

Open motion period on the IFOAM Standard Version 0.2

Introduction from the IFOAM Standard Committee to the membership

In July 2010, the IFOAM membership approved a new IFOAM Organic Guarantee System (OGS), with several components, one of which is the IFOAM Standard. The new norm is based on the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS), but intended to be an internationally applicable organic standard that can be used directly for certification. The IFOAM Standard will replace the IBS in the IFOAM Accreditation Program after approval by the membership. Thereafter certification bodies or scheme owners wishing to use the IFOAM Standard as a basis for their certification program will be able to do so under contract with IFOAM.

In order to develop the IFOAM Standard, the IFOAM World Board established a new Standard Committee and appointed its members in November 2010. The Committee, with the help of the IFOAM OGS department, worked from December 2010 to October 2011 to turn the IBS into a certification standard. During that period the Committee held 2 in-person meetings and 3 remote meetings. A first draft was sent to the IFOAM membership and other stakeholders for comments during a 60-days period ending 31st of March 2011. The Committee received comments from about 10 IFOAM members and a couple of other stakeholders. These comments, as well as Committee responses to them, were published on the IFOAM website¹ in August 2011. Policies governing the revision of IFOAM Norms and the functioning of the Committee can be found on the IFOAM website at: http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/ogs_policies_procedures/ogs_policies_procedures.html.

The Committee was given a mandate by the World Board to develop a certification standard that would 1) stay as close as possible to the IBS 2005 to minimize disruption of Accredited Certification Bodies (ACBs), and 2) ensure that the standard could obtain equivalence with the EU regulation in the near future for the purpose of gaining market access. The Committee believes that it has reconciled the two objectives in the World Board's mandate to the best of its ability. The Standard Committee also made revisions based on comments received during the consultation period. In the opinion of the Committee, the standard presented here is equivalent to the EU in the production, processing and handling of plant-based products and honey under the current process of equivalent CB applications in the new EU import rules. There were too many discrepancies between the former IBS and the EU regulation to achieve equivalence in the areas of livestock and aquaculture products without major changes to these sections. As a consequence, the Committee decided not to bind itself to the EU equivalence objective in these areas.

In addition the Committee implemented a handful of significant changes, such as the inclusion of requirements on nanotechnology which are consistent with the new IFOAM

¹ http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/norms.html.

position, the adoption of the draft plant breeding standards as per the request of the membership in 2008, and the removal of the textile processing section which has been supplanted by the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS).

Turning the IBS which is a “standard for standards” into a “certification standard” meant a change of style in the new document. There are fewer recommendations and more firm requirements which spell out what operators must do or must not do. “Regional or other exceptions” give flexibility to this global standard in view of particular site-specific situations. The Committee also ensured that the IFOAM Standard is equivalent to the IFOAM Standards Requirements / Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards (COROS) approved by the IFOAM membership in July this year.

IFOAM requests that the membership approve the IFOAM Standard by April - May 2012 so that stakeholders can start using the standard after that date. The standard is not perfect. The Committee has already included in its future work plan the updating and further improvement of the IFOAM Standard through a process of intensive consultation with the membership. Areas that will need work include: reconciliation and harmonization of the livestock and aquaculture standards with other international standards, particularly the EU's; motion from the General Assembly to develop requirements for greenhouse production / protected cropping; and further development of the social justice standard.

The World Board has approved the attached draft, which is now presented to the IFOAM membership for motions. The motion process is the last step before a yes/no vote by the members on the adoption of the IFOAM Standard. All IFOAM full voting members can submit one or several motions. Each motion must be seconded by at least one other full voting member organization. A motion on the IFOAM Standard must be:

- A proposed change to the IFOAM Standard text in precise, non-ambiguous, grammatically correct and final language, which must be submitted in track changes in electronic format (MS Word), or else by a specific description of changes or additions to the wording of the relevant section of the standard. The change may concern several requirements of the standard but must address one single topic/issue.
- Accompanied by a rationale that explains the reason for the motion. If you are requesting a change and have not previously participated in the process, please explain why you are making a motion at this time.
- Accompanied by the identity of the organizations submitting and seconding the motion.

Members that want to propose changes on more than one topic / issue should submit several motions, and not aggregate several issues into one single motion. Only the normative text is subject to motions. Motions that concern the POA section or Section A (Introduction) will not be considered. Motions for changes to the Lists of Substances for Organic Production and Processing must be accompanied by a dossier and must be evaluated according to the criteria in Appendix 1 of the IBS before going to the membership for a vote.

Motions must be submitted to Joelle Katto-Andrighetto at j.katto@ifoam.org or Charles de Gaulle Str. 5, 53113, Bonn, Germany, and received by January 8, 2012. Motion makers must make themselves available for communication with the IFOAM Head Office and IFOAM Standard Committee throughout the months of January, during which the motion reconciliation process will occur. All submitted motions will either:

- be resolved (i.e. withdrawn, implemented or combined with another motion) in a joint agreement between the IFOAM Standard Committee and the motion maker; or
- be submitted to IFOAM membership vote in February/March 2012.

The IFOAM Standard Committee

IFOAM Standard Committee members:



Tali Berner, Israel



Sarah Hathway, UK



Stephen Barrow, South Africa



Chayaporn Wattanasiri, Thailand



Daniel Neuhoff, Germany



Andrew Monk, Australia



Brian Baker, USA



Jan Deane, UK