



**NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL  
STANDARD FOR AN  
AGRICULTURAL  
PLANT INSPECTOR**

**NOS.API.01  
First Edition**

## APPROVING AUTHORITY

This National Occupational Standard has been prepared and published under the authority of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Board on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

## ZAMBIA QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

The Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 13 of 2011 was enacted by the Government of the Republic of Zambia to ***“provide for the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework; establish the Zambia Qualifications Authority; provide measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to the foregoing”***. Among other functions, ZAQA is responsible for ***determining national standards for any occupation***, through various sector specific National Occupational Standards Development Teams (NOSDTs).

## REVISION OF NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

National Occupational Standards shall be revised after every **5 years**, or whenever necessary, by the issue of either amendments or of revised editions. It is important that users of National Occupational Standards (NOS) ascertain that they are in possession of the latest amendments or editions.

## NOS DEVELOPMENT TEAM RESPONSIBLE

This National Occupational Standard was prepared by the Agriculture National Occupational Standards Development Team, upon which the following organisations were represented:

1. Agricultural Institution of Zambia (AIZ)
2. Aquaculture Development Association of Zambia
3. CropLife Zambia
4. Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (Department of Fisheries)
5. Golden Valley Agriculture Research Trust (GART)
6. Katete College of Agricultural Marketing
7. Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture)
8. Mulungushi University (MU)
9. Natural Resources Development College (NRDC)
10. University of Zambia (UNZA)
11. Veterinary Council of Zambia
12. Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)
13. Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU)
14. Zambia Seed Trade Association (ZASTA)
15. Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA)

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1. Dr. Amy Kingdom (Zambia National Farmers Union - ZNFU)
2. Dr. Batiseba Tembo (Zambia Agriculture Research Institute - ZARI)
3. Dr. Elias Kantashula (University of Zambia - UNZA)
4. Dr. Josef M. Chileshe (University of Zambia - UNZA)
5. Maj. Nelson Kaluba (Rtd) (Aquaculture Development Association of Zambia)
6. Mr. Alex Dennis Chilala (Zambia Agriculture Research Institute – ZARI)
7. Mr. Davis Mwanza (Natural Resources Development College - NRDC)
8. Mr. Enerst Muzukutwa (CropLife Zambia/ZASTA)
9. Mr. Johnstone Mfula (Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (Department of Fisheries))
10. Mr. Malumo Nawa (Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture))
11. Mr. Masautso E. Sakala (Natural Resources Development College - NRDC)
12. Mr. Mathews Ngosa (Agricultural Institution of Zambia (AIZ))
13. Mr. Shadreck C. Mubanga (Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust - GART)
14. Mr. Stanford Phiri (Katete College of Agricultural Marketing)
15. Mr. Joseph T. Mwale (Mulungushi University)
16. Mrs. Precious Hamusute (Veterinary Council of Zambia)
17. Ms. Eva N. Kaonga (University of Zambia - UNZA)
18. Ms. Sylvia H. N'gandu (University of Zambia - UNZA)
19. Mr. Fidelis Cheelo (Zambia Qualifications Authority)
20. Miss Womba Soneka (Zambia Qualifications Authority)
21. Mr. Modest Hamalabbi (Zambia Qualifications Authority)

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## FOREWORD

The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education established by ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011 to “**provide for the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework; provide measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to the foregoing**”.

Among other functions, ZAQA is responsible for “**determining national standards for any occupation**”, through various sector specific National Occupational Standards Development Teams (NOSDTs) of experts composed of representation from appropriate authorities, government departments, industry, academia, regulators, consumer associations and non-governmental organisations, etc.

This National Occupational Standard (NOS) has been developed by the Agriculture National Occupational Standards Development Team in accordance with the procedures and guidelines of ZAQA. All users should ensure that they have the latest edition of this publication as National Occupational Standards are revised from time to time.

This NOS shall be used by, among others, industry, employers, quality assurance bodies, awarding and professional bodies and education and training institutions, as a benchmark to identify training needs, develop job profiles/descriptions, develop curricula and learning programmes, in various sectors where the occupation exists.

## JUSTIFICATION

Plant pests and diseases have been recognized as a major challenge to crop production. One of the major pathways through which plant diseases, pests and weeds are spread and introduced in an area is through the movement of plant materials and products. The increase in international trade has scaled movement in plant materials, hence, the risk of introduction of new and invasive organisms to new areas. Since it is very difficult to control pests, weeds, and diseases once introduced into a new area, many countries have established institutions and developed necessary guidelines to regulate the movement of plants and their associated products in the country and outside to minimize such negative effects. The work of the agricultural inspector is therefore to provide inspection services in order to help prevent the introduction and spread of serious plant pests, diseases, and noxious weeds that could threaten the agricultural industry through enforcement of plant health legislation. Therefore, he/she ensures that plants and plant products for trade meet prescribed health, quality, and safety standards required for domestic and international trade. In addition, he/she provides monitoring of diseases and pests to enable timely interventions.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

API	Agriculture Plant Inspector
CS	Core Skill
NOS	National Occupational Standard
NOSDT	National Occupational Standards Development Team
OK	Organisational Knowledge
PC	Performance Criteria
PS	Professional Skill
RK	Regulatory Knowledge
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TK	Technical Knowledge
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZQF	Zambia Qualifications Framework

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purposes of this NOS, the following terms and definitions shall apply:

**Core Skills/Generic Skills:** are a group of skills that are key to learning and working in today's world. These skills are typically needed in any work environment. In the context of the NOS, these include communication related skills that are applicable to most job roles.

**Function:** is an activity necessary for achieving the key purpose of the sector, occupation, or area of work, which can be carried out by a person or a group of persons. Functions are identified through functional analysis and form the basis of NOS.

**Job Title:** defines a unique set of functions that together form a unique employment opportunity in an organisation.

**Knowledge and Understanding:** are statements which together specify the technical, generic, professional and organisational specific knowledge that an individual needs in order to perform to the required standard.

**National Occupational Standards (NOS):** are statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding. They are precise descriptions of what an individual is expected to be able to do in his/her work role.

**National Occupational Standards (NOS) Code:** is a unique reference code that identifies a NOS.

**National Occupational Standards Development Team (NOSDT):** means an established group of national stakeholders/experts responsible for the development of National Occupational Standards within a specific economic sector or occupation.

**Occupation:** is a set of job roles, which perform similar/related set of functions in an industry.

**Organisational Context:** includes the way the organisation is structured and how it operates, including the extent of operative knowledge that managers have in their relevant areas of responsibility.

**Performance Criteria:** are statements that together specify the standard of performance required when carrying out a task.

**Scope:** is the set of statements specifying the range of variables that an individual may have to deal with in carrying out the function which have a critical impact on the quality of performance required.

**Sector:** is a conglomeration of different business operations having similar businesses and interests. It may also be defined as a distinct subset of the economy whose components share similar characteristics and interests.

**Sub Sector:** is derived from a further breakdown based on the characteristics and interests of its components.

**Technical Knowledge:** is the specific knowledge needed to accomplish specific designated responsibilities.

**Unit Title:** gives a clear overall statement about what the incumbent should be able to do.



## 1. OVERVIEW

This is an introductory section providing a brief summary and specific information or commentary about the content of the NOS and the targeted sector and occupation to help the user judge whether it is relevant to them.

<b>NOS Code</b>	NOS. API.01
<b>Occupation</b>	Agricultural Plant Inspector
<b>Job Title</b>	Agricultural Plant Inspector
<b>Job Description</b>	The Agricultural Plant Inspector, inspects agricultural produce, equipment, and facilities to ensure compliance with laws and regulations governing health, quality and safety
<b>Job Purpose</b>	The Agricultural Plant Inspector ensures that agricultural products, produced, sold and imported meet the set standards by either the government or international bodies.
<b>ZQF Level</b>	6
<b>Sector</b>	Agriculture
<b>Sub sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crops</li> <li>• Livestock</li> </ul>
<b>Other Economic Sector(s) in which the Occupation is Practiced</b>	Trade and industry
<b>Other Similar Jobs that can be performed by an Agricultural Inspector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Technologist</li> <li>• Technical Plant Health Inspector</li> <li>• Field Operations Supervisor</li> <li>• Agriculture Supervisor</li> <li>• Seed Sampler</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum Educational Job Entry Qualification(s)</b>	Diploma in Agriculture or equivalent
<b>Practicing License Requirements (if any)</b>	Seed Inspector's license (for Seed Inspectors)
<b>Training/RPL</b>	Seed inspector's course for seed inspectors
<b>Minimum Job Entry Age</b>	20
<b>Prior Experience</b>	Non
<b>Performance Criteria</b>	As described in the Units under Section 4

## **2. SCOPE**

This National Occupational Standard specifies the fundamental knowledge and understanding, skills and competences that an Agricultural Plant Inspector must possess to be successful in his/her job role. It is applicable to Agricultural Plant Inspectors working in public or private organisations or self-employed.

## **3. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES (VALUES, ETHICS AND ATTITUDES)**

This job requires an individual to possess:

- Creativity
- Problem solving skills
- Analytical skills
- Mathematics skills
- Integrity and respect for confidentiality
- Interpersonal skills
- Commercial Awareness
- Attention to details
- Ability to communicate effectively and clearly
- Self-motivated and team worker
- Ability to plan and prioritize,
- Quality consciousness
- Occupational health and safety oriented

## **4. UNITS AND ELEMENTS**

This National Occupational Standard is divided into 2 Units representing the tasks that a job holder should undertake in his/her day-to-day work. Each unit is further broken down into elements depicting the number of activities to be carried out for the successful execution of a particular task.

**UNIT 1** [This unit is about Health, Safety and Environment]

<b>Unit No.</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Health, Safety and Environmental Management</b>
<b>Description</b>	This unit is about maintaining safety, health and environmental protection for the individual and the plant
<b>Scope</b>	This unit covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Regulations</li> <li>• Environmental Protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Criteria (PC) w.r.t. the Scope</b>	
<b>Element</b>	<b>Performance Criteria (PC)</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety Regulations</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PC1. Read, interpret and implement national and organisational safety and health policies and regulations.</li> <li>PC2. Assess risks and possible safety hazards of all aspects of operations</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Protection.</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PC3. Read, interpret and implement the environmental policies for the organisation</li> <li>PC4. Read, interpret and implement environmental standard operating procedures and policies of the organisation</li> <li>PC5. Read, interpret and implement national and global environmental regulations.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding (K)</b>	
<b>A. Organisational Context (Knowledge of the company/ organisation and its processes)</b>	The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OK1. Company quality, health, and safety policies</li> <li>OK2. Company environmental policies</li> <li>OK3. Company regulations and global best practices</li> </ul>
<b>B. Technical Knowledge</b>	The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TK1. Safety and health risk assessment</li> <li>TK2. Environmental Risk assessment</li> <li>TK3. Toolbox talk</li> </ul>
<b>C. Regulatory context (Knowledge of Rules and Regulations)</b>	The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RK1. Regulatory requirements for health &amp; safety</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (S)</b>	
<b>A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills</b>	<b>Writing Skills</b>
	The individual on the job must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CS1. Write in English and give simple concise instructions.</li> </ul>
	<b>Reading Skills</b>

	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CS2. Read and interpret internal/external documents.</li> <li>CS3. Read and understand manuals, health and safety instructions, memos, other company documents.</li> <li>CS4. Read from different sources- books, screens in machines and signage.</li> <li>CS5. Interpret the various colour codes, nomenclature and acronyms related to the profession.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CS6. Express statements or information clearly so that others can hear and understand.</li> <li>CS7. Participate in and understand the main points of simple discussions.</li> <li>CS8. Respond appropriately to any queries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Professional Skills</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Making</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS1. Follow organisation rule-based decision-making process.</li> <li>PS2. Take decisions with a systematic course of actions and/or response.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Plan and Organise</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS3. Plan and organise work to meet deadlines.</li> <li>PS4. Work constructively and collaboratively with others.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Customer Centricity</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS5. Follow the code of conduct.</li> <li>PS6. Manage relationships with customers with the intent of satisfying its requirements for service delivery.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Problem Solving and Decision Making</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS7. Recognize problems and search for solutions.</li> <li>PS8. Choose the best methods to complete assigned tasks.</li> <li>PS9. Approach relevant authority when required.</li> <li>PS10. Judiciously use common sense in day-to-day activities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Analytical Thinking</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS11. Apply domain knowledge, observations and data to select course of action to perform tasks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Thinking</b></p>	
<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PS12. Critically evaluate information obtained from customers, supervisor and co-workers to perform day-to-day activities.</li> <li>PS13. Ask relevant questions for better understanding.</li> </ul>	

**UNIT 2** [This Unit is about inspection of the agricultural produces, equipment, and facilities to ensure compliance with laws and regulations governing health, quality, and safety].

<b>Unit No.</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Commodity inspection and Certification</b>
<b>Description</b>	This Unit is about inspection of agricultural produces, equipment, and facilities to ensure compliance with laws and regulations governing health, quality and safety
<b>Scope</b>	<p>This Unit covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of import/export documents</li> <li>• Inspection of facilities and equipment</li> <li>• Plant health inspection</li> <li>• Seed inspection</li> <li>• Registration of seed growers</li> <li>• Seed Sampling</li> <li>• Certification of consignment</li> <li>• Phytosanitary awareness</li> <li>• Record keeping and report writing</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Criteria (PC) w.r.t. the Scope</b>	
<b>Element</b>	<b>Performance Criteria (PC)</b>
<b>Review of import/export documents</b>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC1. Examine the documents associated with the consignment.</p> <p>PC2. Verify the consignment is identifiable and accurately described</p> <p>PC3. Verify the consignment integrity to ensure that the commodity is in line with the phytosanitary certificate received or to be issued</p>
<b>Inspection of facilities and equipment</b>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC4. Conduct inspections of storage facilities, transport and packaging materials of plants, and plant products used in agricultural trade to ensure adherence and compliance to phytosanitary regulations</p> <p>PC5. Supervise treatment and disinfection of infrastructure and equipment of agricultural commodities where necessary</p>
<b>Plant health inspections</b>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC6. Inspect plants and plant products for the presence of Agricultural pests and for compliance with the set regulations.</p> <p>PC7. Supervise the disinfection and destruction of consignments that do not meet the prescribed standards</p> <p>PC8. Provide pest diagnostic identification services to clients.</p> <p>PC9. Interpret and enforce regulations for the movement of plants and plant products.</p> <p>PC10. Conduct pest surveillance and risk analysis for quarantine documentation and information purposes.</p> <p>PC11. Conduct disease surveys</p> <p>PC12. Collect samples of specimens for further identification</p>

<b>Seed inspection</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC13. Detect minimum isolation distances required to produce seeds. PC14. Conduct timely field inspections PC15. Use variety descriptors to ensure distinctness and uniformity of varieties PC16. Decide to reject or accept a field in accordance with the set standards
<b>Registration of seed growers</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC17. Register seed growers based on laws that relate to seed growing in Zambia
<b>Seed Sampling</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC18: Apply Seed Sampling skills PC19. Sample seed based on procedures and equipment required by International Seed Testing Association (ISTA)
<b>Certification of consignment</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC20. Inspect the transportation and handling procedure of agricultural products to ensure it meets all the regulatory requirements PC21. Certify consignments that have met the phytosanitary requirements. PC22. Ensure that consignments that fail the inspection are sufficiently secured until further action. PC23. Recommend consignment treatment where appropriate. PC24. Supervise consignment treatment.
<b>Phytosanitary awareness</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC25. Assist in phytosanitary awareness creation activities to ensure compliance with phytosanitary regulations PC26. Offer appropriate advisory phytosanitary services
<b>Record keeping and report writing</b>	To be competent, the individual must be able to: PC27. Document all processes of consignment inspection. PC28. Store the data safely. PC29 Write reports of discoveries or findings observed during an inspection
<b>Knowledge and Understanding (K)</b>	
<b>A. Organisational Context (Knowledge of the organisation and its processes)</b>	The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: OK1. Relevant legislation, standards, policies, and procedures in work OK2. Relevant health and safety requirements applicable in the work environment OK3. Own job role and responsibilities and sources for information pertaining to work OK4. Who to approach for support in order to obtain work-related information, clarifications, and support

	<p>OK5. The health, hygiene, safety, and quality standards and the impact of not following the standards on consumers and the business</p> <p>OK6. Documentation and related procedures applicable in the context of work</p>
<p><b>B. Technical Knowledge</b></p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Phytosanitary regulations</p> <p>TK2. Enforcing quarantine and phytosanitary regulations</p> <p>TK3. How to conduct inspections-plant health</p> <p>TK4. Seeds inspections procedures</p> <p>TK5. Fumigation procedures on equipment and facilities used for trade</p> <p>TK6. Noxious weeds</p> <p>TK7. Quarantine and non-quarantine pests and diseases associated with international trade</p> <p>TK8. Crop protection strategies.</p> <p>TK9. Seed production practices</p> <p>TK10. Pest and disease surveillance strategies</p> <p>TK 11. Pest risk analyses</p> <p>TK12. Current Agricultural issues mainly those relating to Plant health, plant imports, and exports</p>
<p><b>Skills (S)</b></p>	
<p><b>A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills</b></p>	<p><b>Reading Skills</b></p> <p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS1. Read internal information documents sent by internal teams/ supervisor</p> <p>CS2. Update oneself about the latest technologies by reading research articles, attending seminars, workshops, etc.</p> <p>CS3. Read equipment manuals and process documents to understand the equipment operation and process requirement</p> <p><b>Writing Skills</b></p> <p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS4. Record and maintain all the information plan quarantine and phytosanitary activities</p> <p>CS5. Write reports</p> <p><b>Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)</b></p> <p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS6. Effectively communicate with the staff, colleagues, and relevant stakeholders</p> <p>CS7. Be polite and courteous under all circumstances</p>
<p><b>B. Professional Skills</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Making Skills</b></p> <p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS1. Use the correct methods for agriculture inspection</p> <p><b>Plan and Organise</b></p>

	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS2. Plan and organise the work order and jobs received from the supervisor</p> <p>PS3. Plan and prioritise the work based on the instructions received from the supervisor</p> <p>PS4. Plan to utilise time and equipment effectively</p>
	<p><b>Customer Centricity</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS5. Manage good relationships with the manager and colleagues</p>
	<p><b>Problem Solving Skills</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS6. Study the problem and provide a best solution</p> <p>PS7. Quickly identify problems and solve them immediately</p>
	<p><b>Analytical Thinking</b></p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS8. Analyse the information received from officers and specialists</p> <p>PS9. Think analytically to come up with solutions</p>
	<p><b>Critical Thinking</b></p>
<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>PS10. Determine how to improve productivity and production</p> <p>PS11. Find innovative solutions for promoting agricultural technology</p>	



## **5. EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND CONSUMABLE MATERIALS**

These include, but not limited to; Computer, Printer and relevant Software programs, Personal protective equipment (PPE), moisture meter, measuring cylinders, beakers, crucibles, test tubes, funnels, flasks, microscope, test tubes, beakers, magnifying glasses, weighing machines, Bunsen burners, dropper.

## **6. DILEMMAS/CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES FOR A JOB HOLDER**

Dilemmas associated with the job of an Agriculture Inspectors include long working hours, exposure to chemical, physical and biological hazards, time pressure to complete tasks, working in extreme weather such as hot and cold conditions, working in noisy, wet and dusty environments, etc.

### **6.1 Alternative Choices (Solutions) to Dilemmas and Complexities**

Solutions to dilemmas include carrying out risk assessment and implementing appropriate control measures, ensuring good time management and planning, participating in workplace safety sensitization and awareness, supporting capacity building through training, managing work stress, adhering to company's safety and standard operating procedures at all times, paying attention to detail, consulting extensively within and outside one's department/team on safety and other issues.

## **7. WORKING CONDITIONS/ENVIRONMENT**

Working conditions include working in cold, hot and wet conditions, working at heights, stand/walk for long hours, working in laboratory environment, working in shifts, areas that are dusty.

## **8. PARTIES INVOLVED/INTERACTING WITH THE JOB HOLDER OR TRAINEE**

### **8.1 Internal/Within the Organisation**

Parties involved/interacting with the job holder who are internal to the organisation include supervisors, subordinates, and other employees.

### **8.2 External/Outside the Organisation**

Parties involved/interacting with the job holder who are external include customers/clients, government regulators, trainers, suppliers of equipment/tools/consumables, occupational health and safety associations, Academia etc.

## **9.0 PHYSICAL DEMANDS ON THE BODY**

- Physique to sustain strenuous conditions;
- Be able to walk and stand for long periods of time;
- Bend, stretch, twist, or reach out;
- Be able to lift relatively heavy materials, tools and equipment;
- Be able to use fingers, hands and feet with ease to complete the assigned task (dexterity)

## **ANNEX A**

### **Criteria for Assessments based on this NOS**

#### **A.1 Guidelines for Assessment**

**A.1.1** Criteria for assessment for curricula and learning programmes based on this NOS will be created by curricula and programmes developers. Each Performance Criteria (PC) will be assigned marks proportional to its importance in the NOS. Curricula and programmes developers will also lay down proportion of marks for theory and practical skills for each performance criteria, giving more weight to practical skills.

There shall be allocated the 'Total Mark', which will be the sum of all marks in each Unit, distributed across the number of PCs in that particular Unit. The 'out of' mark will be the mark allocated to each PC, which will be shared between theory and skills practical assessments.

**A.1.2** Awarding/assessment bodies or institutions and other users of the NOS will create unique question papers for the theory part and evaluations for skill practical part for their respective candidates.

## ANNEX B NOS Version Control

This Annex gives details necessary for the tracking of the NOS versions based on the number of revisions.

<b>NOS Code</b>	NOS.API.01		
<b>ZQF Level</b>	6	<b>Version Number</b>	01
<b>Sector</b>	Agriculture	<b>Date of Approval</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
<b>Sub Sector</b>	Crops and Livestock	<b>Date of Last Review</b>	N/A
<b>Occupation</b>	Agricultural plant Inspector	<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2027

## **REGISTERED OFFICE**

Zambia Qualifications Authority  
Ground Floor, Finsbury Park  
P.O Box 51103  
Lusaka, Zambia

**Tel:** +260 211 843050/ 843053

**Mobile:** +260 963 922 730/ 0956 037 185 / 0972 559 301

**Email:** [info@zaqa.gov.zm](mailto:info@zaqa.gov.zm)

**Website:** [www.zaqa.gov.zm](http://www.zaqa.gov.zm)