

FACT SHEET

Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) and Certification Assurance (CA) arrangements

What is Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) and Certification Assurance (CA)?

The ICA and CA Scheme is a national plant health certification scheme accepted by all States and Territories. The Scheme is based on quality management principles. It provides a harmonised approach to the audit and accreditation of businesses throughout Australia and the mutual recognition of Plant Health Assurance Certificates (PHACs) issued by an accredited biosecurity certifier accompanying consignments of produce moving interstate.

These PHACs issued by an accredited biosecurity certifier have the same legal force as Plant Health Certificates (PHCs) issued by approved Departmental Biosecurity Certifiers.

Applying

Who may apply for accreditation?

An application must be made by the **legal entity** which owns and operates the business to be covered by the ICA or CA Arrangement. The following legal entities may be accredited as a Biosecurity Certifier:

- Individuals
- Incorporated companies
- Registered Co-operative Associations, and
- Partnerships or Trusts.

In the case of Partnerships, an application can be made which will need to be signed by each of the partners OR one partner can apply to be accredited as an individual with the other partners listed as Responsible Personnel.

In the case of trusts, an application must be made by the trustee NOT the Trust.

Companies must provide their Australian Company Number (ACN) OR Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN) and attach a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation. Co-operative associations must provide appropriate proof of registration (either a copy of the Certificate of Registration OR Registration search from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs).

When should I apply?

An application should be made **at least 60 working days** prior to the date on which you intend to commence certifying produce under the ICA or CA Arrangement.

Applications for multiple arrangements can be made through the one [application form](#). Application fees will be charged per arrangement.

Where do I send the application form?

ICA Scheme information and current ICA or CA Procedures and application forms are available from Plant Biosecurity, NSW Department of Primary Industries.

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/ica

Completed applications or requests for further information should be forwarded to:

Biosecurity Certification

PO Box 232
Taree NSW 2430

Phone: 02 6552 3000 Fax: 02 6552 7239

Email: bfs.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Audit and accreditation

Desk Audit

When an application is received, it will be reviewed by a certification officer to ensure all information is filled and current. The Department will issue a pending advice letter to the business to inform them of the next step. If additional information or

clarification is required a Departmental officer will be in contact.

Accreditation Audit (on-site)

After your application has been accepted, a Departmental compliance officer will contact you to arrange a time to carry out an **accreditation audit** of your ICA or CA Arrangement/s. This will be arranged within 60 days from the date of the pending advice letter.

The accreditation audit is carried out to ensure that the system described in your application is implemented and capable of operating in accordance with the ICA or CA Arrangement/s referenced in your application. The audit also confirms that the system implemented is effective in ensuring compliance with the specified requirements of the ICA or CA Arrangement and legislation.

Only after a successful accreditation audit will applicants be issued a Certificate of Accreditation and a book of PHACs from the Biosecurity Certification unit.

Additional books of 100 PHACs can be purchased from the Biosecurity Certification unit.

Compliance audits

Within 60 days of a successful accreditation audit, a Departmental compliance officer will contact the business to arrange a **compliance audit** to verify that the ICA or CA Arrangement/s continue to operate in accordance with the documented procedures.

On-going scheduled compliance audits will be carried out at defined intervals dependent on the ICA or CA Arrangement/s for which the business is accredited.

Random compliance audits

Random compliance audits will be conducted on several accredited businesses annually. This audit may take the form of a full compliance audit. Audit fees will not be applied to random compliance audits.

Investigatory audits

Un-scheduled compliance audits may be carried out to investigate reported or suspected non-conformance by an accredited business.

Renewal of accreditation

The business is required to re-apply for their accreditation prior to the expiry date. Businesses seeking renewal must lodge a renewal application prior to their accreditation lapsing or, if

accreditation has lapsed, a new application must be completed.

A business may not commence or continue certification of produce under an ICA or CA Arrangement unless it is in possession of a valid and current 'Certificate of Accreditation as a Biosecurity Certifier' for the Procedure, produce type and chemical (if applicable) covered by the PHAC.

Fees & charges

The table below sets out the fees charged by the Department.

Fees & Charges	Cost (\$) inclusive of GST	Comments
Application fee	\$255.00 \$750.00	1 year 5 years
Desk audit	No fee charged	
Accreditation & compliance audit	\$150.00 per hour charged in 15 minute increments	At least 30 mins (travel included in audit charge)
Renewal fee	\$160.00	Applies at end of accreditation term
PHAC book (100 Certificates)	\$22.00	

Non-conformance, suspension and cancellation of accreditation

Detection of a non-conformance

Detection of a non-conformance in produce or in the business's ICA or CA processes or procedures will result in an investigation by a Departmental compliance officer to determine the cause.

The business will be advised in writing of the nature of the non-conformance, referencing (where appropriate) the relevant sections of the ICA or CA Procedure and an agreed time-frame for completion of any corrective action needed to rectify the non-conformance and prevent reoccurrence.

Suspension and cancellation of accreditation

It is a condition of accreditation that the accredited person must implement and operate the ICA or CA Arrangement system in accordance with the relevant conditions of accreditation.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* provides Departmental officers a range of enforcement tools ranging from written directions to Penalty Infringement Notices.

Accreditation may therefore be suspended or cancelled for contravention of accreditation conditions including failure to pay fees.

Failure to comply with the ICA or CA Procedure may constitute grounds for suspension or cancellation of the accreditation.

Reconsiderations

A business which has had its accreditation refused, suspended or cancelled may lodge an application for reconsideration of the decision setting out the grounds for reconsideration.

Applications for reconsideration should be sent to:

Biosecurity Certification

PO Box 232
Taree NSW 2430

Phone: 02 6552 3000 Fax: 02 6552 7239

Email: bfs.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au

A business which has had certified produce refused entry by an importing State or Territory authority should initially contact the Regulatory Compliance Manager on 02 6391 3384.

Amendments to accreditation details

You need to advise Biosecurity Certification if your details change during the accreditation period, such as your:

- postal address
- contact numbers, or
- Responsible Personnel – person/s identified to sign PHACs on behalf of the applicant.

Any changes in regard to partnership agreements or other changes require you to complete a variation form and send to Biosecurity Certification.

If you require a variation or additional ICA or CA Procedure/s you must complete a new application form and send to Biosecurity Certification.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (February 2019). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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