoC audits shall be conducted against CoC v6.1 from 1 July 2023.*

CBs were kindly requested to inform their clients that upcoming audits shall be conducted against CoC v6.1 from 1 July 2023. Companies shall use the new CoC v6.1 checklist for their self-assessments.

All CBs and CB auditors approved for CoC v6.0 are allowed to conduct CoC v6.1 audits. No extra training is required.

CoC IHTs shall internally train their approved CoC auditors in the changes in CoC v6.1 using the edition update register. Evidence of the internal training shall be available during any integrity assessment.

Existing CoC IHTs are not obliged to attend a new CoC v6.1 training but may attend voluntarily.

Temporary exceptions for companies seeking CoC certification as communicated in [TN 04/2022](#) will be phased out by 31 December 2023. You can find more information [here](#).

5 PRODUCE SAFETY ASSURANCE STANDARD

We hereby inform you that the Produce Safety Assurance standard will be phased out by the end of 2023, as soon as IFA v6 Smart becomes obligatory. This date is linked to the audit date, so the last possible audit date for the Produce Safety Assurance standard is 31 December 2023. All already issued certificates will remain valid until their expiry date.

6 ADD-ON-RELATED UPDATES

6.1 Add-on phase-in for IFA v6: release of the updated version of three add-ons

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat decided to release add-ons in a phase-in process before the obligatory date for IFA v6 Smart, 1 January 2024 (with the exception of GRASP and GGFSa that have already been released). Add-ons may be released in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center before they are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and will be available for training before December 2023. This will allow a smoother CB and producer onboarding to all of the revised add-ons, facilitate IHT and CB internal auditor training sessions for implementation, and give CBs the opportunity to adjust to the new rules and documents. All new add-ons used in combination with IFA v6 will follow the same Smart IT process as IFA v6, no separate process training or implementation is required. The add-ons will be released in “packages” a few at a time. Today, we inform you that two add-ons that must be used in combination with IFA v6 are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center:

AH-DLL GROW v3.1 (see below for details)

Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) add-on version 2 (see below for details)

The obligatory date for all the add-on versions on this list is 1 January 2024 when used in combination with IFA v6 Smart. However, for producers with production processes certified to IFA v5.4-1-GFS, the current versions of add-ons, such as FSMA PSR add-on v1.3, will be available in combination with IFA v5.4-1-GFS until IFA v6 GFS achieves GFSI-recognition.

Following the GFSI-recognition of IFA v6 GFS and a short transition period, it will be obligatory to use the new add-on version in combination with IFA v6 GFS.

6.1.1 AH-DLL GROW version 3.1 (New)

In the context of the continued cooperation between the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and retailers Albert Heijn (AH) and Delhaize (DLL), the GROW add-on has been reviewed.

GROW v3.1 (scheme ID 334) is valid from 27 July 2023 and will become obligatory for IFA v6 Smart audits from *1 January 2024* and for IFA v6 GFS as soon as IFA v6 GFS is GFSI-recognized and becomes obligatory.

GROW v3.1 can be combined with IFA v6 Smart/GFS for fruit and vegetables as the base standard. The normative documents are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center.

GROW v3.1 will be released in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems (AOH and Validation Service) in Q3 2023.

What action must be taken?

1. Notify your clients

Please inform your clients that upcoming GROW audits that are conducted together with audits against IFA v6 Smart/GFS for fruit and vegetables shall be conducted using GROW v3.1 and that they shall use the new checklist and forms for self-assessments.

2. About GROW v3.1 CB auditor and IHT training

In addition to the IFA for plants CB auditor qualifications, CB auditors require training in order to be able to conduct audits against GROW.

a) CBs previously approved for GROW v3.0

All CBs currently approved for GROW v3.0 will be automatically approved for GROW v3.1. CB auditors and IHTs already approved for GROW v3.0 shall successfully complete and pass an update online test, without any update/new training offered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. This online test shall be conducted *within one month* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the CB auditor.

b) New CBs: IHT training requirements

New CBs seeking GROW v3.1 approval shall be finally approved CBs for IFA v6.

The CB's IHTs shall successfully pass the online test after attending the GROW v3.1 IHT training offered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat. The IHTs shall train the relevant CB auditors in this add-on who shall then complete and pass the online test as offered by the applicable GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. This online test shall be conducted *within three months* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the CB auditor.

If a CB auditor fails the test twice, they shall retake the test in a proctored setting. If they fail the test a third time, the CB auditor shall attend a GROW v3.1 IHT training and pass the respective test.

CB auditors and IHTs can search for all the available CB trainings in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy by registering with their credentials.

3. What is new in GROW v3.1?

While the content of GROW v3.1 is similar to GROW v3.0, the structure of the checklist and annex has changed.

Changes to the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations specifications:

- The specifications have been adapted to the new add-on template.
- The specifications have been aligned with GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations version 6.
- The general wording has been improved for added clarification and a clearer understanding of the rules.
- More specific requirements have been included, e.g., rules on parallel ownership and compliance requirements.
- The group certification requirements no longer require producer group members that require GROW to conduct a self-assessment. An internal audit is sufficient.
- The same CB shall conduct the audit against the base standard and GROW.

Changes to the checklists:

- The modules have been restructured to include a total of five GROW modules, as the previous requirements are now included in two new separate modules.
- The forms are now included directly in the checklist.
- The IFA “control points and compliance criteria” have been renamed “principles and criteria”.
- The wording has been improved to make requirements clearer.

Changes to the annex:

- Readability has been improved by adding all products and their risk classifications per module into one list creating a matrix.

6.1.2 New FSMA PSR add-on v2 (New)

The FSMA PSR add-on v2 is valid from 27 July 2023 and will become obligatory for IFA v6 Smart audits from *1 January 2024* and for IFA v6 GFS as soon as IFA v6 GFS is GFSI-recognized and becomes obligatory.

The FSMA PSR add-on v2 can be combined with IFA v6 Smart/GFS for fruit and vegetables as the base standard. The normative documents are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center in English and Spanish.

The release of the FSMA PSR add-on v2 in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems (AOH and Validation Service) is planned for Q4 2023.

What actions must be taken?

1. Notify your clients

Please inform your clients that upcoming FSMA PSR add-on audits that are conducted together with IFA v6 Smart/GFS for fruit and vegetables audits shall be conducted using the FSMA PSR add-on v2 and that they shall use the new checklist and forms for self-assessments.

2. About FSMA PSR v2 CB auditor and IHT training

In addition to the IFA for plants CB auditor qualifications, CB auditors require training in order to be able to conduct audits against the FSMA PSR add-on.

a) IHTs previously approved for the FSMA PSR add-on v1.3

All CBs currently approved for FSMA PSR add-on v1.3 will be automatically approved for FSMA PSR add-on v2. CBs shall send their FSMA PSR add-on IHT(s) to the FSMA PSR add-on v2 IHT training offered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and the IHT(s) shall successfully complete and pass the online test for FSMA PSR add-on v2. This online test shall be conducted *within one month* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the IHT. IHTs can search for all available CB trainings in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy by registering with their credentials.

b) CB auditors previously approved for the FSMA PSR add-on v1.3

All CB auditors currently approved for the FSMA PSR add-on v1.3 shall be trained by the IHT and successfully complete and pass the online test for the FSMA PSR add-on v2. This online test shall be conducted *within one month* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the CB auditor.

c) New CBs: IHT and CB auditor training requirements

The CB's IHT(s) shall attend the FSMA PSR add-on v2 IHT training offered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and successfully complete and pass the online test for the FSMA PSR add-on v2. This online test shall be conducted *within three months* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the CB auditor. The IHT shall train the relevant CB auditors in this add-on who shall then complete and pass the online test as offered by the applicable GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. This online test shall be conducted *within three months* of it becoming available in the GLOBALG.A.P. CB Academy in the working language of the CB auditor.

If a CB auditor fails the test twice, they shall retake the test in a proctored setting. If they fail the test a third time, the CB auditor shall attend an FSMA PSR add-on v2 IHT training and pass the respective test.

Failure to attend the new IHT training for the FSMA PSR add-on v2 will result in the CB being blocked in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and they will not be able to conduct audits against the FSMA PSR add-on v2.

For new CBs:

CBs not yet approved for the FSMA PSR add-on may apply by uploading a signed letter of intent to CB-AT. A precondition for approval is that the CB shall have final approval for IFA v6 for fruit and vegetables and submit evidence of Produce Safety Alliance training for at least one person who has completed the 16-hour PSA training for trainers (IHT for the FSMA PSR add-on) or two persons who have completed the 8-hour PSA grower training (at least one shall be the IHT for the FSMA PSR add-on). These persons shall also have the auditor qualifications for IFA v6 GFS for fruit and vegetables and at least one of these persons (or at least one person on the decision-making committee) shall have the CB QMS auditor qualifications required to make certification decisions. The annual CB scope extension fee applies.

3. What is new in the FSMA PSR add-on v2?

While the content of the FSMA PSR add-on v2 is similar to the FSMA PSR add-on v1.3, the structure of the checklist and annex has changed.

Changes to the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations specifications:

- The specifications have been adapted to the new add-on template.
- The specifications have been aligned with GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations version 6.
- The general wording has been improved for added clarification and a clearer understanding of the rules.
- More specific requirements have been included, e.g., rules on parallel ownership and sampling for QMS audits.
- References to the mid-cycle checklist have been removed.

Changes to the checklists:

- The IFA “control points and compliance criteria” have been renamed “principles and criteria”.
- The wording has been improved to make requirements clearer.
- More specific requirements have been included, e.g., handwashing.

Changes to the annex:

- The annex has been removed from the principles and criteria and is available in a separate *obligatory* guidance document.

4. When will the FSMA PSR add-on v2 be available in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems?

The FSMA PSR add-on v2 will be released for use in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems (AOH and Validation Service) in Q4 2023 (first in the beta system and then live).

6.2 GRASP clarifications (New)

Clarification for GRASP v2, P&C G3

We hereby communicate a correction to GRASP v2, P&C G3. In order to align this P&C with the requirement for self-assessment as it reads in the GRASP v2 general rules, section 6.1 c), the text of this P&C will be changed to:

“The self-assessment/internal GRASP assessment shall have been completed before the CB external assessment and during *a time when the number of workers present is representative of the labor hired during the year/production cycle (especially subcontracted and seasonal labor) and agricultural activities are taking place (e.g., during peak season or harvesting).*”

GRASP audit timing

We would like to clarify that the GRASP v2 QMS audit shall be conducted before the CB farm audits of the producer group members/production sites. The GRASP assessment of the central PHUs shall be conducted while they are in operation, any time before/during/after the CB farm audits.

IFA v5.4-1-GFS together with GRASP v1.3-1-i

As previously communicated, IFA v6 Smart and GRASP v2 will become obligatory from 1 January 2024. IFA v5.4-1-GFS will continue to be valid after 1 January 2024, until IFA v6 GFS becomes GFSI-recognized.

During this recognition period, the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat decided *to only allow* IFA v5.4-1-GFS audits to be conducted together with GRASP v1.3-1-i. CBs shall continue to upload the GRASP v1.3-1-i checklist to the GLOBALG.A.P. database to issue a GRASP proof of assessment.

GRASP exception for IFA v6 for aquaculture is phased out

In TN 03/2022 we announced that IFA v6 for aquaculture audits could be combined with GRASP v.1.3-1-i, because GRASP v2 was not yet available in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems. GRASP v2 is now available in AOH.

The exception that allowed CBs to use GRASP v.1.3-1-i together with IFA v6 for aquaculture therefore *no longer applies*.

6.3 Nurture Module clarifications (New)

Transition period for audits against Nurture Module version 11.3

As previously communicated in TN 01/2023, Nurture Module v11.4 shall be used for CB assessments from 1 April 2023. CBs may conduct extension, surveillance, and unannounced assessments against Nurture v11.3 until the end of the validity of existing certificates. CBs may also make certification decisions for regular assessments against Nurture v11.3 after 1 April 2023 if the assessment was conducted before 1 April 2023.

Minimum requested CB key performance indicators for the Nurture Module

We hereby inform you that Tesco has revised the minimum criteria for new and currently approved CBs for the Nurture Module:

The overall key performance indicator score has been changed and shall be above 4.00. This change shall become applicable starting immediately for new CBs.

For all approved CBs, the Nurture Governance Committee will review their updated key performance indicators after their next release.

6.4 When can the FSMA PSR add-on v1.3 be combined with IFA v5.2?

The FSMA PSR add-on v1.3 may be combined with IFA v5.2, but *only* in exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic requiring remote audits. Please bear in mind that remote audits are not feasible for IFA v5.4-1-GFS.

6.5 GLOBALG.A.P. Farm Sustainability Assessment version 3.0

Previously communicated on 15 March 2023 and 27 April 2023

In the context of the continued partnership between the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform), the GLOBALG.A.P. Farm Sustainability Assessment (GGFSA) has been reviewed.

GGFSA v3.0 (scheme ID 332) replaced GGFSA v2.1 and is obligatory for all GGFSA audits conducted after 1 May 2023. GGFSA v3.0 audits may be conducted together with IFA v5 audits as long as IFA v5 is still valid and shall then only be conducted together with IFA v6 audits.

GGFSA v3.0 was released on 14 March 2023. The normative documents are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. [document center](#). GGFSA v3.0 will continue to use the GLOBALG.A.P. database for the time being and will be transferred to AOH at a later date.

While no training in GGFSA is required, CB auditors shall be approved for IFA v6 for plants (or CfP) and for GRASP. *No additional* GGFSA online test is required.

What actions must be taken?

Notify your clients

Please inform your clients that GGFSAs conducted after 1 May 2023 shall be conducted using GGFSAs v3.0.

What is new in GGFSAs v3.0?

While the structure and content of GGFSAs v3.0 are similar to GGFSAs v2.1, key changes include:

The streamlining of wording/terminology to align with IFA v6 and SAI Platform FSA v3, e.g.,:

- The FSA questions have been renamed from “basic” to “intermediate.”
- The IFA “control points and compliance criteria” have been renamed “principles and criteria.”

Changes to the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations specifications:

- Clarification that the QMS/site management system (SMS) self-assessment shall be conducted once annually, and that the self-assessment against all the P&Cs shall be conducted every three years
- Clarification that any complaints against the results of an audit shall be addressed via the CB’s complaint procedure
- Clarification that the initial CB audit against GGFSAs (producer already certified to IFA or CfP) may be conducted mid-cycle.

Changes to the checklists:

- Addition of the eight new FSA v3 requirements
- Revised FSA Performance Level requirements for
Bronze: 100% Essential and 50% Intermediate P&Cs
Silver: 100% Essential, 75% Intermediate, and 50% Advanced P&Cs
Gold: 100% Essential, 100% Intermediate, and 75% Advanced P&Cs
- Inclusion and adaptation of QMS and SMS requirements into auditable P&Cs in the checklist
- Addition of the scoring columns (Yes, No, and N/A) to the QMS/SMS P&Cs.

The GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and SAI Platform offered a joint informative webinar on 3 May 2023 where they presented GGFSAs v3.0. Participation in this webinar was optional and free of charge.

6.6 GROW v3.0: update of GROW annex documentation

Previously communicated on 15 March 2023

We previously informed CBs that there has been an update to the GROW annex documentation (where the risk classification per crop per module is indicated) and that this shall be used starting *immediately*.

Where to find the updated GROW annex documents:

These updated documents are available in the GLOBALG.A.P. document center: Click [here](#) to find the latest annex.

Valid version:

The latest valid version is dated May 2023.

Changes:

New products included: macadamia nut, mandarin, walnut. Products were changed to singular to match the GLOBALG.A.P. product list. Risk classification was also added to watermelon.

Applicable languages:

English. Please use the latest English version until other languages are ready.

7 GLOBALG.A.P. IT UPDATES

7.1 GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and available functionalities (New)

The following is a summary of the functionalities of the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems and what CBs can do in each of them:

CB-AT

- Register auditors in CB-AT and assign roles
- Submit documents to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat for review, preferably in English or at least partly translated (it is not necessary for the translation to be done by a sworn translator)
- Beta CB-AT launched for users that have registered for the GLOBALG.A.P. IT trainings
- Reviewer and decision-making committee roles requirement swapped
- Decision-making committee renamed "Certification committee"
- GGFS v3.0 available in CB-AT

We kindly ask CB-AT users to make sure that IFA v6 modules are "Submitted to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat" as soon as possible so that we can evaluate them and grant approval. This is crucial for your work in AOH and Validation Service. Please make sure that there are some users in your company with the roles "Reviewer" and "Certification committee" for the corresponding standards and add-ons. Without these roles, you will not be able to complete an audit in AOH. You can find user guidance on using CB-AT in the *user guideline for CB-AT* [here](#).

Validation Service

- Issue an IFA v6 certificate for plants/aquaculture or GRASP v2 letter of conformance via web interface or API
- Transfer parts of the information from the AOH audit report to the GRASP v2 letter of conformance
- System participation fee invoiced automatically once the certificate is issued

AOH

- Go through the Smart process of compiling the audit report for IFA v6/GRASP v2 and complete the checklist digitally via web interface, API, or Excel upload (limited to the P&Cs)
- Conduct the review and make the certification decision in AOH using the audit report
- Connect producer group member/production site audits to one multi-report.
- Make use of the Excel export/upload functionality for the non-conformances/non-compliances report and header data to manage.

API documentation

[Here](#) you can find a summary of all the API documentation for:

AOH:

Beta <https://beta-api-audit-doc.globalgap.org>

Live <https://api-audit-doc.globalgap.org>

Validation Service:

Beta <https://beta-api-validation-doc.globalgap.org>

Live <https://api-validation-doc.globalgap.org>

GLOBALG.A.P. database:

<https://api-doc.globalgap.org/>

7.2 Reviewer, certification committee and authorized person: roles in GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems (New)

The reviewer role is the term used in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems Smart Process for the person who carries out the technical review of an audit report, as defined in section 7.5, “Review” of the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation standard. The following conditions apply for the reviewer:

1. The reviewer cannot be involved in the evaluation (audit) process.
2. The reviewer shall have at least the same qualifications as the auditor. Therefore, the review of a QMS audit can only be conducted by a QMS auditor approved for the same farm assurance solution and scope.
3. The reviewer is not required to be an active auditor, meaning the five annual CB audits required for the maintenance of CB auditor competency are not a requirement for the reviewer.
4. The reviewer (same person) can also take part in the CB decision-making committee. Note: this decision-making committee consists of a minimum of one person. The reviewer can therefore also act as the decision-making committee on their own, if nominated by the CB.

The *certification committee* role is the term used in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems Smart Process for the person(s) who make the certification decision, based on an audit report, as defined in section 7.6, “Certification decision” of the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation standard. The following conditions apply for the members of the CB decision-making committee:

1. The members of the CB decision-making committee cannot be involved in the evaluation (audit) process.

The *authorized person* is the person assigned by the CB to be the signatory on behalf of the CB on certificates or any other statement of conformance, as defined in section 7.7.2, “The formal certification documentation shall include the signature or other defined authorization of the person(s) of the certification body assigned such responsibility” of the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation standard. The CB registers this person in CB-AT and the name of this person will be automatically displayed on the certificates or statements of conformance. No qualification requirements apply for the CB authorized person.

Note 1: The CB shall meet the ISO/IEC 17065 requirements for their own accreditation.

Note 2: These definitions are only applicable to the Smart Process. The Legacy Process (the current process being used in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems) still uses the terms and definitions that apply to the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

Note 3: The Smart Process is the certification process in which the GLOBALG.A.P. database is no longer the leading GLOBALG.A.P. IT system. In the Smart Process, CB-AT is used for auditors' qualifications, AOH is used to conduct the audit and make the certification decision, and the certificate is issued in Validation Service, instead of in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

Please see the table below for a summary of the roles in the GLOBALG.A.P. IT systems:

Name of the role	CB-AT	AOH	Validation Service
Reviewer	Reviewer	Reviewer	Not in the system
Person(s) being part of the CB's decision-making committee	Certification committee	Certification committee	Not in the system
Person's signature appears on the certificate	Certificate signatory	Not in the system	Authorized person

7.3 AOH upload rules update (New)

As previously communicated in TN 01/2023, the AOH upload rules have been updated. The new rules include clearer information on uploading to AOH. You can find the updated AOH upload rules [here](#).

8 GLOBALG.A.P. FEE TABLE UPDATE (New)

We hereby inform you that the GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fees and GLOBALG.A.P. fees for CBs have been updated.

Changes to the GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fees were made to clarify the applicability of multiple growing cycles. The changes to the GLOBALG.A.P. fees for CBs relate to the CB license fee (base level).

You can find the updated documents [here](#).

You can find the fee calculators for IFA v6 and GRASP v2, the fee table video tutorial, and the GLOBALG.A.P. system participation fees guideline [here](#).

9 PRODUCT LIST UPDATES (New)

There have been some updates to the GLOBALG.A.P. product list: Added macro algae next to seaweed, i.e., “Seaweed/Macro algae” for clarification (applicable for IFA v5 and IFA v6).

See more changes in the table:

Product Name	Change / Comment	Applicable IFA version		Sub-scopes/Product categories ID numbers				
		v5	v6	FV	PPM	CC	FO	AQ
Citrofortunella fruit	This new product includes all Kumquat hybrids	x	x	100955	100954 (only v5)			
Common mallow (herb)	Another species has been added under this product – <i>Malva sylvestris</i>	x	x	874	936 (only v5)			
Philippine lime/Calamondin	Scientific name corrected to <i>Citrus x macrocarpa</i>	x	x	100914	100913 (only v5)			
Skirret	New product with scientific name <i>Sium sisarum</i>	x	x	100956				
Strawberry guava	New product with scientific name <i>Psidium littorale</i>	x	x	100958	100957 (only v5)			

The latest versions of the GLOBALG.A.P. product list (v5.17 and v6.0_Jul23) is available on the GLOBALG.A.P. website:

[GLOBALG.A.P. product list v5.17](#)

[GLOBALG.A.P. product list v6.0 Jul23](#)

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Sincerely,

GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Body Administration, Benchmarking, and Compliance team