

Organic Certification for Food and Farm Goods From India

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Organic from India runs on two systems. India's NPOP certifies farms and exporters and issues a TraceNet transaction certificate per shipment, and each buying market decides whether it accepts that. The EU accepts NPOP only for unprocessed plant products and only until its recognition runs out, and the US stopped accepting it in 2021. This guide shows importers what to check and walks an exporter through certification.

The Short Version

- An organic certificate covers how the crop was grown and handled. It is not a residue or heavy-metal test.
- For the US, the Indian supplier needs a USDA-accredited certifier. NPOP alone has not been enough since July 2022.
- For the EU, NPOP covers unprocessed plant products only, and that recognition expires on 31 Dec 2026 unless the proposed extension is adopted. Check its status before you contract for 2027.
- Every Indian organic export needs a TraceNet transaction certificate. Ask for it per shipment and check it on APEDA's e-verification page.
- Check the certification body's status in the destination market on the day you buy. The EU has removed Indian control bodies before.

Here's a question to ask your Indian supplier before you look at any certificate. Organic for which market? It sounds pedantic, but it's the whole subject. In late 2021 the EU removed several of the largest control bodies certifying Indian organic produce from its list, after a long run of organic sesame and other consignments turned up ethylene oxide ([Soil Association](#), November 2021). That same year the US ended its arrangement with India altogether, so an Indian NPOP certificate stopped being enough for US

organic ([USDA FAS](#)). Overnight, a farm that was "certified organic" was still organic in India, but not in the same way in Rotterdam or Los Angeles.



So this guide starts with what each market accepts, then gives the importer's checks, then the exporter's steps under India's National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). It's one of our [certification guides](#).

1. Two Systems, One Shipment

NPOP is India's organic programme, run by APEDA under the Ministry of Commerce. A National Accreditation Body accredits certification bodies, and those bodies inspect and certify farms, grower groups, processors and exporters to the NPOP standard. The 8th edition of the NPOP regulation and procedures came out in 2024 ([APEDA NPOP](#)).

TraceNet is APEDA's online traceability system. Under DGFT's Public Notice 39/2024–25, a product can be exported from India as organic only if it was produced, processed, packed and labelled to NPOP and goes with a transaction certificate (TC) issued through TraceNet by an accredited body. A provisional TC goes with the consignment for Indian customs, and a final TC replaces it. Organic textiles are the exception. DGFT later said the TC rule doesn't apply to them, because textiles sit outside NPOP's categories ([DGFT notice, via TEXPROCIL](#)). For organic cotton and GOTS, see [textile certifications](#).

Then the **buying market** decides whether it trusts NPOP. That's the part buyers miss.

2. What Each Market Accepts From India

Market	What it accepts	What that means for you
European Union	NPOP for unprocessed plant products, under the old equivalence regime. Processed goods need a control body the EU recognises directly	Recognition expires 31 Dec 2026. The Commission proposed extending it to 31 Dec 2036 (Dec 2025). We found no sign it has been adopted. Check before you contract
United States	Only a USDA-accredited certifying agent. NPOP recognition ended 11 Jan 2021, and the transition ended 12 Jul 2022	The supplier holds a USDA organic certificate, and each shipment needs an NOP Import Certificate
Switzerland, Taiwan, Australia	Listed by APEDA as equivalence or MRA partners	Check the scope with your own authority
United Kingdom	Check the current GB list of recognised bodies and countries	Ask your UK certifier which Indian bodies it accepts
UAE, Saudi Arabia, others	Varies	Check with your authority or certifier

The EU line needs the most care. Recognitions granted under the old regulation end on 31 December 2026 under Article 48 of Regulation 2018/848, and the Council gave the Commission a mandate to negotiate organic trade agreements with India and ten others ([Council Decision 2021/1345](#)). In December 2025 the Commission proposed moving the date to 31 December 2036 to avoid disrupting trade ([COM\(2025\) 780](#)). As of 17 October 2026 we couldn't find that it had become law. If you're signing a contract for organic Indian spices or pulses delivered in 2027, put the status in writing with your EU certifier first.

3. What an Importer Should Check

An organic certificate says the product was grown and handled under an organic standard, with an inspected chain. It doesn't say the lot is clean. A food safety manager at a US spice company put it well - an Indian organic certificate is paperwork, not proof of heavy-metal testing (r/Cooking, 2024, our forum signal FS-CAT-078). The 2021 EU removals happened because certified organic lots carried ethylene oxide. So test organic lots the same way you test conventional ones ([food import testing](#)).

Then check the paper.

1. **The scope certificate.** Ask for the supplier's current certificate. Check the operator name, the address, the products listed and the standard (NPOP, EU, or USDA NOP). A certificate for "turmeric" doesn't cover turmeric powder if processing isn't in scope.
2. **The certifier's status in your market.** For the EU, the body must be on the current EU list for India. For the US, it must be a USDA-accredited certifier. Bodies are added and removed, so check on the day.
3. **The transaction certificate for this shipment.** Every organic export from India carries a TraceNet TC. Check it on APEDA's e-verification link for TCs under NPOP ([APEDA NPOP portal](#)). The TC quantity should match your invoice, and the lot numbers should match the packing list.
4. **Your own import document.** For the EU, an electronic certificate of inspection (COI) in TRACES, endorsed before release. For the US, the NOP Import Certificate from the supplier's certifier. Your broker files the entry.



Red flags. A certificate that expired last season with "renewal in process". A TC that covers far more tonnage than the farm group could grow. A product on the TC described more broadly than on the scope certificate. A trader with a certificate that lists only trading, selling a product it claims to grow. None of this means a supplier is out to cheat you. Merchant exporters buying from certified grower groups are normal in Indian organic trade. It means you check that the chain of certificates reaches the farm.

4. What to Ask the Supplier For and When

- **Before the sample:** the scope certificate, the certifier's name, and which market's standard it covers.
- **At the PO:** the standard you need on the TC (NOP for EU unprocessed, USDA NOP for the US), the lot sizes, and the clause that the lot will be tested for residues before shipment.

- **Before sailing:** the provisional TC from TraceNet, and the test report for the same lot.
- **After sailing:** the final TC, and for the EU, the data your importer needs to complete the COI.

Following a grower group's certificate back to the farms, sitting in on the lot sampling and making sure the TC matches the container is the kind of on-the-ground work [SourcingSync](#) handles for buyers.

5. Who Certifies in India

APEDA is NPOP's secretariat. The National Accreditation Body accredits certification bodies, and APEDA publishes the list of accredited bodies on the [NPOP portal](#). A certification body inspects the operator, issues the scope certificate and issues TCs through TraceNet. Under the 8th edition, organic grower groups have their own legal status in place of the old internal control system arrangement (APEDA, as reported on launch in January 2025).

For the US, the Indian operator also needs a certifier accredited by USDA. Several international certifiers that work in India hold USDA accreditation. Check the USDA list for the current names. We don't recommend any.

6. How an Indian Exporter Gets Certified

Step 1 – Decide which markets you'll sell to. NPOP for India and for the EU's unprocessed products, USDA NOP for the US, and possibly both. One inspection can often cover several standards if the body is accredited for them. Ask.

Step 2 – Choose an accredited certification body. Pick one from APEDA's list for NPOP and, for the US, one from USDA's list. Ask for its scope for your

product category and what it charges (check the current fee with the body).

Step 3 – Apply and send the documents. Usually: land records or lease, field maps, crop plans, input records, processing and storage details, and for grower groups, the list of members with their plots. The body opens your file on TraceNet.

Step 4 – Go through conversion. Land isn't organic the day you apply. Commonly cited NPOP periods are two years for annual crops and three for perennials, counted before harvest (check the current period in the NPOP procedures, as it can be shortened under conditions). Keep records from day one.

Step 5 – Inspection. The body visits farms, stores and processing units, interviews staff and may take samples for residue tests. Visits can also be unannounced, so keep records current all year.

Step 6 – Fix non-conformities and receive the scope certificate. It lists the operator, products and activities. Renew every year, with an annual inspection.

Step 7 – Apply for a TC for each shipment. Enter the lot on TraceNet. The body issues a provisional TC before shipping and a final TC after. Check the TC against your invoice and packing list before it goes.

Step 8 – Send the buyer the paper. The scope certificate, the TC, the residue test for the lot, and for the EU, the details the importer needs to complete the COI in TRACES.



Common reasons for trouble: residue findings (most often ethylene oxide or pesticide drift from neighbouring fields), mismatched quantities between TC and invoice, processing done in a unit not covered by the certificate, and buyers getting goods certified to the wrong market standard.

7. A Worked Example With Sesame for Hamburg and Chicago

This example is an illustration built from the rules above, not a real firm.

Say a trader in Gujarat buys organic hulled sesame from a grower group in Rajasthan and sells half to a German importer and half to a US bakery supplier.

Hulled sesame has been processed, so for the EU it needs a control body the EU recognises for processed products, not just NPOP. The US half needs a USDA-accredited certifier for the grower group, the hulling unit and the trader. That's three certificates in the chain, and the trader's must list trading and the hulling unit's must list hulling.

Sesame is also where the EU found ethylene oxide in 79 of 197 Indian notifications in our count, and Salmonella in 69 (RASFF, 2021 to 2026, [our rejection study](#)). Organic doesn't change that. So each lot gets a residue and Salmonella test before shipping, with the same lot number on the test report, the TC and the invoice. For the sesame market itself, see the [sesame page](#).

FAQ

Is the India Organic logo valid in Europe? 

It shows NPOP certification. In the EU, the EU organic logo rules apply. Ask your certifier how to label.

Can I sell NPOP-certified goods as organic in the US? 

What happens to Indian organic in the EU on 1 January 2027? 

Does an organic certificate mean the lot passed a pesticide test? 

8. Next Steps

- For lab tests on organic lots, see [food import testing](#).
- For organic cotton, see [textile certifications](#) and [getting GOTS, OEKO-TEX and GRS certified](#).

- For plant health paper on the same shipment, see phytosanitary certificates.
- Border rules: EU, US, UK, Australia.
- All certificates: certifications.