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Guidance Document

Technical Requirements for
Agricultural commodity grading

*A guide to implementation of Nigeria Agricultural
Commodity Standards Grading Policy Framework
2025 -2030.*

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NIGERIA AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY STANDARDS GRADING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Guidance Document on Implementation of Commodity Standards Grading

Introduction

Commodity standards grading is a systematic approach to classify and evaluate the quality of agricultural products. This system ensures consistency, quality, and safety, facilitating trade and building consumer trust. This document provides guidance and technical implementation support to stakeholders willing to implement the relevant provisions of Nigeria Agricultural Commodity Standards grading policy. This document outlines the steps to implement commodity standards grading procedure effectively.

This document can be used by private sector actors wishing to take advantage of the opportunities provided by grading system to maximise their return on investment in agricultural commodity trading whether buying or selling. It will be useful to aggregators of commodities, commodity exchange centres, and aggregation hubs.

The attempt here is to answer practical questions bordering on 'how, why, by who, and when' related to commodity grading exercise either in small scale or national large scale. The tools proposed here are applicable at all levels of commodity trading.

Objectives

- **Ensure Quality and Safety:** Establish standards that guarantee the quality and safety of commodities.
- **Facilitate Trade:** Create a common language for buyers and sellers, simplifying transactions, introducing transparency, predictability and confidence in commodity trading financial data.
- **Promote Fair Pricing:** Enable fair pricing based on the quality of the commodity making it possible for farmers and commodity aggregators to access finance using bankable proposals and projections made using graded commodity pricing system.
- **Enhance Market Access:** Improve access to both domestic and international markets. It is our hope that application of the prescribed tools here will end the rejections of Nigeria's agricultural commodities at destination countries.

Supporting Vision of the Policy

This guidance document provides support to the Nigeria Agricultural Commodity Grading policy to ensure actualisation of the text and spirit of policy. Embracing the same by stakeholders will result in a boom in farming, processing, commodity trading and export of Nigeria's agricultural commodity.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Establishing Standards

- **Identify Key Commodities:** Determine which commodities require grading standards.
- **Research Existing Standards:** Review national and international standards (e.g., Codex Alimentarius, ISO, ARSO, SON, USDA, CEN, CENELEC, ETSI and other standards) to understand best practices.
- **Consult Stakeholders:** Engage with farmers, traders, consumers, and regulatory bodies to gather input and ensure the standards meet market needs.

2. Developing Grading Criteria

- **Define Quality Parameters:** Establish clear, measurable criteria such as size, colour, weight, moisture content, and purity.
- **Create Grading Categories:** Develop categories (e.g., Grade A, Grade B) based on the defined quality parameters.
- **Pilot Testing:** Conduct pilot tests to refine the grading criteria and categories.

3. Certification and Compliance

- **Certification Process:** Develop a certification process for commodities that meet the established standards.
- **Training and Education:** Provide training for farmers, traders, and inspectors on the grading standards and certification process.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Implement a system for regular monitoring and enforcement of the standards.

4. Infrastructure and Resources

- **Laboratory Facilities:** Establish or upgrade laboratories for testing and certifying commodities.
- **Inspection Services:** Develop a network of trained inspectors to ensure compliance with the standards.
- **Information Systems:** Implement information systems to track and manage grading and certification data in such a way that traceability is guaranteed.

5. Communication and Outreach

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate stakeholders about the benefits of commodity standards grading.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Maintain ongoing communication with stakeholders to address concerns and gather feedback.
- **Market Promotion:** Promote graded commodities in domestic and international markets to enhance their value and demand.

Challenges and Solutions

- **Resistance to Change:** Address resistance by demonstrating the benefits of grading standards through pilot projects and success stories.
- **Resource Constraints:** Seek funding and technical assistance from government agencies, international organizations, and private sector partners.
- **Maintaining Consistency:** Ensure consistent application of standards through regular training and audits.

Conclusion

Implementing commodity standards grading is essential for ensuring the quality and safety of agricultural products, facilitating trade, and promoting fair pricing. By following the steps outlined in this document, stakeholders can develop and maintain effective grading systems that benefit the entire supply chain.

PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING GRADING SYSTEM FOR SELECTED COMMODITIES

A Practical Guide

STEP 1. STANDARDS

1.2 NAME OF A COMMODITY: -----

1.3 COMMODITY DESCRIPTIONS -----

1.4 IS THERE ANY EXISTING STANDARDS YES OR NO

1.5 IF YES, CHOOSE ONE

TYPE	NATIONAL	CONTINENTAL	GLOBAL
	DESTINATION MARKET	BUYERS SPECIFICATION	INDUSTRIAL SPECIFICATION

1.6 AVAILABLE GRADING SYSTEM YES OR NO

1.7 DO THE EXISTING GRADING MEET MARKET PREFERRED REQUIREMENTS YES OR NO

NOTE:

- a. *It is important to note that it makes better economic sense to tailor your commodity grading system to align to available or interest market for the commodity whether local or international especially if the primary driver of the grading system is access to market.*
- b. *Regardless of the choice of standards or grading types, the graded commodities shall not be found to be in non-conformity with requirements of this policy.*
- c. *Where no standards exist research existing related standards: review national and international standards (e.g., codex ALIMENTARIUS, ISO, ARSO, SON, USDA, CEN, CENELEC, ETSI and other standards) to understand best practices.*
- d. *Consult stakeholders: engage with farmers, traders, consumers, and regulatory bodies to gather input and ensure the standards meet market needs.*

2.0 GRADING

2.1 IF NO GRADE EXIST: Consult the stakeholders - Farmers, Commodity Associations, Buyers, Industrial Users and All Interest Parties.

2.2 ENGAGE – STAKEHOLDERS and begin a participatory process of developing a grading system for the commodity after agreeing on the followings:

Which standard type

Grade levels or categories (1-4)

Quality Parameters

Bagging or Packaging type

Inspection requirements

Certification / Testing

Storage conditions

Transportation requirements

(Note: the implementers may require expert assistance to navigate these requirements appropriately)

2. Developing Grading Criteria

2.1 **Define Quality Parameters:** Establish clear, measurable criteria such as size, shapes, thickness, age, colour, weight, moisture content, and purity (as may be applicable).

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Size				
Shapes				
Colour				
Weight				
Moisture content				
Purity				

Note:

1. **Create Grading Categories:** Develop categories (As above) based on the defined quality parameters unique to the commodity.
2. **Pilot Testing:** Conduct pilot tests to refine the grading criteria and categories.

3. Certification and Compliance

3.1 **Certification Process:** Develop a certification process for commodities that meet the established standards.

Who certifies			
Certification requirements			
Certifications activities			
Laboratory testing Requirements			
Packaging requirement			
Labelling Requirements			
Other requirements			

3.2 **Training and Education:** Provide training for farmers, traders, and inspectors on the grading standards and certification process.

Identify training needs
Who needs the training
What education materials are needed
What shall be the message to the market

3.3 **Compliance Monitoring:** Implement a system for regular monitoring and enforcement of the standards.

Role of inspectors	
Role of regulators	
Role of Enforcement Agencies	

3.4 Infrastructure and Resources

- a. **Laboratory Facilities:** Establish or upgrade laboratories for testing and certifying commodities.

List of required tests					
Accredited laboratories					
Locations					

- b. **Inspection Services:** Develop a network of trained inspectors to ensure compliance with the standards.

List of accredited inspectors	The contact details
Inspections guide and parameters	Published
Inspection certificates	

- 4.0 **Information Systems:** Implement information systems to track and manage grading and certification data in such a way that traceability is guaranteed.

Repository for commodity grades	
Market information	
Notifications	
Pricing information	
Trading & financial information	
Traceability information	

5.0 Communication and Outreach

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6.0 Protection of grading integrity

Commodity Association role	
Government Role	
Regulators	
Consumers Roles	
Financing Institutions role	

7.0 GRADING AND PRICING

COMMODITY / GRADE / SIZE / PRICE / WEIGHT / DESTINATION

COMMODITY	GRADE 1	PRICE/KG	PRIME MKT	ALT MKT
	GRADE 2	PRICE/KG	PRIME MKT	ALT MKT

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

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