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Introduction:

This document is intended to give interested persons or companies an overview of the OCCP standards for Organic Aquaculture. Organic aquaculture is considered to be part of animal husbandry and the general principles thereof also apply. OCCP standards was adopted by the Philippine National Standards on Organic Agriculture and Processing in 2005 after undergoing a series of public consultations

Minimum Requirements:

1. General

- Organic fishery is carried out in such a manner that produces the least effect on local biological processes and the environmental integrity of the surrounding water and land areas.
- It complies with all fishery and related environmental laws, codes of conduct for responsible fisheries and social/ ethical standards
- It precludes illegal and indiscriminate practices, including all other destructive fishing practices such as the use of noxious substances and fine mesh nets, scare fishing, blast fishing and use of very intense lighting

2. Conversion Period


- For aquaculture= approximately three years.
- This can be prolonged or shortened based on farm history and farming practices and condition of the fish farm and its immediate perimeter (not less than 200 meters onward from the farm).
- For capture fishery, the conversion period shall depend on operators' compliance with all established requirements, codes of conduct, fishery/environmental laws and social/ethical standards.

3. Site

- Compliance with local and national regulations on zoning
- Strict prohibition on fishing in "no take zones", fish sanctuaries, protected areas and marine reservations
- Installations should be within defined zones

4. Environmental and Water Management

- Compliance with the maximum sustainable yield and catch limits as established by BFAR, DENR and LGUs
- The sources of water should have the least risk of pollution. These must be tested twice a year for presence of contaminants such as heavy metals, pesticide residues, and hormone disrupting chemicals.
- The water quality of source water bodies must not become significantly deteriorated due to farming operation

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- Feed wastage or feces, which are collected must be used as fertiliser in organic agriculture or in other appropriate applications
- The following are some prohibited acts:
 - Catching of endangered and preserved species
 - Use of noxious substances
 - Smothering/destruction of corals and sea grasses and cutting down of mangroves and any resembling plants that grow in dense groves along tidal coasts

5. Stock/Seed Selection and Stocking Practices

- Stock/seeds must come from organic hatcheries
- If organic organisms are commercially unavailable stock from non-organic hatcheries may be used provided at least 99% of the biomass gain occurs under organic management.
- Introduction of exotic species is restricted
- Genetically engineered species and monoculture is prohibited

6. Breeding

- Producers must develop stock resistant to local disease pathogens and ensures genetic diversity. Breeds must be chosen that are adapted to local conditions.
- Brought-in aquatic organisms must come from organic sources.

7. Fish Welfare and Health Management


- Producers must carry out hygienic routines and routine examinations to detect nascent diseases and production disturbances
- When treatment is necessary, the use of natural methods and medicines must be the first choice
- Conventional veterinary drugs/ chemicals and vaccinations may only be used if no other justifiable alternative is available. This always requires approval by OCCP.
- Some prohibited acts: Lethal, harassing, or damaging means to deter predators; Use of synthetic compounds.

8. Nutrition and Feeding

- All feed ingredients must be derived from certified organic ingredients and sustainable wild feed resources
- Feed must only be offered in a way that allows natural feeding behaviour and minimizes loss of feed to the environment
- Combining feed production with nutrient cycling through polyculture is strongly encouraged

9. Parallel Production in Aquaculture

- In open water systems, conventional and organic production units must be physically separated by a minimum of **200 m** from conventional farms and subject to the approval of OCCP.
- For land-based installations, there must be physical barriers such that water cannot circulate between organically certified and conventional units.
- The growing of various species of filter plants in treatment ponds is encouraged

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10. Harvest, Handling and Storage

- Harvest, handling and transportation must minimize the stress inflicted on, and suffering of the organisms.
- The handling and harvest of animals must be carried out in such a manner that will optimize the quality of the product without synthetic additives.
- Organic and conventional fishery products must be stored in separate storage facilities.
- Storage facilities must always be kept thoroughly clean and free from decaying wastes, slime and foul smell
- Cleaning and sanitation of storage facilities shall follow requirements stated in Animal Husbandry

11. Labelling

- Only products that are produced, handled and processed according to these Standards may be labeled as "produce of organic agriculture" or similar
 - **"certified organic" or similar**- minimum of 95% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin and should carry the logo of the certification program
 - **"made with organic ingredients"**- less than 95% but not less than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin and there is a clear statement of the proportion of the organic ingredients. An indication that the product is covered by the certification program may be used, close to the indication of the proportion of organic ingredients
 - Where less than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin, the **indication that an ingredient is organic may appear in the ingredient list**. Such product may not be called "organic".


Records and Traceability:

The company must maintain updated documents of the following, containing key information to allow evaluation of compliance with standards:

1. Map of site and units
 - location of cages/pens/ponds; source of water (for ponds); eventual sources of pollution; location of marine protected areas, no catch zones and fishing zones; storage facilities
2. Production diary
 - information on general handling, reproduction, veterinary treatments, inputs used and special observations; pond preparation, fertilization, control of predators, etc
3. Yield and Sales Records
4. Other supporting documents- receipts, invoices

These documents must be maintained for at least three years after harvest and be available for inspection at all times.

The operator has to establish a system for assuring traceability and ensuring that sold products actually come from approved areas.

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Knowledge:

The operator has to study and keep a copy (hard copy or electronic file) of the respective standards, regulations and laws

The operator needs to have adequate knowledge on organic aquaculture rules and technologies

Note:

Please be aware that this is only a selection of the essential requirements of the standards and everyone is advised to get a copy of the standards and study all the requirements of the standards. A copy of the OCCP standards may be obtained from the OCCP website www.occp.phils.org while the Philippine National Standards may be obtained from the DA-BAFPS website