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I. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1. **Natural gums** are used for a variety of applications, particularly as additives in food or feed. With a view to **general food and feed safety aspects**, all participants of the supply chain, beginning at the sources in the countries of origin, are expected to contribute to (and to maintain and further improve) **a high level of product safety**.

2. **AIPG GPG** are particularly meant to ensure that **gums as natural raw materials**

- **do not bear a risk** of food safety hazards and are **safe for human consumption**,
- **are collected /harvested, transported , stored and processed with care** in order to **control** physical, chemical , microbiological or any other kind of **contamination**.

3. Thus, the objective of **AIPG GPG** is to give recommendations on **Good Practices** to be applied already at the stage of harvesting (hand picking) /collection of the gum in the local areas , during the interim storage in the rural communities and the subsequent transportation , and at the stage of storage in warehouses and treatment in processing facilities, before and during exportation to the markets in the consumer countries.

4. **AIPG GPG** particularly refer to **Gum Arabic /Acacia gum** (hereinafter referred to as “the gum”) but may also be applied to other gums used as food or feed additives if harvested/collected in a similar manner, i.e. as a handpicked dried exudate from trees, such as e.g. Gum Karaya .

5. In case of a gum for sale as an organic product, compliance with relevant legal provisions of the destination countries must be assured at any stage of collection, transportation, storage and processing. Relevant documentation has to be provided and made available to the contract partner.

II. GUIDELINES FOR HARVESTING AREAS

1. LOCAL COLLECTION

The following measures **must be applied** to prevent gums from any contamination:

1.1. During and after hand- picking from the tree, the dried gum shall be **directly collected and stored in suitable containers** such as jute sacks, woven plastic bags, or baskets.

1.2. The gum **must not be stored on and/or collected from the ground** in order to avoid further contamination with **any foreign matter** such as earth, stones, soil, glass, animal remains or parts of plants (see **annex** to the AIPG GPG). Particularly, any contamination with other plant material growing or cultivated in the harvesting area such as **e.g. peanuts or grains, cereals must be avoided.**

1.3. **Visible contaminants** such as peanuts, grains, cereals or any other foreign matter mentioned in the **annex** must be **removed immediately.**

1.4. For the collection and transportation of gums, **only unused / virgin sacks, bags or baskets** must be used.

1.5. Sacks and bags used for the collection and transportation of gums must be **exclusively dedicated** to this specific purpose, and should be marked / labelled “ **Gum Arabic only** ” in Arabic, English and French and should have a specific colour.

1.6. Re-usable sacks, bags, or baskets may only be used **exceptionally** and if
- exclusively dedicated to the collection and transportation of gums, and
- exclusively used for gum collection and transportation before,
in order to avoid any possible (cross) contamination of the gum with other traces of vegetable or mineral materials or any other materials mentioned in the **annex.**

1.7. Persons suspected of being infected by pathogens shall not be involved in the collection process.

2. INTERIM STORAGE

2.1. **Collected gums temporarily stored** before further transportation should be kept in suitable places, preferably buildings, and should be protected from all types of pests (rodents, insects) and any kind of animals including birds.

2.2. During interim storage, **any contamination with foreign matters and/or other materials or waste** (see **annex**) must be avoided by appropriate measures such as **strict physical separation** of the material from such contamination sources.

2.3. In case of **re-packing for transportation**, the requirements mentioned in section II 1.4., 1.5., 1.6. shall apply accordingly.

2.4. *Persons suspected of being infected by pathogens shall be denied access to the interim storage areas and must be prevented from any contact with the material stored.*

3. TRANSPORTATION

3.1. The time between interim storage after collection / harvesting and road transportation of the gum to further or final warehouse storing, or to processing facilities (for granulation, pulverization), **should be kept as short as reasonably practicable.**

3.2 .For road transportation, only **appropriate vehicles** /covered trucks should be used, which are clean and in good condition.

3.3 The gum must be kept **separated from other goods** on the same vehicle.

3.4 **In no case**, the gum may be carried together with livestock, chemical substances, mineral oils, fuels, pesticides, biocides or any other load that might **cause a contamination** of the gum.

III. GUIDELINES FOR WAREHOUSE STORAGE

1.1 Warehouse buildings /storing facilities for gums must **be properly designed** for this use. They should be inaccessible to any kind of animals and adequately protected against birds, rodents and insects (see section II 2.1 above).

1.2 Appropriate pest-control measures, such as traps, electrical insect-control devices, as well as measures for identifying an infestation are recommended. Fumigation is **not allowed**.

1.3 The gum must be **stored strictly separated** from any other agricultural products /material of plant origin (peanuts , groundnuts ,grain, cereals) or any other material referred to in the **annex** in order to avoid cross- contamination.

1.4 The gum must be **stored strictly separated** from chemical substances , pesticides, biocides and other possible sources of chemical contamination (see **annex**).

1.5 Specific care should be taken when handling/packing/repacking the material.

1.6 The gum must be stored in a dry, well-ventilated building, on pallets, away from the wall and off the ground. The gum, where possible, should not be directly exposed to sunlight.

1.7 Persons suspected of being infected by pathogens shall be denied access to the storage areas and must be prevented from any contact with the material stored.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING FACILITIES

1.1 **Processing facilities** in the countries of origin for pulverisation or granulation of gums must comply with **basic requirements of food hygiene. Quality Management systems and Quality Assurance systems must be put in place. There should be adequate written guidelines / standing operation procedures in order to assure a safe processing of the raw material.** The principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) shall apply.

1.2 **Buildings and production facilities** should be inaccessible to any kind of animals and should be constructed in a way that they are adequately protected against birds, rodents and insects. Machinery and equipment must be easily accessible and **regularly maintained** and **dry-cleaned**. Cleaning agents must **not** be used.

1.3. The gum raw material **must be inspected for foreign matters** (see annex) which have to be eliminated before entry into the production process. Any cross contamination (before, during and after processing) with other products must be avoided.

1.4 All processed gums must be **properly packed and stored** in order to maintain the product quality.

1.5 **Packaging materials** used for the processed product must be brand-new and free of any contamination and shall be stored in a clean dry place free from hazardous matters as referred to in the annex.

1.6 **Personnel involved in processing** must be well experienced and should have undergone adequate training in production techniques, and must be instructed in basic food hygiene matters. Personnel must not be permitted to work in the processing area, if they are known to be suffering from diseases or are carrying diseases likely to be transmitted through food. Personnel suspected of being infected by pathogens or known to be in contact with such persons must be entirely excluded from the production process.

1.7 Eating is forbidden in the processing area.

1.8 **Lot traceability** shall be assured by adequate record keeping/documentation systems and by proper and clear labelling of the processed gum.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPORTERS

1.1 Exporters in the countries of origin are asked to **adequately communicate the basic principles** laid down in the AIPG GPG to their trading/business partners further down the supply chain, i.e. particularly **to collectors, intermediate dealers, truckers, warehouse keepers and processors**.

1.2 Exporters are expected to make efforts to **instruct/coach** their partners in the supply chain (especially: smaller farmers and collectors/ smaller intermediate traders) particularly on the issues dealt with in section II 1.1 to 1.6 of the AIPG GPG.

1.3 Exporters, ideally with the support of their national organizations and/or governmental institutions, are encouraged to

-**make available** in the **logistic chain** unused / virgin sacks, bags or baskets as described and labelled under section II 1.4 and 1.5 of the AIPG GPG

-consider **effective measures** to **avoid** the entry of re-used sacks, bags or baskets into the logistic chain/supply chain for gums.

1.4 Exporters/buyers should only **accept** gums if collected and transported in sacks, bags, baskets complying with the requirements set out in section II 1.4 to 1.6 of the AIPG GPG.

1.5 Exporters are requested to assure lot traceability by adequate record keeping/documentation systems and by proper and clear labelling of the gum.

- 2.1. Exporters are encouraged to refer to these **AIPG GPG** in their contracts concluded with their trading partners /suppliers in the country of origin.
- 2.2. Where and to the extent possible, exporters or their representatives should assure the compliance with the recommendations of the **AIPG GPG** e.g. through regular audits/ inspection visits with other participants in the supply chain.
- 2.3 Exporters are encouraged to allow regular inspections/audits by Third parties, particularly where offered under the patronage of AIPG.
- 3.1. Specific **specifications for gums** should be agreed between the **exporters** in the countries of origin and their **contract partners /buyers** in the **importing/ consumer countries**. Such specifications may include safety criteria such as microbial load, contaminants, residues, heavy-metal content, and further product- related parameters such as purity criteria and visual and sensory properties, or the absence of traces of substances which might bear a potential risk to health (see **annex**) .
- 3.2. The present **AIPG GPG** may be referred to in such specifications or may be included in the individual terms of contract.

ANNEX
NON EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF TYPICAL FOREIGN AND HAZARDOUS MATTERS

At **all** stages in the supply chain, including collection areas and market places, gums **must be kept/ stored separately** from other material. Any contamination with other material, see non-exhaustive list below, **must be avoided**.

Particular attention should be paid to the avoidance of Ethylene Oxide (“ETO”) residues irrespective of its possible sources (e.g. application as a pesticide, biocide, cleaning agent, by cross-contamination or through packaging material, see below No. 5)

- 1. Physical foreign matters:** i.a.
 - earth , stones, soil
 - glass
 - parts of metals, plastic materials etc.
- 2. Animals, animals remains or materials from animal origin :** i.a.*)
 - farm, domestic or wild animals
 - fish and fish products
 - milk and its derivatives
 - eggs and egg products
 - molluscs, crustacean / shellfish and products of these
- 3. Plants, vegetables and products of these:** i.a.*)
 - seeds, peas, cereals (wheat, rye, barley, oat, corn etc.)
 - cacao, peanuts, soybeans, sesame, tree nuts
 - products thereof (i.e. peanut-oil, sesame-oil, oil-cakes etc.)
 - celery ,mustard, lupines
- 4. Microbiological contaminants / dirty materials, waste materials**

5. Chemical contaminants : i.a

- Mineral oils, fuel
- pesticides, insecticides, biocides
- residues of ethylene oxide (“ETO”) resp. its reaction product 2-chloroethanol (“2-CE”)
- any substance classified /labelled as “dangerous substance” or “dangerous good”

6. GMO- genetically modified organisms

*) see also list of 14 allergens, annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1169 / 2011

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R1169&rid=4>

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