From August 23rd. 2017, all growers certified for MPS-ABC, MPS-GAP, MPS-SQ and MPS-Q(ualiTree) can use the uniform MPS-vignette, provided with their unique MPS-number. Requirements for the use of the uniform MPS-vignette are laid down in the document “Instructions for use of uniform MPS-vignette” and can be downloaded from www.my-mps.com.

Existing customers are allowed a transitional period for the use of MPS-vignettes on packaging material, plant labels, etc. up to and including December 31, 2018. For usage of the vignette on rolling stock that is used for a long period, like cars, trucks, the transitional period is two years longer, namely up to and including December 31, 2020.

Certification standard MPS-Quality

Version 1
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The certification standard for MPS-Quality is published by:
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If there are any doubts or lack of clarity the Dutch version of the certification scheme prevails

Contents

0 General provisions

0.1 Terms and definitions

The following definitions apply:
Applicant
Company that has submitted an application to the certification body for certification for the MPS-Quality certificate.

Company
An organisation trading in products, at its own expense and risk, and that can be seen as an independent organisational and legal entity (at the level of a subsidiary company).

RI
Reliability Index: a measuring instrument measuring the reliability of information on a batch in cases of clock supply at the VBN auctions with regard to the last 100 supplied batches. This is displayed at product level.

Certificate
Proof of status that is issued to a process, product, person or organisation if there is justifiable confidence that specified requirements are being adhered to.

Certificate holder
Company that has been certified by the certification body on the basis of the certification standard, that has obtained the MPS-Quality certificate and undertakes to fulfil all obligations arising from the certification standard.

Certification body
Organisation that is authorised (on the basis of a licence agreement with MPS) to carry out the audits of compliance by the certificate holders with the requirements of the certification standard, and that has been given the right to award MPS-Quality certificates.

Certification standard
Certification standard for MPS-Quality

Participant
A company participating in the MPS-Quality programme but that is not certified as yet.

Document
Recorded information – in any form (e.g. on paper or electronic) – relevant for the quality care system of the certified grower.

Scope
the application area of the certification standard of the grower's company for whom MPS-Quality certification has been applied and/or awarded.

Specification: specifications are understood as the conditions of delivery agreed upon with the client. The VBN product specifications (see www.vbn.nl) apply to supplies to auctions.

Stichting MPS
Stichting MPS (the MPS Foundation), with its registered office in Honselersdijk, administrator of the MPS-Quality certification standard.

VBN

Association of Dutch Flower Auction Houses (*Vereniging van Bloemenveilingen in Nederland*)

0.2 Area of application

a) The certification standard applies to floricultural products. The requirements relate to the quality of floricultural products, the quality of purchasing, sales and post-harvest processes, information exchanges with suppliers and buyers, the internal organisation of the company including its quality policy, training and improvement management.
b) The certificate holder is a grower of floricultural products.
c) In order to guarantee that production processes, products and services can satisfy the requirements mentioned in the certification standard, the certificate holder operates a quality system. The certificate holder must be able to demonstrate that the quality system being operated, and the application of that system, satisfy the conditions of the certification standard. The certificate holder cannot exclude any applicable sections of the company that fall within the direct sphere of influence of the MPS-Quality certification standard. All relevant company sections must be included in the assessment carried out by the certification body.

0.3 Purpose

a) The purpose of the certification standard is:
   1. to promote a recognisable market position of producers within the floricultural sector who manage the quality of floricultural products and the post-harvest processes involved in supplying these products in an effective and efficient manner;
   2. to stimulate improvements in quality management by growers of floricultural products;
   3. to reinforce the (high quality) image of the floricultural sector;
   4. to contribute to the improvement of quality control throughout the chain of production and sales of floricultural products.

b) The certification standard contributes to the achievement of this objective by means of:
   1. setting the criteria for good quality and environmental management for producers of floricultural products in the form of specific conditions.
   2. including conditions in the certification standard that help reinforce good collaboration and harmonisation between suppliers and buyers within the chain of production and sales of floricultural products.
   3. issuing a collective quality mark and promoting recognition of the certification standard and this quality mark.
   4. stimulating improvements in the certification standard with the aim of further reinforcing the quality management of the participating companies and the floricultural sector as a whole.

0.4 Finances

a) The participant or certificate holder is obliged to pay an annual contribution to MPS. The board of MPS will jointly draw up a budget each year. The amount of this annual contribution for MPS-Quality will be set at the time of the decision to approve and set the budget.
b) The annual contributions comprise:
   - contributions towards the costs of the board and management
   - contributions towards the costs of promotional activities.
c) The applicant and certificate holder are obliged to pay the costs of the certification audit and of the follow-up audits to the responsible certification body.

These costs will be invoiced directly by the certification body in question on the basis of an agreement between the certification body and the applicant and/or certificate holder.

0.5 Exemption

a) In exceptional cases, the MPS Council of Stakeholders may grant exemption from one or more conditions or obligations if in its opinion it is not reasonable to demand fulfilment of those conditions or if it can be demonstrated that certain conditions have been complied with by other means.
b) Restrictions, conditions and provisions can be attached to the exemption(s) and the certificate(s) awarded partly on the grounds of such exemptions.

0.6 Liability

a) MPS, the VBN and its members are in no way liable for any losses of any form suffered by applicants, certificate holders or third parties arising from or connected with the implementation of the certification standard. The certificate holders indemnify MPS, the VBN and its members against claims by third parties.

0.7 Certification bodies

a) Audits regarding the fulfilment of MPS-Quality and certification conditions are carried out by MPS or a certification body that has entered into a licence agreement with MPS in this regard.
b) The certification bodies must employ the services of qualified auditors to carry out these audits. These auditors must:
    - have demonstrable knowledge of and experience in the floricultural sector. This must be supported by evidence from a completed horticultural training programme of at least MBO/HBO level (intermediate or higher vocational education) or equivalent, supplemented by at least two years of relevant work experience;
    - have knowledge relating to quality care;
    - have followed several days of training on the implementation of audits;
    - have carried out at least ten certification audits for product and/or system certification, or at least one initial certification audit or two follow-up audits for MPS-Quality as a trainee under the supervision of a qualified MPS-Quality auditor;
    - have a thorough knowledge of the MPS-Quality certification standard and who maintain that knowledge through participation in auditor meetings organised by MPS and through carrying out at least one initial certification audit or two follow-up audits for MPS-Quality each year.
    - have guaranteed neutrality.

0.8 Certification audit

a) Before a certification audit is applied for, the applicant must have worked for at least three months in accordance with the requirements of MPS-Quality. The applicant must also have carried out internal audits (1.1), a customer satisfaction survey (2.2) and a supplier evaluation (3.1) before the certification audit takes place, all of which should be carried out in accordance with the certification standard. If it is observed at the beginning of the certification audit that one or more of these requirements have not been met, the audit will be halted. The financial consequences of halting the audit will be for the account of the applicant.
b) During the initial assessment (certification audit), the certification body investigates whether the quality system of the certification applicant and the applicant's product satisfy the requirements set, as laid out in the certification standard.

c) The initial assessment takes at least six hours. In cases of more than one location, the amount of extra time needed to visit and assess the entire company is determined in consultation with the inspection body.
d) The combination of the follow-up audit for MPS-Quality with an audit for another certification scheme is permitted.
e) The assessments take place by means of interviews with the management and/or employees of the company of the applicant, observations made at the company sites, the assessment of records and administrative data, and the assessment of products.
f) The certification body will provide MPS with the following details within a week of the certificate being awarded:
   - the name of the company of the certificate holder as well as the trading name under which the company operates, if different;
   - the name of the person legally representing the company;
   - the full address and place of business of the company of the certificate holder and any additional places of business of the company;
   - the date on which the certificate holder was first registered as such.

0.9 Follow-up audits

a) The certificate holder undertakes to allow regular follow-up audits to be carried out by a certification body in order to assess whether the quality system and the products of the certificate holder still meet the requirements set in this certification standard, and whether the MPS-Quality logo is being used in accordance with the provisions of the scheme.
b) The audit frequency is set at once every twelve months. MPS may at some point decide to increase this frequency should this appear necessary.
c) An agreement is entered into between the certification body and the certificate holder regarding the implementation of follow-up audits. The agreement has a duration of three years.
d) The follow-up audits take at least four hours each. In cases of more than one location, the amount of extra time needed to visit and assess the entire company is determined in consultation with the inspection body.
e) The combination of the follow-up audit for MPS-Quality with an audit for another certification scheme is permitted.
f) The certification body may decide that an additional follow-up audit is necessary, for example in response to observed shortcomings, or upon receipt of complaints about the certificate holder (see also 2.3, handling complaints).
g) The audits take place by means of interviews with the management and/or employees of the company of the certificate holder, observations made at the company sites, the assessment of records and administrative data, and the assessment of products.

0.10 Thematic audits

a) MPS may organise regular thematic audits as part of the follow-up audits, which serve to assess the operation of the elements of the certification standard. The audit themes will be determined by the Council of Experts.
b) The certification body carries out these audits as part of the follow-up audits at no additional charge. The certificate holder must cooperate with these audits. The results of these thematic audits are reported to MPS by the certification body.

0.11 Use of the collective brand name MPS-Quality

(From August 23, 2017, the uniform MPS-vignette will be used. Existing customers are allowed a transitional period up to and including December 31, 2018, see page 0)

a) MPS permits the non-exclusive use of the collective brand name MPS-Quality by suppliers of floricultural products who have entered into a certification agreement with a certification body and whose products and business operations at least fulfil the requirements as set out in the most recent version of the certification body's regulations for product certification, the most recent version of the MPS-Quality certification standard as set by MPS, and other new and/or modified regulations and/or provisions coming into effect after the date on which this agreement was entered into. The right to use the collective MPS-Quality brand name applies exclusively to certificate holders who are certified on the basis of the certification standards for MPS-Quality.
b) The collective brand name guarantees the common characteristics, which apply to the applicability of this certification standard.
c) Certificate holders have the right to use the MPS-Quality logo on company presentation items (for example on stationery, orders and sales forms).
d) The MPS-Quality logo may be used on products as long as it is clearly linked to the name of the company, the address and the registered premises of the company.
e) The digital design of the logo will be made available to certificate holders by MPS.
f) The logo is permitted in any colour, though we have a preference for the MPS corporate identity colour, which is the colour the logo is supplied in.

0.12 Sanctions

a) In the event that the certificate holder fails to fulfil its obligations arising from the certification standard, the sanction scheme of the certification body will enter into effect.
b) In the event that the certificate holder acts contrary to the certification standard, the entitlement to use the collective brand name MPS-Quality will be withdrawn.

0.13 Modifications

a) Upon the advice of the MPS Council of Stakeholders, the Board of MPS is authorised to modify the certification standard. Participants will be informed of the modifications. A realistic transition period will be allowed in order to give participants the opportunity to make adjustments and to implement the modified requirements. If the participants are unable to fulfil these after the transition period, this may mean that the certification cannot be continued in accordance with the new requirements.
b) If the regulations, conditions, rules of procedure or provisions referred to in this certification standard are modified, the applicable version will enter into effect.

0.14 Publication

a) A copy of the most recent version of the certification standard is available for perusal at the MPS head office or at the offices of recognized certification bodies.
b) The participant receives a copy of the certification standard at the time of the initial registration. The participant will be informed of any changes to the certification standard for the duration of his registration.
c) The list of MPS-Quality participants is public. MPS will ensure the publication of an up-to-date overview of certified MPS-Quality companies through the website www.my-mps.com. The Council of Stakeholders determines the way in which the data are made available.
d) MPS is nevertheless entitled to process the data provided by the participant (or arrange for the processing of this data), to analyse and to use this data for the purposes of determining general figures, group figures (i.e. more than 10 individual company situations), etc. The Board of MPS will determine the way in which – and the relevant purposes for which – these figure are then made public.

0.15 Enclosures

The following appendices accompany this certification standard:

a) MPS-Quality norms regarding shelf life
b) Guidelines on carrying out shelf life tests oneself.
c) Conditions regarding reporting complaints
d) Sanction regulations MPS-Quality
e) Terms and conditions regarding the use of the MPS-Quality logo

1 Management processes

1.1 Improvement management

1.1.1 Definitions

- Quality manual: a document that describes how the operating processes should proceed, who is responsible for them, how audits are carried out and who is responsible for the audits.
- Improvement plan: a document that describes how the grower works towards improving his performance.

1.1.2 Requirements for improvement management

A. Preparing an improvement plan

The participant should carry out internal audits before the certification audit takes place. After this, the company carries out internal audits at least once a year. The results can be used to check whether the current working methods and process descriptions are adequate. One can also check whether the requirements are adhered to. The outcomes of this audit are recorded using a checklist. These records are used for an improvement plan, to be drawn up annually.

In preparing the improvement plan, use is also made of information stemming from for example the customer satisfaction survey (see 2.2), the handling of complaints (see 2.3), and the procedure for harvesting, sorting and packing (see 3.2.2).

The improvement management procedure is made up of at least the following elements:

1. A list of who evaluates which processes, and when (N.B. the evaluation may not be carried out by the person who is responsible for the process by virtue of his job)
2. Registration of the results of the internal audits;
3. The improvement plan consists of the following elements:
    a. a description of modifications or points for attention for the coming year with regard to the MPS-Quality processes;
    b. a plan of action describing the modifications that will be carried out and the points for attention that will be dealt with;
    c. the person responsible for implementing the modifications or checking up on the points for attention.
    d. Indicating the desired shelf life standard, for example following the VBN target value table (see appendix).

B. Implementing the improvement plan

Once a company has described all the processes in accordance with the MPS-Quality certification standard, these must then be carried out in the correct manner. The management ensures that the descriptions of the operating processes within the grower's company are communicated to the staff, understood and implemented. Operating processes are subject to change. It is therefore necessary to evaluate these processes regularly and modify them where appropriate. In this way, the company can learn from its experiences. This allows it to attain higher levels of quality. The evaluation and the resulting activities are recorded in the annual improvement plan.

When modifications have been made, they are included in the quality manual. During preparation of the improvement plan, a check is also made to see whether the modifications/points for attention from the previous year have actually been implemented or dealt with. Modified procedures must be signed for approval by the management.

1.2 Personnel & organisation

1.2.1 Definitions

- Personnel plan: a document that describes the tasks and responsibilities of staff members, meeting structures and performance appraisal interviews.
- Tasks: the actions assigned to a person for the purpose of achieving results.
- Responsibility: the obligation the account for the results of his/her actions.

1.2.2 Requirements for personnel & organisation

A. Preparing a personnel plan

The personnel plan contains at least the following elements:

1. A table and/or organisation diagram, depicting the organisation and the various functions.
2. The tasks and responsibilities of staff members;
    a. The grower has described in writing the responsible position for all processes for which MPS-Quality has set requirements
    b. The tasks and responsibilities for each process have been made known within the organisation.
    c. The training and experience required for each task is recording in writing.
3. Replacements in the event of absence;
    a. The grower has set down in writing the function of replacements for each staff member in the event of absence.
4. Meeting structure. The following details are given for each type of meeting:
    a. the purpose;
    b. the participants;
    c. the number of times per year / meeting frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)
    d. where appropriate, the person responsible for the agenda and the minutes.
5. Performance appraisal interviews;
    a. The grower will hold performance appraisal interviews at least once a year for those staff members with permanent employment contracts.
    b. The interviews are conducted using a standard checklist.
    c. The conclusions drawn from the last interview form the basis for the next interview.
    d. The need for training is assessed during the performance appraisal interviews.

B. Implementing the personnel plan

The personnel plan is implemented in line with the prescribed procedures. The grower ensures that the staff members are familiar with job descriptions, tasks and responsibilities. The replacement procedure in the event of absence is described and regulated. The internal meeting structure is clear. The company applies this effectively. Performance appraisal interviews with all staff members with a permanent contract of employment form an important part of improving the company's performance.

2 Support procedures

2.1 Document management

2.1.1 Definitions

- Document: Recorded information – in any form (e.g. on paper or electronic) – relevant for MPS-Quality.
- Registration: A form prepared and completed documenting an operating process.

2.1.2 Requirements for document management

A. Document management procedures

The grower specifies procedures for document management.

This specification must include at least:

1. The operating process to which the document applies;
2. The length of time for which the document and records must be stored;
3. The place where the document and records are stored;
4. The document and record codes (see manual);
5. The place where the latest version of the document is kept for perusal by staff members;
6. The person responsible for managing the document;
7. The procedure followed for distributing modified procedures and documents.

B. Implementing document management

Document management is carried out in accordance with the specified procedure. The purpose, the procedure and the improvement plans are described and communicated.

2.2 Customer satisfaction

2.2.1 Definitions

- Customer satisfaction survey: An analysis that provides insight into the level of satisfaction of customers regarding the supplied products and services. The aim of a customer satisfaction survey is to tailor the product and the service better to the wishes of the customers and business contacts.
- Contact: people and/or organisations with whom you maintain business relations and/or share business interests.

2.2.2 Requirements for customer satisfaction

A. Customer satisfaction survey procedures

Every year, the grower prepares a plan for carrying out a customer satisfaction survey.

This plan must describe at least the following:

1. The information that the grower hopes to gain, including at least the satisfaction of the client regarding the product (and its quality), the service provision and the handling of complaints;
2. The target group of the survey (at least the five most important customers/contacts, unless it can be demonstrated that you have fewer than five customers);
3. The survey procedure;
4. The person responsible for the survey;
5. The period during which the survey takes place;

B. Carrying out a customer satisfaction survey

The participant should carry out a customer satisfaction survey before the certification audit takes place. After this, the company collects information in a structured manner at least once a year (if possible) from at least the five most important contacts/customers regarding their satisfaction with the quality of the product, the service provision and the handling of complaints (see also 2.3: Dealing with complaints)

To this end, the grower carries out a customer satisfaction survey in accordance with the specified procedure. The data gained from the customer satisfaction survey is recorded. The grower assesses the results of the customer satisfaction survey and discusses them with the members of staff concerned.

The improvement measures to be taken are implemented. The resulting modifications in working methods and operating processes are recorded and included in the improvement plan.

2.3 Dealing with complaints

2.3.1 Definitions

- Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction with a product and/or service falling within agreed parameters. A complaint can also relate to information provision (such as EAB/Florecom message).

  Comments on the RI, a falling RI and quality-related comments added by the auction are also viewed and counted as complaints (see also 3.2.2.C.5).
- Complaints analysis: the received complaints are evaluated periodically. Based on the conclusions drawn, working methods and operating processes are modified in order to avoid further complaints.
- Nonconformity: something that fails to comply with a standard, specification or agreement.
- Correction: a measure to remedy a nonconformity.
- Corrective measure: a measure to remove the source of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation.
- Central Reporting Point for Complaints: the central reporting point for complaints set up by MPS. Under certain conditions, the grower's contacts can register a complaint with MPS. MPS will make these conditions known.

2.3.2 Requirements for handling complaints

A. Procedure for handling complaints

The grower has prepared a written working method for the handling of complaints.

This working method must describe at least the following:

1. The names of customers/contacts who have lodged complaints;
2. The manner in which the complaints were recorded;
3. The manner in which the correction of the nonconformity was relayed to the contact;
4. The manner in which feedback was provided to the staff members concerned;
5. The analysis of the complaints, the sources of the nonconformities, the corrections and the corrective measures that are implemented at least once a year;
6. The person responsible for handling the complaint.

B. Implementation of procedure for handling complaints

The grower implements the complaints procedure in accordance with the specified procedure, taking the following points into account:

1. Received complaints:
   a. speedy handling of complaints;

b. initial contact must be made with the complaining party within one working day;
c. in this contact, the complaining party must be informed of the possibility to submit a complaint to the Central Reporting Point for Complaints, as well as of the applicable conditions.

2. The corrective measures and any changes to processes or working methods are implemented on the basis of the complaints received or the analysis of the complaints. These can also be cultivation-technical measures that influence the shelf life. The members of staff concerned are kept informed of these changes.

2.4 Vase/shelf life test

2.4.1 Definitions

- Expected value: the expected average vase/shelf life after VBN sales simulation (www.vbn.nl) in days following harvest.
- Test phase: the period in the vase/shelf life test during which the products are tested in a simulation of the conditions in the subsequent links of the chain.

2.4.2 Requirements for the vase/shelf life test

A. Procedure for carrying out vase/shelf life tests

The grower is obliged to carry out a vase/shelf life test every two months subject to the availability of the end product. The grower prepares a working method for the execution of the vase/shelf life test (see appendix Guidelines on shelf life tests, or www.vbn.nl).

This specification must describe at least the following:

1. The products/mixed/arrangements that have been subjected to vase/shelf life tests. If several cultivars are involved, there is no obligation to carry out vase/shelf life tests on all products and varieties every two months. The grower must use his expectations and experience to select products or varieties for vase/shelf life tests. He or she explains this selection in the quality manual.
2. The minimum expected value in terms of case/shelf life (use can be made of the target value for vase life and shelf life for house plants (see appendix));
3. The test conditions (preferably using the VBN test protocols) giving details of at least: the test phases, lighting values, air humidity and temperature.
4. The evaluation criteria that determine the ornamental value (preferably based on the VBN vase/shelf life chart);
5. The test audit;
6. The test record;
7. The size of the random sample, the frequency and the duration of the vase/shelf life test;

Product group	**Sample size**
Cut flowers	at least 2 x 5 stems
Small plants (< 17 cm)	at least 6 plants
Large plants (≥ 17 cm)	at least 3 plants

8. At least once a year, a reference vase/shelf life test will be carried out by an independent agency with demonstrable experience with carrying out vase/shelf life tests in accordance with VBN test protocols.
9. The person responsible for carrying out the vase/shelf life tests;

10. The person responsible for improvements if the test results prove unsatisfactory;

B. Carrying out a vase/shelf life test

The grower carries out the vase/shelf life test in accordance with the specified procedure.

The following points of departure apply:

1. The company will increase the frequency of the vase/shelf life tests in the event of problems relating to the vase/shelf life during cultivation and/or storage of the products.

2. If the vase/shelf life is shorter than the expected value (a negative result), the company will investigate the reason for this and implement improvement measures.
3. The company indicates how the results of the vase/shelf life tests will be communicated. The company will also indicate how the results will be made available to the customers. The results will in any case be made available to customers upon request.

3 Primary processes

3.1 Purchasing

3.1.1 Definitions

- Purchasing: the purchase of organic parental material and cultivation material.
- Parental material: organic starting material for cultivation.
- Cultivation material: material used in the cultivation process (e.g. substrate, fertilisers, crop protection agents, growth stimulators) or added to the end product (e.g. potting compost, containers, film, tape).
- Critical cultivation material: those products that have a major influence on the quality and/or quality of the end product.
- Supplier: company supplying parental material, cultivation material or other required materials.
- Traceability: the possibility to trace a product back to its source with certainty.
- Nonconformity: anything that fails to comply with a standard, specification or agreement.

3.1.2 Requirements for purchasing

A. Purchasing procedures

Critical cultivation material is purchased from suppliers who conform to the requirements specified by the grower. Own parental material is also subject to the purchasing procedures, only the administrative handling differs (entry control is carried out during the production of the parental material).

This working method must describe at least the following:

1. The critical cultivation material (bought-in parental material is always critical);
2. The requirements with which parental material and critical cultivation material must comply. This must at least describe the requirements for:
    a. product quality;
    b. traceability;
    c. timely and correct delivery.
3. The product requirements to be defined must at least describe:
    a. product specifications;
    b. plant passport;
    c. volume/quantity;
    d. delivery date;
    e. delivery conditions.

4. The assessment of the incoming batches and the recording method. In the case of nonconformities, a complaint will be lodged with the supplier. The registered complaints will be used in assessing the suppliers.
5. The supplier performance assessment (at least once a year).
6. The person responsible for assessments, monitoring and recording of suppliers and supplied products and services. Any steps taken in response to the assessment;
7. A list of suppliers preferred on the basis of their performance.

B. Implementing the supplier performance assessment

The grower works in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

The participant should carry out a supplier performance assessment before the certification audit takes place. After this, the company carries out a supplier performance assessment at least once a year. This should be carried out by the grower in line with the prescribed procedures.

The results of the supplier performance assessment and any (concluding) measures should be recorded.

The purchasing procedure specified by the grower should be adjusted on the basis of the results.

3.2 Harvesting, sorting, packaging

3.2.1 Definitions

- Nonconformity: anything that fails to comply with a standard, specification or agreement.
- In this regard, reliable information is understood to be the full, correct and timely information about the product in line with the VBN product specifications, unless otherwise agreed with the buyers.
- Critical control point: an activity of great importance for the maintenance of product quality.
- Quality control point: critical control point at which a check is carried out because any subsequent errors in the process will be irreparable.
- Product specifications: specified requirements that the product must fulfil, as agreed with the client or the auction. VBN specifications are displayed at www.vbn.nl.

3.2.2 Requirements for harvesting, sorting and packaging

A. Procedure for harvesting, sorting and packaging

The grower prepares a working method for harvesting, sorting and packaging, and implements this working method.

This working method must describe at least the following:

1. all work involved in these processes;
2. the critical control points;
3. the manner in which order information is supplied;
4. product specifications;
5. quality control points; at least the following must be described:
    A. how checks are made for each batch that the batch fulfils the set product specifications, that the supply information corresponds with the supplied product and that the information is reliable (complete, accurate and available in good time)
    B. how this check is made demonstrable
    C. which (demonstrable) corrective measures are taken in the event that nonconformities are detected
    D. how these nonconformities are included in improvement management (see also 1.1 Improvement management).
6. the person responsible for the execution and monitoring of the work;
7. the place where the written working method is kept.

B. Monitoring and cleaning plan

Every year, the grower prepares:

1. A monitoring and maintenance plan for harvesting, sorting and packaging machinery.
2. A cleaning plan for cleaning all harvesting and sorting materials that come into contact with the product (e.g. barrels, pails etc.) and for the processing areas.

The monitoring and cleaning plan must at least describe the following:

1. the required work;
2. the frequency with which the work is carried out;
3. the person responsible for the execution and monitoring of the work;
4. how the work is recorded;
5. The place where the monitoring and cleaning plan is stored;

C. Implementing the harvesting, sorting and packaging procedures and the monitoring and cleaning plan

1. Information concerning orders, batches and specifications is provided verbally and/or in writing to the responsible staff members. The monitoring plan and the cleaning plan are provided in writing.
2. When harvested, sorted and packaged, the product complies with:
    - the applicable VBN specifications, unless otherwise agreed with the customer (in the case of trading through VBN auctions), or
    - the specific agreements such as those reached between the grower and his customer.
3. If it becomes apparent during the harvesting, sorting and packaging process that the product does not comply with the specifications agreed with the customer and the fault will be impossible to correct, you should contact the customer.
4. The applicable VBN specifications must be present on the grower's premises if the grower supplies to a VBN-affiliated auction. These specifications must be stored in a generally known and accessible place.
5. The grower must keep a record of the number of complaints relating to the supply information (for clock supply, this is the RI). The number of complaints must be reduced in conformity with the improvement plan (see 1.1, Improvement management).
6. The grower works in line with the prescribed procedures, the monitoring plan and cleaning plan.

3.3 Storage

3.3.1 Definitions

- Conditioned storage space: an area in which the temperature can be controlled. Products can be stored here.
- Product: end product

3.3.2 Requirements for storage

A. Storage procedure

The grower prepares a working method for the storage of products. This working method must describe at least the following:

1. the storage conditions;
2. the maximum time between harvesting the products and their storage in the conditioned storage area;
3. the maximum storage period per product;
4. in the case of conditioned storage, a storage area monitoring plan must be available. The grower monitors the conditions and makes random checks in all the areas used for product storage.
5. the person responsible for storage and monitoring the storage areas.

B. Implementing the storage procedure

The grower stores the products in accordance with the specified procedure.

3.4 Sales

3.4.1 Definitions

- Product specifications: specified requirements that the product must fulfil, as agreed with the client or the auction.

3.4.2 Requirements for sales

A. Sales procedure

The grower prepares a working method for the sales process.

This must describe at least the following:

1. registration of the sales orders;
   When issuing a quotation, accepting an order or signing a contract, the grower will record at least the following specification in the quotation, order confirmation or contract:
   a. customer details;
   b. numbers;
   c. quality;
   d. sorting specifications;
   e. price;
   f. delivery period;
   g. packaging;
   h. other specific delivery conditions.
2. the method by which the feasibility of the order is assessed;
3. if during the period between sale and delivery it becomes evident that it will be impossible to meet the agreed deadlines, the customer should be contacted with a view to reaching a new agreement.
4. deciding which orders must be confirmed in writing;
5. the person responsible for order registration, registration of specifications, order confirmations, response to nonconformities and internal transfers;

Within the sales process, the grower will apply the applicable VBN specifications unless otherwise agreed with the customer.

B. Implementing the sales procedure

The grower works in line with the prescribed procedures.

Customer orders are always registered along with full details of their specifications for internal administration purposes. Interim changes to the delivery agreements are dealt with in accordance with the sales procedure.

3.5 Delivery

3.5.1 Definitions

- Electronic Delivery Note (EAB): a document intended for electronic dispatch in accordance with the conditions specified by the auction in question.
- Presentation: external presentation of the products/batch.

3.5.2 Requirements for delivery

A. *Delivery procedure*

The grower prepares a working method for the delivery process.

This must describe at least the following:

1. The activities to be carried out:
    a) preparing the batch for dispatch in accordance with the customer's specifications;
    b) the preparation of a delivery note/delivery document to accompany the batch;
    c) the addition of other documents (e.g. GP cards) to the batch as appropriate;
    d) carrying out random checks on each batch to monitor adherence to product specifications, presentation and numbers;
    e) checking the delivery note/delivery document;
    f) instructing responsible personnel;
    g) correcting nonconformities;
    h) contacting the person responsible for sales if the nonconformity cannot be corrected;
    i) supplying the correct EAB;
    j) storing a copy of the EAB for at least one year in the interests of traceability;
    k) protecting the products during transport to assure their quality;
    l) using modes of transport that prevent possible reductions in the quality of the product.
    m) providing the logistics provider with the necessary documentation;
    n) providing any necessary instructions concerning delivery of the products.
2. The person responsible for deliveries.

B. Implementing the delivery procedure

The grower works in line with the prescribed working method and carries out the specified checks.

These checks involve:

- checking the batch ready for delivery against the order;
- checking the delivery note against the batch ready for delivery.

Enclosure A

MPS-Quality shelf life standards

Table 1: MPS-Quality target values for vase life of cut flowers after VBN transport simulation (vase content: water)

No	Product	Target value (in days)				
		3-5	5-7	7-10	10-14	>14
1	Alstroemeria				X	
2	Anemone		X			
3	Chrysanthemum					X
4	Cymbidium					X
5	Dianthus			X		
6	Eustoma (Lisianthus)		X			
7	Freesia			X		
8	Gerbera			X		
9	Gypsophila		X			
10	Iris	X				
11	Lilium				X	
12	Rosa small -flowered			X		
13	Rosa large-flowered		X			
14	Tulipa	X				

Table 2: MPS-Quality shelf life/blooming time target values for potted plants after VBN transport simulation

No	Product	Green/blooming	Target value (in weeks)				
			1	2	3	4	5*
1	Anthurium	Flowering					X
2	Begonia	Flowering					X
3	Bulb on pot	Flowering		X			
4	Calathea	Growing					X
5	Chrysallidocarpus l.	Growing					X
6	Chrysanthemum	Flowering			X		
7	Cyclamen	Flowering					X
8	Draceana	Growing					X
9	Euphorbia pulch.	Flowering					X
10	Ficus	Growing					X
11	Guzmania	Flowering					X
12	Hedera	Growing					X
13	Hydrangea	Flowering					X
14	Kalanchoë	Flowering					X
15	Phalaenopsis	Flowering					X
16	Rhodondendron	Flowering					X
17	Rosa	Flowering	X				
18	Saintpaulia	Flowering					X
19	Spatiphyllum	Flowering					X
20	Yucca	Growing					X

* The following applies to all plants: depending on the VBN plant write-down criteria, adhere to the maximum test duration for green plants.

Enclosure B

Practical guidelines for carrying out shelf life assessment

Shelf life assessment relating to flowers and plants. How should you approach such assessment and what should you be on the alert for? The VBN, the Dutch Flower Auctions Association, has drawn up guidelines for growers, traders, and research institutes that perform, or will be performing, shelf life assessment. The guidelines can be found in this brochure. These guidelines will assist you with adequately structuring and conducting your shelf life assessment. The guidelines address all of the elements that are part of a shelf life assessment. These are meant to assist you with tailoring your assessment to your situation and wishes. It does not outline a boilerplate procedure, since your situation and wishes will dictate the type of shelf life assessment that is right for you. The guidelines below will help you structure and conduct your own assessment.

1. Objective of the assessment

Shelf life assessments can have various objectives. For example, they may be designed to determine the shelf life of your product once it reaches the consumer. But you can also conduct a shelf life assessment to learn more about the effect of various cultivation conditions or actions. The structure, scope, and performance of the assessment *and* the conditions that will be imposed on the necessary materials will depend on the objective of your assessment. This is why you should formulate a clear objective before beginning the assessment.

2. Methods and materials

Purchase simulation

In order to get a realistic impression of the shelf life of your product once it reaches the consumer, mimic as closely as possible the route your product travels between greenhouse and consumer.

The purchase simulation can be divided into various phases, such as:

- a grower-auction simulation phase
- a retail-auction simulation phase
- a retail-sale simulation phase

For each phase, consider the duration and circumstances that will apply in the most likely purchase situation. The following conditions will affect shelf life during the purchase simulation:

- temperature
- atmospheric humidity
- light
- presence of a protective cover
- repackaging
- water availability
- pre-treatment substances.

If you do not have a specific purchase situation in mind, you can use the standard VBN purchase simulation, which can be downloaded via www.vbn.nl.

Enclosure C

Terms and Conditions for Submitting Complaints to the Central Complaint Reporting Desk [*Centraal Klachten Meldpunt*]

1. **What is the Central Complaint Reporting Desk (*Centraal Klachten Meldpunt* or 'CKM')?**
   MPS set up the CKM to centralise the reporting of complaints. Under certain conditions, business contacts of a grower who has MPS-Quality certification can submit a complaint to MPS.
   This appendix explains how, and under what conditions, complaints are registered and settled. If a complaint is submitted to the production company in accordance with H2.3. of the certification scheme, the business contact is notified that he may, subject to the conditions below, submit the complaint to the CKM.

2. **Conditions for submitting complaints**
   Complaints can be submitted to the CKM in the following situations:
   a. A business contact (trader) has complained about a production company three times
   b. The production company is MPS-Quality certified
   c. The business contact (trader) has substantiation available
   d. The complaint has been reported to the production company

   A business contact (trader) can submit a complaint in writing, by telephone, or by fax or e-mail.

3. **Registration of complaints**
   When a complaint is received, MPS will determine whether the complaint meets this conditions; if so, the complaint will be registered.

4. **Settlement**
   If a complaint is registered, the CKM form will be sent to the submitter (trader) for confirmation.
   The production company will be notified about the complaint received by means of a letter and the appended CKM form.
   The CKM will forward the complaint to the relevant certification body (CB).
   The CB will contact the production company and assess whether the work processes meet the requirements of the scheme.
   If necessary, the certificate will be revoked and MPS, as the publishing body, will be notified of this.

ENCLOSURE D

Sanction Regulations MPS-Quality

1. CERTIFICATION AUDIT		
1.0 The requirements as stated in the MPS-Quality certification standard must be fulfilled.	More than five minor or at least 1 major nonconformity observed.	Certificate is not awarded (certification audit). Participant must take demonstrable corrective measures within 3 months.
	A maximum of five minor nonconformities observed.	Warning: the certificate is awarded under the condition of the resolution of the shortcomings by means of corrective measures within 3 months.
1.1 Corrective measures must have been carried out demonstrably within the specified period.	Corrective measures have not been carried out demonstrably within the specified period.*	Warning. A period of two weeks is specified in order to make the corrective measures demonstrable after all. *
1.2 Corrective measures must have been carried out demonstrably within the specified period.	Corrective measures have not been carried out within the specified period.*	The certificate is not awarded/is withdrawn. The agreement will be temporarily suspended until the corrective measures have been demonstrably carried out. **
1.3 Modifications to the certification standard must be implemented by the participant within the specified period.	Modifications have not been implemented by the participant within the specified period.	The certificate is withdrawn. The agreement will be temporarily suspended until the corrective measures have been demonstrably carried out.**
1.4 Corrective measures/ implementation of the modifications must be demonstrated within 6 months in the event of a temporary suspension of the agreement.	The corrective measures/ implementation of the modifications have not been demonstrated within the 6-month period.	The agreement is dissolved.

Major Nonconformities Forms (major NCFs) are completed if elements of the standard are not documented and/or implemented (to a significant degree), or if elements of the standard are not documented/implemented in accordance with the certification standard (or the spirit of the standard), resulting in structural shortcomings.
Minor Nonconformity Forms (minor NCFs) are noted if elements of the standard are partially undocumented and/or implemented, or if elements of the standard are not documented/implemented in accordance with the certification standard (or the spirit of the standard), resulting in possible structural shortcomings in the long term.

* Demonstrable correction means that evidence is made available to MPS, If the nature of the corrective measures necessitates verification on site before the certificate can be awarded, the cost of this work will be charged to the participant. The participant will be informed of this in advance.

**The temporary suspension of the agreement will last no longer than 6 months. If corrective steps have

not been taken demonstrably, the agreement will then be dissolved.

APPENDIX E

Requirements for using the MPS-Quality logo (From August 23, 2017, the uniform MPS-vignette will be used. Existing customers are allowed a transitional period up to and including December 31, 2018, see page 0)

MPS-vignet

1 The MPS foundation owns the mark it issues. The expression of this mark that is relevant to growers is:

- the product logo, with the relevant grower's MPS registration number, with the words "MPS-Quality" underneath, to be referred to hereinafter as the "MPS-Quality logo"

Requirements

2 Subject to the following requirements, growers who satisfy the requirements of the MPS-Quality certification scheme are entitled to affix the MPS-Quality logo to the flowers and plants they cultivate and/or the floriculture products they harvest from nature.

Applicability

3.1 Growers may only affix the logo to one-off packages, price lists, brochures, invoices, stationery, and other advertising. The shape, size, colour, etc. of the logos must meet the requirements imposed by MPS. The logo may only be affixed to floriculture products.

3.2 The requirements for the logos:

- The shape of the logo may not be changed or modified. It must be used as supplied.
- The logo measures 3.6 cm x 4.4 cm. The size of the logo may be reduced to no smaller than 50%, and enlarged to no more than 150%, of the original dimensions. Any other enlargement or reduction must be discussed with MPS.

3.3 The logo can be affixed in any colour, although MPS prefers its own house style colour. This is the colour in which the logo is supplied.

3.4 Growers may not make environmental claims – such as environmental friendliness or awareness – in combination with the use of the logo.

3.5 Growers must always include their MPS registration number when using the logo.

3.6 Growers may not use the logo as their own trade mark.

3.7 Growers may not transfer or license their right to use the logo to a third party.

3.8 The grower receives a version of the logo through the personal files on the Internet for use in accordance with this article. If the grower decides to deviate from this, he must submit an example or galley proof of the altered logo to MPS's PR for approval. He or she will then receive written proof of MPS's grant or denial of consent.

Audits

4 The grower is obliged at all times to permit the designated non-partisan auditor(s) access to its business and accounting records, and to cooperate with random checks designed to verify whether its commercial operations satisfy the requirements imposed in connection with the use of the logo.

Violation

5 If a grower does not satisfy the present requirements, MPS will be authorised – after having heard the relevant grower or having afforded the grower the opportunity to be heard – to take the following measures in respect of the grower:

a issue a warning, stating which measures the grower must take the meet the present requirements;

b impose a penalty of no more than EUR 450 for each violation;

c publish the violation committed, stating the MPS registration number of the relevant grower on MPS's website and in MPS's newsletters;

d revoke, either temporarily or permanently, the right to use the logo.

Termination of usage right

6 The right to use the logo shall end:

a through the termination of the grower's registration with MPS;

b if the grower remains in default of taking the measure(s) imposed on him;

c if the grower is declared bankrupt, granted a suspension of payment, is in the process of being dissolved, or is put under guardianship or into receivership;

d through the liquidation of the grower's business.

In such case, the grower shall be obliged to immediately destroy the entire stock of materials referred to in section one, or to cause such stock to be destroyed.
If the grower ceases operations at its own initiative, that fact will be announced on MPS's website.

Liability

7.1 The grower shall be fully liable for the products to which the logo is affixed, and the grower shall indemnify MPS against any such liability claims.

7.2 Growers shall have no right to claim any damages once they are no longer entitled to use the logo.

7.3 MPS shall only be liable for harm or loss resulting from an intentional act or omission or gross negligence on its part.

General

8 MPS's Board shall be entitled to change the usage requirements, with due observance of a notice term of 3 months.

9 All disputes relating to the interpretation or performance of this agreement shall first be submitted to the Board of MPS. If the grower disagrees with the Board's decision, the dispute will be resolved exclusively in accordance with the applicable MPS Arbitration Scheme [*Reglement Arbitrage MPS*] by the Arbitration Committee appointed in accordance with said Scheme, with the venue for arbitration being the Netherlands. The Arbitration Committee's decision shall be binding on the parties.