

List of Conformity Assessment Systems recognized by IFOAM-Organics International as equivalent to the IROCB

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The following conformity assessment systems (accreditation programs and systems of approval/registration of organic certification bodies) are recognized by IFOAM-Organics International as credible, based on equivalence to the IROCB (International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies) and/or recognition by other credible systems (peer-review):

- The OAA accreditation in compliance with the **Argentina** Organic Regulation
- The **Australia** Quarantine and Inspection Service accreditation for organic certification bodies
- The **Canada** Organic Regime approval system for certification bodies
- The SFE Accreditation Program for organic certification bodies in **Costa Rica**
- The requirements for organic control bodies under the **EU** organic regulation
- The **IFOAM** Accreditation
- The **India** NPOP Accreditation Program
- The **Israel** PPIS authorization system for organic certification bodies.
- The MAFRA Accreditation program for organic certification bodies in **Korea**.
- The organic JAS registration system for certification bodies in **Japan**
- The approval system for Third Party Agencies under the **New Zealand's** Official Organic Assurance Programme
- The SAS Accreditation for organic certification bodies in **Switzerland**
- The Ministry of Agriculture's authorization system for organic certification bodies in **Tunisia**
- The **USA** National Organic Program (NOP) Accreditation

Criteria for recognition of conformity assessment systems by IFOAM-Organics International

The above accreditation programs and systems of approval/registration of organic certification bodies are recognized by IFOAM-Organics International as equivalent to the IFOAM Accreditation Program, from the point of view of the requirements applied to certification bodies for the control of organic operators. Those requirements are deemed equivalent to the IROCB (International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies), based on either:

- a) IROCB equivalence based on a desk analysis of organic accreditation/approval requirements by IFOAM-Organics International, plus verification that there is an independent review of the certification bodies' approval process, such as through a peer-review by another country for the purpose of equivalence, OR
- b) That the conformity assessment system has been officially recognized as equivalent by at least 1 other government system already recognized by IFOAM-Organics International as equivalent.

Background on the IFOAM-Organics International Conformity Assessment Recognition Program

The International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence (ITF), lead by IFOAM, FAO and UNCTAD developed the IROCB (International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies) as a tool for the equivalence assessment of various conformity assessment systems. The ITF recommended that governments could use the IROCB as a basis to judge whether requirements for organic certification bodies in other systems would be judged equivalent to their own, for the purpose of import approvals.

IFOAM-Organics International conducts equivalence assessments of requirements for organic certification bodies against the IROCB. These assessments are available on request by writing to ogs@ifoam.bio. Based on these assessments, and on the criteria that systems be peer-reviewed, IFOAM-Organics International has recognized the EU and NOP requirements for certification bodies. Other systems officially recognized by the EU and/or NOP as equivalent are also recognized by IFOAM-Organics International.

Since the IROCB essentially covers the requirements of ISO 17065, all recognized programs can be considered as equivalent to ISO 17065. The IROCB and ISO 17065 contain many of the same requirements. However, IFOAM-Organics International does not consider ISO 17065 Accreditation alone as sufficient for a credible organic conformity assessment system. ISO17065 alone is not equivalent to IROCB because it is generic and does not provide requirements specific to the organic sector. This is particularly manifest for inspection requirements, such as the lack of requirements on on-site inspection, inspection frequency, inspection protocol requirements, and group certification. Systems that rely on ISO 17065 Accreditation must therefore complement it with

additional organic-specific requirements and oversight in order to be recognized by IFOAM Organics International as equivalent.

For more information, please write to ogs@ifoam.bio.