



ASSURANCE **C**ERTIFICATION **S**CHEME



National Parks Board
Plant Science and Health
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Preface

The National Parks Board (NParks) of Singapore offers the Assurance Certification Scheme (ACS) to Companies that regularly export plants, cut flowers and plant products. The ACS allows the Agencies to carry out approved phytosanitary activities on behalf of NParks on commodities produced within their premises.

This document sets out the requirements for gaining approval to undertake phytosanitary activities under the Assurance Certification Scheme (ACS).

REVISION REGISTER

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1.0	April 2009	Initial Version
2.0	October 2010	Amendment of the whole document
2.1	July 2011	Amendment to the grounds of suspension and termination including changes to flow in dealing with non-compliances
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The terms and conditions in this document are subject for review.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION	
A	Scope
1	The Assurance Certification Scheme (ACS) is a voluntary scheme offered by NParks to all companies who regularly export plants, cut flowers and plant products.
2	Under this scheme, the company must meet prescribed requirements by Nparks in order for the company to undertake export phytosanitary activities on behalf of Nparks in accordance with international and bilateral requirements on commodities produced within their premises. How these approved activities are carried out is to be documented by the company in the ACS Manual.
3	By implementing Quality Management System (QMS) procedures prescribed in the ACS Manual, exporters minimize the various phytosanitary risks in inspection and certification activities authorized by the NParks. Nparks will ensure that the QMS system is adhered to through periodic audits.
B	ACS Objective
4	The objective of the ACS is to have an ordered and coordinated quality process control in order to produce a product that consistently meets NParks' Phytosanitary Export Certification requirements as well as to comply with the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries.
5	Agencies under the ACS shall set up a Quality Assurance System comprising the phytosanitary process control procedures that aim to meet the phytosanitary export certification requirements agreed between the NParks and the company.
C	Benefits of Joining ACS
6	Member agencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none">gain NParks' approval to undertake specific phytosanitary activities.are allowed to carry out approved phytosanitary activities in their own premises (instead of at Nparks office).have flexibility to carry out phytosanitary activities at any time of the day and on any day of the week (instead of being limited to NParks operating hours).minimize various phytosanitary risks in the production of exported commoditiesenjoy financial savings as members get discounted rates for issue of phytosanitary certificates.
D	Confidentiality
7	All information submitted in the ACS Manual will be classified "Confidential".



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SECTION II: GENERAL POLICY	
This section outlines some of the policies with respect to the operation of the Scheme.	
A	Eligibility
8	Applicants shall meet the following minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) maintain satisfactory records for phytosanitary certification with NParks in the preceding 12 months.b) have resources (staff, premises, expertise, facilities and equipment) to carry out agreed procedures and consistently meet requirements set by NParks.c) document in an Assurance Certification Scheme (ACS) Manual all the management responsibilities, policies, procedures, allocation of responsibilities and record keeping for maintaining the required assurance and standards.d) have the capabilities to comply with the procedures set out in the ACS Manual.e) Qualification of company's certified inspector:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least six months experience in any operation related to the exported commodity applied for.• Have no fewer than 2 NParks Certified Inspectors to conduct raw material and end-point export inspection. (The Certified Inspectors are required to have successfully completed the Course on (i) <i>Inspection Techniques</i> and (ii) <i>Pest Identification and Inspection</i> conducted by NParks' Plant Science and Health Branch.
B	Application
9	To join ACS the Company shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) ensure that the minimum requirements stipulated in A7 is attained.b) enclose the following documents in a sealed envelope, with a label "<i>Application to Join the Assurance Certification Scheme</i>" at the top left hand corner:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• application letter (<i>refer to Appendix 1</i>).• documented evidence that the Agency meets the minimum requirements to join ACS.• a declaration by the Chief Executive of the Agency.• the ACS Manual.c) submit the application to:<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Director Plant Science & Health (PSH) Animal and Plant Health Centre 6 Perahu Road Singapore 718827</i></p>d) Allow NParks to undertake:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desk audit• Initial site audit• Regular compliance audit

C	Evaluation
	<u>Assessment</u>
10	After accepting the Company's application to join the ACS, NParks shall assess the Company's fulfillment of the requirements and its suitability to be in the ACS.
11	In performing the assessment, NParks may check files relating to the Company's past performance for any matter relating to the Company's compliance to regulatory requirements.
	<u>Desk Audit</u>
12	The <i>Desk Audit</i> is a primary step in the evaluation procedures and it involves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> evaluating the ACS Manual and. determining the adequacy of the <i>Quality Management System</i> (QMS) described in the manual, in meeting the approved requirement for the phytosanitary activities applied for under the ACS.
13	If NParks deems from the desk audit that the QMS described in the manual does <u>not</u> appear to be effective with respect to the phytosanitary activities for which it applies, NParks may advise the Company to revise, amend and resubmit the manual for reassessment.
14	If NParks deems from the desk audit that the QMS described in the manual appears to be effective with respect to the phytosanitary activities for which it applies, NParks will conduct a site audit of the QMS.
	<u>Initial Site Audit</u>
15	Following the desk audit, NParks will perform an initial site audit to assess the entire QMS, to ensure that the procedures documented are complied with at site and that they are effective in practice.
16	NParks will inform the Company of its findings and may make further recommendations with regards to the Company's application for membership in the ACS, for the Company's compliance.
	<u>Approval</u>
17	Upon fulfillment of all the requirements and approval of the proposed QMS described in the Company's ACS Manual, NParks may approve the Company to be a member of the ACS.
18	NParks reserves the right to reject or disapprove any Company's application to join the ACS, without assigning any explanations thereto.
19	All new members are categorised at the high-risk level until they have completed operating their systems for an uninterrupted period of 12 months with no major or critical non-compliance being found.
D	Audits
	<u>Routine Compliance Evaluation</u>
20	NParks will carry out regular compliance <i>audits</i> each year to ensure that the Company: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> continues to operate its QMS in accordance to NParks approved standards

	<p>and procedures.</p> <p>b) is able to adjust the QMS when the requirements or conditions change, and when problems are addressed and corrected.</p> <p>c) compliance audit shall be carried out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 times per year for cut flowers, foliages, aquatic plants, plants and other fresh produce. • 2 times per year for seeds and grains. • 1 time per year for other plant products.
21	<p>NParks may decide to vary the frequency or intensity of the audits, after consideration of the Company's performance, whether there are repeat interceptions from importing countries or changes in risk factors.</p>
E	Non-Compliance
22	<p>Non-compliances to approved procedures or any terms and conditions of the ACS will be regarded as the Company's failure to deliver procedures and outcomes specified in the ACS Manual.</p>
23	<p>Where there are non-compliances, the Company shall take all appropriate corrective actions immediately.</p>
24	<p><i>Please refer to Appendix 2 for the details of non-compliances.</i></p>
F	Overseas Interception
25	<p>Overseas interception is an important criterion in determining non-compliances as it reflects the extent to which the QMS is adhered. Such interceptions may also be used to keep track of the changes in sanitary and phytosanitary rules of importing countries on a particular commodity.</p>
26	<p><i>Please refer to Appendix 2 for the details of overseas interceptions.</i></p>
G	Corrective Action
27	<p>A corrective action and time frame for its implementation is to be agreed between NParks and the Company (<i>Please refer to Appendix 2 E for reporting details</i>).</p>
H	Group Certification Arrangement
28	<p>Given approval on the merit of each case, an ACS Company is allowed to apply for phytosanitary certificates on behalf of another exporter exporting the ACS Company's products produced in compliance with the ACS arrangements. The ACS Company assumes full responsibility for non-compliance.</p>
29	<p>ACS Company shall ensure that the exporter possesses proper storage facility with no possibility of cross contamination and is committed to keeping the certified consignments intact and unadulterated.</p>
30	<p>Audits shall be extended to the approved exporter's premises to verify the above requirements are complied.</p>
I	Suspension of Membership
31	<p>NParks may suspend a Company for a minimum period of 1 month from the ACS under one or more of the following conditions:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) occurrence of one critical non-compliance b) the Company fails to report any change made to the process flow or layout of the ACS premises or it implements a process flow or layout without prior approval from NPARKS c) occurrence of 3 overseas interceptions within six months where the consignment is treated and released by the importing country d) occurrence of 3 overseas interceptions within one year where the consignment is rejected or destroyed (minimum period of 3 months) e) the company commits 3 major non-compliance within one calendar year f) non-payment of NParks services such as for export certification or audits
32	NParks will formally advise the Company of its suspension.
33	The periods of suspension applicable for various conditions or non-compliances are given in <i>Appendix 5: Dealing with Non-compliances-Flowchart</i> .
34	The Company shall not carry out any phytosanitary inspection activities agreed under ACS during the suspension period.
35	During the suspension period, all of the Company's products shall be subject to end point inspection by NParks within the normal operational hours and the company shall pay the normal or urgent service charges for the inspection.
J	Reinstatement of Membership
36	NParks may reinstate a Company to the ACS when it complies with all corrective actions, changes and conditions for reinstatement prescribed by NParks.
37	For reinstatement, the suspended Company shall incorporate all prescribed corrective actions, changes and conditions into its ACS Manual before reapplying to join the ACS.
38	NParks will carry out desk and site audits in consideration of the application for reinstatement from the Company.
39	Where NParks approves the application for reinstatement, NParks will formally inform the Company of the approval and the effective date of reinstatement.
40	When a Company has been confirmed as meeting the conditions for reinstatement, they will be notified in writing of the date from which membership will be reinstated.
K	Termination of Membership
41	<p>NParks may terminate a Company from the ACS under, but not limited to, one or more of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is falsification of the phytosanitary certificate, or where there is fraud or misrepresentation of any record, declaration, treatment certificate, statement, representation or document for obtaining a phytosanitary certificate or any ACS-related approval from NPARKS b) the Company commits 3 critical non-compliances within one calendar year c) the Company commits 4 overseas interceptions within one calendar year where the consignment is rejected or destroyed d) the Company remains inactive for one year e) the conditions for reinstatement from a suspension are not met within the specified time

	f) the Company requests for the termination
42	The grounds for termination applicable to various conditions or non-compliances are given in <i>Appendix 5: Dealing with Non-compliances-Flowchart</i> .
43	NParks will formally inform the Company being terminated of the reasons for the termination and the effective date of termination.
44	A Company that has been terminated shall not be allowed to rejoin the ACS within six months from the date of termination.
45	NParks will carry out desk and site audits in consideration of any application to rejoin the ACS after termination.
46	In the event of termination of ACS membership, the Company shall: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Return to the PSH within two working days of the termination date, the Company's ACS Agreement and/or their Certified Inspector's Certificate of Competency. Not be allowed to export the products produced under the ACS.
L	Exclusion of Liability to NParks
47	NParks and its authorized staff and agents shall not be liable, under all circumstances, for any loss, claim, action, demand, expense, injury or damage, however caused, arising directly or indirectly from or in any way related to the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> phytosanitary inspection or treatment conducted phytosanitary certificates issued
48	ACS members shall not expect any products inspected or treated under the ACS to be accepted by an importing country's phytosanitary or plant protection authority.
SECTION III: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	
This section outlines the primary requirements that must be addressed by company seeking approval to carry out inspection and certification activities on their products under this scheme.	
A	Company Undertaking
49	The Company shall: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> agree to meet the requirements under the Terms and Conditions of the ACS arrangement. agree to operate the documented QMS as approved by the CEO or any authorized person of the CEO of NParks. agree to comply with the policies, procedures and specifications set out in this ACS manual which defines the quality system in operation. grant entry to the premises at any time to persons who are NParks authorized officers for the purpose of audit. note that any approval to join this scheme will be subject to desk audit, site audit and compliance audit and agreement to pay any reasonable costs of such audits as may be charged to the company from time to time. understand that if failure to provide all or any of the information requested in connection with this application, the application may be rejected or denied approval. agree to inform NParks on any change of premises or transfer of management failing which membership can be terminated.

B	Approved Activities under ACS
50	Agencies shall seek NParks' approval to undertake phytosanitary activities applicable to the commodity for export. The type of specific commodity intended for export will be indicated in <i>Appendix 1</i> .
C	Application Requirements
51	Agencies interested in joining the ACS shall submit to NParks' a formal application, with documented evidence to show that the Company meets the prescribed minimum requirements.
52	Table 1 summarizes the documents required for the application:
TABLE 1: DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATION	
Minimum Requirements	Documentation Required
a) maintain satisfactory records for phytosanitary certification with NParks in the preceding 12 months.	<i>No documents are required to be submitted for this requirement. NParks will verify the requirement from its records on the applicant.</i>
b) have resources (staff, premises, expertise, facilities and equipment) to carry out agreed procedures and consistently meet requirements set by NParks.	<i>A) an Application Letter B) a Resource Management Plan showing:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the appointed Management Representative (MR). • a Staff Company Chart and the line of communication. • a duty statement listing the staff deployed, their qualifications and experience and their respective responsibilities under the ACS. • a detailed layout plan of the premises where the phytosanitary activities will be carried out. • the resource allocation for all the process control procedures of phytosanitary certification activities.
c) document in an Assurance Certification Scheme (ACS) Manual all the management responsibilities, policies, procedures, allocation of responsibilities and record keeping for maintaining the required assurance and procedures. d) have the capabilities to comply with the procedures set out in the ACS Manual.	<i>a copy of the ACS Manual.</i>

	e) have no fewer than 2 NParks Certified Inspectors (who have successfully completed the Plant Pathology Course on (i) <i>Inspection Techniques</i> and (ii) <i>Pest Identification and Inspection</i> conducted by NParks Plant Science Section to conduct export inspection.	<i>a copy of the certificates of attendance issued by NParks.</i>
D	ACS Manual	
53	The Company shall prepare, submit and maintain an ACS Manual, which is a compilation of documents relevant to the ACS. Generally, the manual contains the approved <i>Quality Management System</i> (QMS), which describes the management's commitment to the ACS.	
54	As a member of the ACS, the Company shall: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ensure compliance with the procedures documented in the ACS Manual after it has been approved by NParks. review its ACS Manual annually to ensure that the QMS remains suitable and effective in complying with NParks' standards. keep and make NParks' available records of the QMS review for NParks' inspection, when requested to do so. ensure that all amendments to its ACS Manual are approved by NParks prior to implementation. ensure that its ACS Manual is made NParks available for audit by NParks when requested to do so. ensure that its ACS Manual, showing all approved checklists, procedures, processes and other relevant activities, is made available to relevant staff. 	
55	The arrangement above is subject to renegotiation including updating of manuals, whenever NParks deems it necessary to do so.	
56	NParks will conduct regular audits to ensure the Company's compliance to the approved <i>Quality Management System</i> .	
57	The QMS shall be documented in the ACS Manual shall contain description of the <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Management's Responsibilities and Commitment to the ACS, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality policy and objectives of ACS. scope of approved phytosanitary activities under the ACS. schedule of countries (Final Destinations). importing countries' requirements. management review of the ACS. a Resource Management and Agency Chart. a Quality Assurance System to meet the export phytosanitary certification standards agreed between NParks and the Company. a Document Control System to keep relevant documents, reports and information on policies, procedures, and controls relevant to the ACS. a Record System to compile all records of activities taken such as control of non-conforming product, corrective actions and preventive actions. 	
E	Management Responsibilities and Commitment	



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	<u>Quality Policy and Objectives</u>
58	The Company shall make a statement describing its <i>Quality Policy and Objectives</i> to meet the requirements of ACS agreed between NParks and the Company.
59	The quality policy and objectives shall align with the ACS's objective.
60	The Management's responsibilities and commitment to the ACS shall be to set policies, procedures, controls and documentation relevant to the ACS, including the following: a) general requirements, such as certification specifications and phytosanitary, legislative and administrative requirements. b) the agreed phytosanitary activities and all NParks approved procedures. c) statements on quality policy and objectives. d) the process controls to meet the standards and procedures, including the Phytosanitary <i>Quality Assurance System</i> . e) operational instructions to ensure that importing countries' phytosanitary requirements are satisfied. f) dissemination of certification-related information. g) maintenance of current information on import requirements of the importing countries.
	<u>Scope of Approved Phytosanitary Activities under ACS</u>
61	The QMS shall describe clearly the scope of the ACS arrangement and indicate the agreed phytosanitary activities.
	<u>Schedule of Countries (Final Destinations)</u>
62	The QMS shall indicate clearly the schedule of the ACS arrangement, including: a) a list of applicable products and. b) a schedule of countries to which products are exported.
	<u>Importing Countries' Requirements</u>
63	The Management shall be aware of revisions to requirements made by importing countries and update the QMS of the changes.
64	The Management shall appoint a person to be responsible for checking with NParks on changes in conditions for export to countries identified as destinations in the QMS.
	<u>Management Review of ACS</u>
65	The Management shall review the ACS on a regular basis (minimum one review per year). The purpose of this review is to verify the efficiency of procedures and to confirm that the procedures are maintained at or above the agreed level.
66	The QMS shall state the frequency, method and person responsible for the review. The management shall ensure that all reviews carried out are properly documented and information on such reviews is made available to NParks upon request.
	F <u>Resource Management and Company Chart</u>
	<u>Resource Management</u>
67	The Management shall ensure the provision of adequate resources (personnel and expertise) to undertake ACS activities:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) performing inspections of plants and plant products for purposes related to the issuance of phytosanitary certificates (including pest management programs). b) identification of plants and plant products. c) detection and identification of pests. d) performing or supervising phytosanitary treatments required for the certification. e) survey, monitoring and control activities related to phytosanitary certification. f) constructing appropriate certification procedures and formulating instructions from importing country phytosanitary requirements. g) develop Corrective Actions to address non-conforming and non-compliance issues. h) internal auditing of NParks trained personnel and certification systems, where appropriate.
68	<p>The Management shall identify duties and lines of communication of all personnel with certification-related responsibilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) who is responsible for each specified process. b) how each process will achieve the set phytosanitary objectives agreed c) where each process is being carried out. d) any other relevant information.
69	<p>The Management shall ensure provision of adequate infrastructure (premises and facilities), equipment and facilities to carry out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) inspection b) testing c) treatment d) consignment verification e) cleaning, pest control and waste disposal f) training
	<p><u>Company Organization Chart</u></p>
70	<p>The Management shall submit an Organization Chart, showing the designation and scope of duties of each approved staff in the ACS, including the Chief Executive Officer and the appointed Management Representative (<i>person responsible for all matters relating to the ACS</i>).</p>
G	<p>Quality Assurance System</p>
71	<p>A Quality Assurance System shall be set up that describes an ordered and coordinated control procedures of the phytosanitary process that aim to produce a product that consistently meets the Phytosanitary Export Certification requirements set by NParks and complies with the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries.</p>
	<p><u>Phytosanitary Process</u></p>
72	<p>The objective of the phytosanitary process is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) control pest infestation during critical stages of export certification and b) minimize the various pest infestation risks during various operational procedures involved in exporting the plant materials
73	<p>The control procedures of the phytosanitary process include detailed procedures for</p>

	<p>inspections of raw and treated materials, phytosanitary treatment of selected raw materials for export, processing and re-treatment of rejected (or non-conforming) materials, and all processes taken to minimize pest infestation on selected export materials and cross-contamination of export materials at all operational stages from receipt of raw material to transportation. Operational stages may include, where relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) product identification and traceability. b) process controls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • source and receipt of raw material, inspection, product selection/rejection • handling of export materials such as treatment, sorting, end point inspection, product selection/rejection • storage preservation and delivery such as packing, labeling, and marking • control of monitoring and measuring devices • packing/storage (layout of premise) • cleaning and waste disposal • transport • monitoring and measuring device control c) Measurement, Analysis and Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of rejected (or non-conforming) materials. • Corrective Actions and Follow-ups.
<u>Phytosanitary Risk Management Programme</u>	
74	The Company shall set up a Phytosanitary Risk Management Program which identify Critical Process Control points and propose corresponding mitigating phytosanitary procedures to address pest risks and infestations in the event of pest risk or infestations. A Hazard Analysis table may be used to describe the procedures.
H Document Control	
75	The Company shall have a Document Control system to keep relevant documents, reports and information on policies, procedures and controls relevant to the ACS.
76	The Company shall keep documents of procedures, processes, audits, agreed export certification system, training of personnel, resources and other relevant records.
77	The Company shall also keep records (documents the past) to show that activities have been performed, results have been achieved, traceability requirements are being met, verification is being performed and preventive and corrective actions are being carried out.
78	The Company shall ensure that all relevant documents and records related to the ACS are updated, complete, accurate, and legible.
79	All relevant and appropriate documents of the operating procedures shall be available at all locations where operations essential to the effective function of the system are performed.
80	All records shall be maintained for at least 24 months and shall be made available to NParks for audit at any time.
81	This includes record of the completed Application For Phytosanitary Certificate in the electronic application system (ECLIPS) after the certified inspector has endorsed and passed the export inspection and records the detail into the Export Inspection Record.

82	The Company shall notify NParks of any changes in the QMS operating procedures prior to implementation.
I	Record System
83	The Company shall have a Record System to compile all records of activities taken such as control of non-conforming product, non-compliances, corrective actions and preventive actions.
84	In general, records shall be kept concerning all activities related to the control procedures of the phytosanitary process. A copy of each phytosanitary certificate shall be retained for purposes of validation and 'trace back'.
85	For each consignment where a phytosanitary certificate has been issued, records should be kept, where appropriate on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any inspection, testing, treatment or other verification which was conducted on a consignment b) the names of the personnel who undertook these tasks c) the date on which the activity was undertaken d) the results obtained e) any samples taken f) non-conforming consignments for which phytosanitary certificates were not issued
86	Records of overseas interception cases shall be submitted to NParks.
J	Submission of Reports
87	The Company shall submit reports to NParks within a specified time frame if there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) changes to the ACS Manual b) information relating to corrective actions c) overseas interception of exported consignments d) any issue raised by importers or other off shore agencies identifying risks relating to NParks export phytosanitary certification e) information on requirements from importing countries obtained from sources other than NParks f) request from NParks for information necessary for improvement of the scheme. g) new pests detections and plant host associations

GLOSSARY

The following list contains words that, where used in this document or the *Guidelines for the Preparation of the ACS Manual*, have the meaning corresponding to the word.

Audit	A systematic and independent process for obtaining information and examining it objectively to determine the degree of conformity with prescribed criteria.
Compliance audit	A compliance audit is an evaluation of specific parts of the Company' system, to confirm that the product or service meets the required specifications.
Auditor	A person with the competence to carry out an Audit to determine the degree of conformity with prescribed criteria.
Certificate	An official document which attests to the status of any consignment affected by regulations.
Certification	All those activities leading to, but not including, the issuance of Certificates.
Competence	Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills.
Consignment	A quantity of plants, plant products or other regulated articles being moved from one country to another and covered by a single Certificate (a consignment may be composed of one or more lots).
Hazard	The potential to cause harm and types of hazards can be divided into biological, chemical or physical.
Inspection	An official visual examination of plant products or other regulated articles to determine compliance with regulations. For phytosanitary regulations inspection is to determine if pests are present.
Inspector	Means a person who is appointed an inspector by the CEO of NPARKS.
Non-compliance	An action or inaction by an ACS company that results in the Company not complying with requirements specified in this programme's standards, or in Treatment specifications.
Company	A company seeking to document and implement a system for approval to undertake specific phytosanitary certification activities as part of the company's normal operations.
Pest	Any species or strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent, injurious to plants, plant products or animals.
Phytosanitary Certificate	Certificate patterned after the model certificates of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).
Pest Free Production Site (PFPS)	Where a defined portion of a place of production can be managed as a separate unit within a place of production
Phytosanitary measures	Any legislation, regulation or official procedure having the purpose to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests.
Plant Materials	Plant or plant-related products.
Plant Products	Any material of plant origin.
Quality Assurance	A set of activities intended to establish confidence that quality requirements will be met.



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Quality Management System (QMS)	A set of interrelated or interacting elements that Agencies use to direct and control how quality policies are implemented and quality objectives are achieved.
Regulated Article	Any plant, forest or plant product, storage place, packaging, conveyance, container, soil or any other organism, object or material capable of harbouring or spreading pests, deemed to require phytosanitary measures, particularly where international transportation is involved.
Specification	A prescription of the requirements with which the product or service has to conform.
Supervision	Oversee, through direct observation, pre-determined activities being undertaken by another party, to confirm compliance with specifications and/or procedures.
Treatment	Officially authorized procedure, for the killing, removal or rendering infertile of pests; and also for the purposes of this standard rendering non-viable or devitalizing a consignment of plants, forest or plant products, and animals.



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APPENDIX 1

SAMPLE APPLICATION LETTER FROM EXPORTERS/COMPANIES

Name of Exporter/Company	:
Business Address	:
Treatment Type(s)	:
Materials (scheduled products) covered	:
Major Importing Countries	:
Telephone/ Fax	:
Email	:
Name & Job Title of Person Responsible for ACS Scheme	:

Applicant's Statement

I (name of applicant and job title in company) wish to apply for approval under the terms and conditions set down in the ACS to carry out approved phytosanitary activities on behalf of NParks on commodities (specify the commodity) produced within our premises.

- a) shall ensure compliance with all Terms and Conditions of the ACS and any such terms and conditions that the NParks may from time to time vary or impose.
- b) shall comply with the policies, procedures and specifications set out in this QA manual that define the quality management system in operation for the application and certification of phytosanitary inspection/treatment measures to the schedule of products on behalf of NParks.
- c) shall grant entry to the premises at any time to persons who are NParks authorized officers for the purpose of audit of the ACS.
- d) agree to NParks making enquiries and using the information supplied by me, in connection with this application for the following purposes.
- e) to ensure that I have appropriate consents, permits, licenses and authority in respect



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of my business operations and my business premises that are required.

- f) to notify the relevant parties of my approved status.
- g) agree to indemnify and keep indemnified NParks or its authorized staff and agents from and against any claim (including third party claim), liability, loss, damage, costs and expenses which NParks or its authorized staff or agents may suffer or incur arising directly or indirectly from the phytosanitary treatment and certification activities that are conducted on behalf of NParks or any other course of actions carried out by my company under the ACS.
- h) fully understand that once my application for the ACS is approved by NParks and if I gave false information for the purpose of obtaining ACS membership /phytosanitary certificate, the ACS membership shall be suspended or terminated with immediate effect.
- i) note that the ACS membership will be subject to desk evaluation and subsequent audits and I agree to pay any costs of such evaluation and audits as may be charged to the company from time to time.

Signed _____

For and behalf of _____
(name of company)

Dated _____

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

Application Received	: Date:		
Additional Information Required	: Yes	No	Date:
First Site Audit	: Yes	No	Date:
Second Site Audit	: Yes	No	Date:
Third Site Audit	: Yes	No	Date:
Application Approval	: Yes	No	Date:

APPENDIX 2	
Non Compliances and Overseas Interceptions	
A	What is Non-Compliance?
1	<p>A non-compliance is a detected incident of any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) failure to comply with any term or condition specified in the ACS Manual. b) incursion of overseas pest interception on exported consignments at importing countries. c) incursion of local pest interception on intended export consignments at end-point inspection during audit or during any inspection carried out at NParks' office.
B	What is Corrective Action?
2	A corrective action is the action taken or to be taken to rectify a non-compliance.
3	For any non-compliance detected, NParks and the Company shall agree on a corrective action and the time frame for implementation.
4	<p>The corrective action shall record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the action to be implemented. b) who is responsible for the implementation. c) the time frame for implementation and. d) the verification method to ensure that it has been successfully implemented.
5	Where the non-compliance impacts on the eligibility of product treatment status, NParks shall verify and decide on the appropriate measures to resolve its status.
C	Types of Non-Compliance
6	There are 3 types of non-compliances, described in Table 2.
TABLE 2: NON-COMPLIANCES	
Type	Description
General	<p>a) A general non-compliance is an incident or deficiency that does not result in a partial loss of confidence in the Company's QMS</p> <p>b) General non-compliances are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unhygienic conditions of the premises. • internal audit not conducted in time. • waste disposal not carried out properly. • failure to meet recording or reporting requirements. • incomplete inspection records. • failure to identify, classify or record defects correctly.

	Major	<p>a) A major non-compliance is an incident or deficiency if not addressed immediately will result in a total loss of confidence in the Company's QMS.</p> <p>b) Major non-compliances are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant difference between the auditor's and the Company's findings. • amendments to the documented procedural details of the ACS operational system not notified to NParks. • actions taken following inspections or audits not recorded. • products for export not made available to NParks for inspection during audit.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incomplete labeling of the product which leads to loss of product traceability. • corrective action for a minor non-compliance not implemented within the agreed time frame. • 3 or more minor non-compliances detected in any one audit. • Other incidents or deficiencies if not addressed result in a total loss of confidence in the QMS.
	Critical	<p>a) A critical non-compliance is an incident or deficiency that results in a total loss of confidence in the Company's QMS.</p> <p>b) Critical non-compliances are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amendments made to approved facilities, requirements or procedures but not notified to NParks prior to their implementation or use. • no official treatment undertaken or incorrect treatment applied when required by the importing country. • no inspection or insufficient inspection carried out as stipulated by QMS. • no specific area and /or equipment for inspection as required • live pest(s) detected at end-point inspection during audit (Please refer to Appendix 4). • required inspection facilities or equipment not used or modified without informing NParks. • corrective action for a major non-compliance not implemented within the agreed time frame. • same major non-compliance detected in two regular audits. • 3 or more major non-compliances detected in any one audit. • exporting or intending to export unapproved product under ACS. • fraudulent information provided for certification of products. • non-authorized staff inspecting or carrying out activities meant for export. • Other incidents or deficiencies that result in a total loss of confidence in the QMS.
D Dealing with Non-compliance		



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7 Refer to the Appendix 5.

E	Reports	
8	The Company shall submit to NParks the following reports within the time frame prescribed.	
TABLE 3: TIME FRAME FOR SUBMISSION OF REPORTS		
	Report on	Time Frame for Submission
	a) changes to (i) responsibility of the competent staff, (ii) inspection or treatment plan, (iii) address of the premises or (iv) management.	within 10 working days of change.
	b) corrective actions applied for critical non-compliance detected.	within 5 working days after detection.
	c) interception of NParks phytosanitary certified products by importing countries.	within 5 working days of receipt of notice of interception from NParks.
	d) issues raised by importers or other off-shore agencies identifying risks relating to NParks export phytosanitary certification.	within 5 working days of receipt of issue.
	e) importing countries' requirements obtained from sources other than NParks.	prior to requesting certification.
	f) information requested by NParks that is necessary for improvement of the scheme.	within the timeframe set by NParks.
F	Interception of Export Consignment due to Pest Detection	
9	Interception of export consignments due to pest detection either at the importing country or during inspection at the local NParks office indicates a failure of the Company to meet the standards and quality assurance procedures documented in the ACS Manual.	
10	An interception of export consignments will be considered as a Critical Non-Compliance (CNC) when the consignment is rejected or destroyed by the importing country.	
11	An interception of export consignments will be considered as a Major Non-Compliance (MNC) when the consignment is treated and released by the importing country	
	a) Upon receiving the notification of pest interception from importing countries, plants harvested from the affected shed will be suspended for export for nine weeks. The plants and shed will be monitored for nine weeks to ensure freedom from whitefly (<i>Bemisia tabaci</i>). The affected shed can then be declared as a Pest Free Production Site (PFPS) before exports resume.	



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APPENDIX 3

DECLARATION BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I _____ (name) being the Owner/Manager/Director* of the registered company/organization _____ (name) hereby declare to all staff concerned and to National Parks Board that I undertake, on behalf of the organisation as follows:

1. I agree to meet the requirements under the Terms and Conditions of the ACS arrangement.
2. I agree to operate the documented system as approved by the Director-General or any authorized person of the Director -General of NParks.
3. I agree to comply with the policies, procedures and specifications set out in this manual which defines the quality system in operation.
4. I grant entry to the premises at any time to persons who are NParks authorized officers for the purpose of audit.
5. I note that any approval to this scheme will be subject to desk audit, site audit and compliance audit and agree to pay any reasonable costs of such audits as may be charged to me from time to time.
6. I understand that if I fail to provide all or any of the information requested in connection with this application I may be denied approval.
7. I agree to inform NParks on any change of premises or transfer of management failing which the arrangement can be terminated.
8. I agree to provide the information requested by NParks necessary for the improvement of the scheme.

I understand that being committed to this ACS arrangement is essential to the successful maintenance of the arrangement and I will endeavor to ensure that all personnel in the system understand their objectives and responsibilities.

Signed _____

Name: _____

Dated _____

Title: _____



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APPENDIX 4

STANDARD FOR INSPECTION

1. STANDARD FOR RAW- MATERIAL INSPECTION

All the raw materials either from own farm or from supplier will be inspected separately. Grower's name or supplier's name will be entered in the raw- material inspection record with the quantity supplied. **At least 20%*** of raw materials received from each source will be inspected. For aquatic plants, foliages and cut flowers the 20% inspection will apply on each variety.

TARGETED PESTS: ALL STAGES OF LIVE PLANT PESTS (eggs, larvae, pupae, caterpillars and adults).

2. STANDARD-FOR END POINT INSPECTION

TARGETED PESTS: ALL STAGES OF LIVE PLANT PESTS (eggs, larvae, pupae, caterpillars and adults).

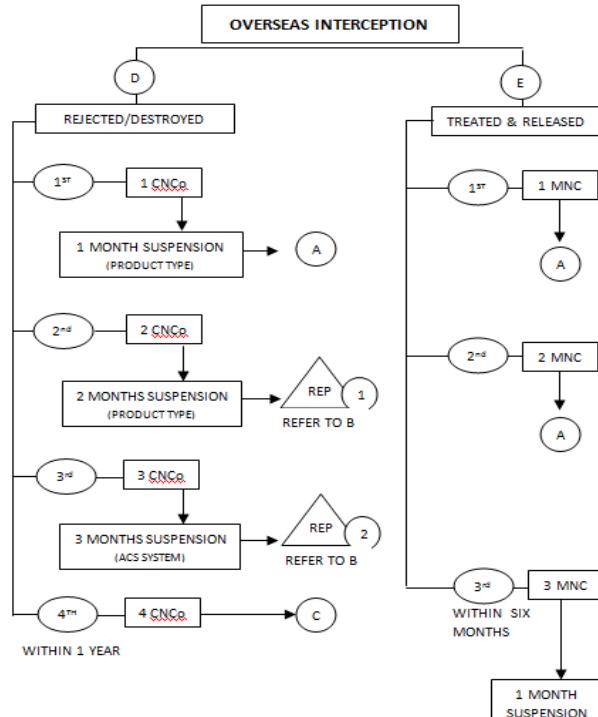
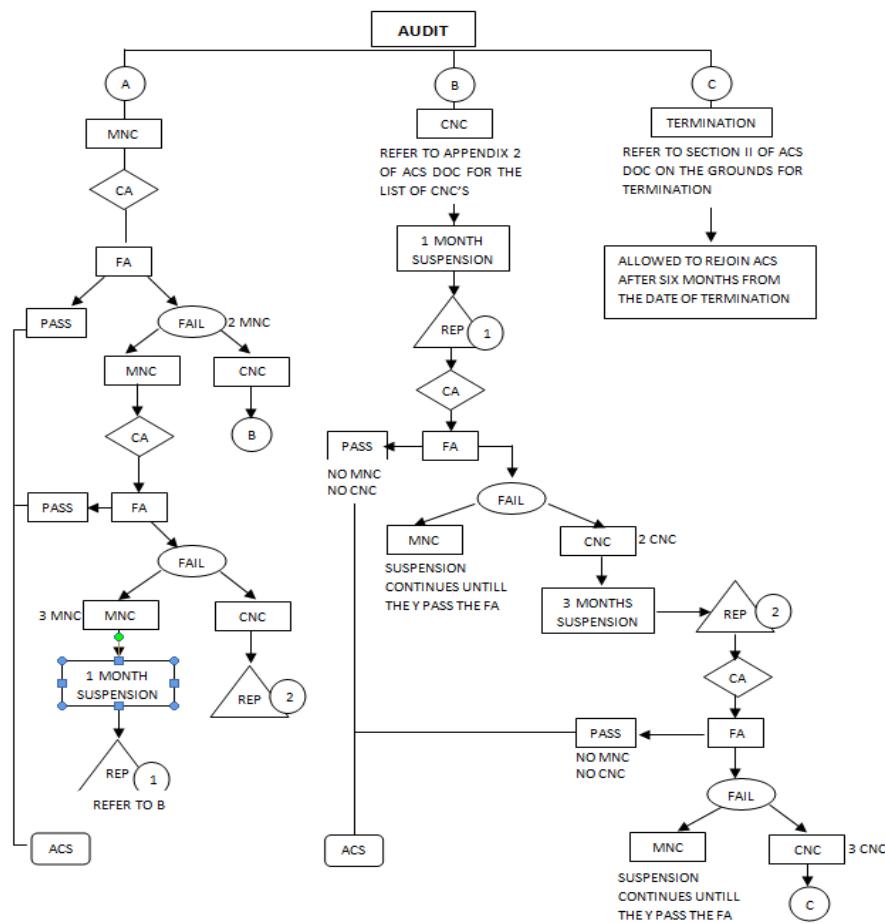
REJECTION CRITERIA: If any live plant pests (all stages) are found in the inspection lot, the lot would be rejected and the exporter has to resort to the following corrective actions namely re- dipping in appropriate chemical or washing and carry out end point inspection again and document it.

* The sampling rate in Para 1 is based on a 95% probability of finding a 1% level of infestation, with a maximum sample size of 20% of the consignment for consignments less than 2000 units. (This is to avoid having a disproportionate impact on smaller consignments.) Above 2000 units, 300 units will be sampled.



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Appendix 5 DEALING WITH NON-COMPLIANCES: FLOWCHART



CA - CORRECTIVE ACTION
FA - FOLLOW UP AUDIT
REP - REINSTATEMENT PROCEDURE
MNC - MAJOR NONCOMPLIANCE
CNC - CRITICAL NONCOMPLIANCE
CNCO - CRITICAL NONCOMPLIANCE OVERSEAS INTERCEPTION