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Directorate General of Foreign Trade's Public Notice : A New Framework for Organic Exports

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The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has issued **Public Notice No. 39/2024-25** on January 5, 2025, outlining updated procedures for exporting certified organic products. This notice supersedes Public Notice No. 73 (RE-2013)/2009-2014, dated November 18, 2014, and Public Notice No. 10/2015-2020, dated May 5, 2015.

This latest framework aims to strengthen India's organic export ecosystem while maintaining compliance with international standards.

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National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)

The **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)** has been pivotal in promoting chemical-free agriculture and sustainable farming practices in India. Administered by the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** under the Ministry of Commerce, the NPOP sets certification standards, accredits certification bodies, and facilitates organic production and marketing.

With its extensive agro-climatic diversity and rich traditions of organic farming, India ranks second globally in terms of organic agricultural land and leads in the number of organic producers (FIBL & IFOAM Yearbook, 2024). Indian organic products certified under the NPOP are recognized as equivalent to European Commission and Swiss standards, facilitating exports to these regions. Negotiations are also underway with countries like Australia, South Korea, and Canada to expand market access.

India's Organic Growth: Key Facts and Figures

As of March 31, 2024, India has:

- **7.3 million hectares** of land under organic certification (cultivated and wild harvest areas).
- **3.6 million MT** of certified organic production in 2023-24, with Maharashtra as the largest producer and fiber crops as the dominant category.
- Exported **261,029 MT** of organic products, generating **INR 4,007.91 crore**, with major markets being the USA, EU, and Japan.

Madhya Pradesh leads in certified organic land, underscoring the regional potential for organic farming.

Key Highlights of the Public Notice

The notice emphasizes the importance of maintaining organic certification integrity throughout the export process. Notable guidelines include:

1. **Certification Standards:** Only products that comply with the NPOP standards, as available on the APEDA website, will be certified as organic. Amendments to these standards will apply as required.
2. **Transaction Certificates (TC):** Exports will only be allowed if accompanied by a TC issued by a certification body accredited by the National Accreditation Body (NAB) under NPOP.
3. **Implementation Timeline:** The 8th edition of the NPOP will come into effect 180 days from the notice date, ensuring ample preparation time for stakeholders.

Conclusion

The updated guidelines underscore India's commitment to ensuring the credibility and global competitiveness of its organic exports. By aligning with international standards and expanding certification processes, the DGFT aims to bolster India's position as a leader in organic agriculture. As global demand for organic products continues to grow, this streamlined procedure ensures that Indian exporters are well-positioned to meet international expectations while promoting sustainable agricultural practices at home.

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