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Offshore Greenhouse Certification Program Questions and Answers

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Find answers to common questions related to the Offshore Greenhouse Certification Program (OGCP).

General

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What is the Offshore Greenhouse Certification Program (OGCP)?

OGCP is an APHIS PPQ certification program for offshore facilities that produce eligible generally admissible unrooted plant cuttings under a systems approach to reduce the risk of pests and diseases from entering the United States. Facilities that participate in the program may benefit from a reduced inspection frequency at the U.S. plant inspection stations for consignment that meet the eligibility criteria. Participation in the OGCP is **voluntary**, and it is not a condition of entry for generally admissible plants.

Who can participate?

Any offshore producer that meets the program's requirements.

What are the program's eligibility criteria?

- Produce [eligible](#) generally admissible unrooted plant cuttings
- Meet all the permit and import requirements stated in 7 CFR 319.37 and the [Plants for Planting Manual](#)
- Production site is certified by APHIS
- Use the [APHIS Core message set](#) (U.S. Customs and Border Protection)

What are the benefits of participating in the OGCP?

Eligible consignments may benefit from a reduced frequency of inspection at the U.S. port of entry.

Consignment - A quantity of plants, plant products or other articles being moved from one country to another and covered, when required, by a single phytosanitary certificate (a consignment may be composed of one or more commodities or lots). [IPPC, 2016a]

What is the process of joining the program?

- Interested offshore producers must send an official request to APHIS through the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) expressing their interest in participating in the OGCP.
- Establish a Cooperative Service Agreement between APHIS and the offshore facility.
- Establish a trust fund agreement to transfer funds to APHIS for the annual certification audits.

Where can I find additional information?

Please visit the [OGCP website](#) for the program's framework and list of eligible plant taxa.

For additional questions or information, please send an email to ogcp@usda.gov.

Is there an OGCP-specific language in the phytosanitary certificate?

Yes. The National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of the exporting country must include the below additional declaration in the phytosanitary certificate indicating that the consignment is eligible for the OGCP and include the approved facility number.

*"All plant taxa in this consignment were produced and prepared for export from [**approved facility number**] in accordance with the Offshore Greenhouse Certification Program."*

Notes

1. NPPOs should verify that all plant taxa in an OGCP consignment are eligible for the program.
2. Non-eligible consignments (e.g. commingled), **must not** include the OGCP language in the additional declaration.
3. The approved facility number is assigned by the NPPO and must not exceed a total of 15 characters.

Participating Offshore Producers

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When is the annual facility certification audit?

Facility certification takes place during the peak plant production and harvesting period.

What is going to be evaluated during the annual full system audit?

The lead auditor will evaluate the facility against the OGCP framework and checklist.

Who performs the annual facility certification audit?

A certified APHIS auditor in collaboration with a NPPO representative and, if available, a local APHIS staff. In some circumstances, two or more certified auditors might be needed.

What is included in the cost of the certification audit/site visit?

The cost of the certification audit includes the salary, benefits, overtime (if applicable), travel, accommodations and overhead for the auditor(s). If several facilities will be audited in one trip, the travel costs can be divided among all the facilities.

Are there any application fees?

There are no application fees to participate in the program.

Do importers need to register?

Importers do not need to register.

How long is the certification valid?

The certification is valid for one year. To maintain certification, a full system certification audit is required every year.

If corrective action requests (CAR) are issued during the audit, the facility will be certified once all CARs are closed.

How long is the certification process?

It can take up to 6 months from the planning phase to certification. APHIS will notify the facility and will send an official letter to the NPPO once the facility is approved and certified.

Can I commingle OGCP eligible and non-eligible plant taxa in the same consignment?

No. To benefit from the program only OGCP-eligible plant taxa must be in the consignment.

Example

If you are bringing a truck with *Abelia sp.* (eligible for the OGCP) and *Pelargonium sp.* (non-eligible for the OGCP), that cargo will **not** be eligible for OGCP and will be inspected at the full rate at the port of entry.

Can I commingle plants from different certified facilities in the same consignment?

No. To benefit from the program the consignment must be comprised of plants from one certified facility.

Example

OGCP-participating facilities, A and B, are close to each other and decide to commingle their plants into one consignment to the U.S. This consignment will **not** be eligible for OGCP and will be inspected at the full rate at the port of entry.

Can I commingle different propagative materials (e.g. rooted and unrooted cuttings) in the same consignment?

No, to benefit from the program the consignment must have **only** unrooted cuttings.

Example

If you include rooted and unrooted cuttings of *Abelia sp.* (eligible for OGCP) in the same consignment, it will **not** be eligible for the OGCP and will be inspected at the full rate at the port of entry.

What if I need/decide to commingle?

Every commercial consignment with commingled plant taxa, facilities, propagative materials etc., will be inspected at full rate at the port of entry.

What happens if the facility is not in conformance with the OGCP framework?

The facility will **not** be eligible to participate in the program until it is in conformance with the OGCP framework.

What happens if a quarantine pest is found in any unrooted cuttings consignment from an OGCP- certified facility?

1. Plant Inspection Station (PIS) will issue an Emergency Action Notification (EAN)
2. Shipment will be destroyed, re-exported or treated
3. Facility will be automatically suspended from the program and the facility's consignments will undergo 100% frequency of inspection for next 5 shipments.
 - i. If no other quarantine pests are found in those 5 shipments, the facility may be reinstated, and the suspension removed by APHIS.
 - ii. If another quarantine pest is found in those 5 shipments, the facility will continue to be suspended until issue is resolved.
4. Before reinstatement, APHIS will communicate with NPPO and offshore facility to discuss and agree on mitigation actions to reduce the risk of future pest interceptions.

What is the process to add additional plant taxa to the OGCP plant taxa list?

Offshore facility sends a list of the new plant taxa to the OGCP program manager at ogcpP@usda.gov. The program manager will submit a request to PPQ's risk managers for review. If approved, the new plant taxa will be added to the [OGCP plant taxa list](#) after notifying the offshore facility.

Note

The review process for new plant taxa may take several months; please submit new plant taxa well in advance of the shipping season.

Brokers

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How can I identify when a consignment is eligible for the OGCP?

The NPPO must add language in the phytosanitary certificate (under additional declaration) acknowledging that the consignment is OGCP-eligible. This language must also include the certified facility number. Brokers can use this language to identify an OGCP consignment.

What information is required in the APHIS Core message set for an OGCP consignment?

- Certified facility number
- List of OGCP-eligible plant taxa
- Producer Name
- Use the grower code “AG1”

What information is required in the APHIS Core message set for a consignment not eligible for the OGCP but from an OGCP-certified facility?

- Certified facility number
- Producer Name
- Use the grower code “DF1”

Where can I confirm the spelling and taxonomic name of a plant taxa?

Please use the [ARM System Propagative Name Validation List](#) and the [OGCP-eligible plant taxa list](#) to verify plant taxonomic names.

Please note that some plant taxa must be at the species level to be eligible for the program. See list of OGCP-eligible plant taxa list to confirm.

ARM will recognize spp. or sp. Either option is correct.

What is the grower code for OGCP consignments?

Use the grower code “AG1” when **all** the plant taxa in the consignment are eligible for the OGCP.

What is the grower code for a consignment not eligible for the OGCP (e.g. commingled with non-eligible plant taxa or non-eligible propagative types)?

Use “DFI” as the grower code when a consignment is **not** eligible for the OGCP.

Who should I contact for questions about the APHIS Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)?

Please email questions about ACE to ace.itds@usda.gov.

Where can I find more information about the APHIS Core message set?

1. [ACE Appendix PGA- Code reference Table](#) (*U.S. Customs and Border Protection*)
2. [ACE PGA Message Set Implementation Guide](#) (*U.S. Customs and Border Protection*)

3. [Filing APHIS Core Message Set Data in ACE](#)

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