

## Procedure for Revision of the IFOAM Norms

**Version: Draft of 30 August** as approved by NMC in June 2007 including changes resulting from membership comments on 1<sup>st</sup> draft of Policy for Norms Revisions.

### Purpose

To define the procedures for revisions to the IFOAM Norms as laid down in the Policy for Revision of the IFOAM Norms.

### Scope

See Policy for Norms Revisions.

### Definitions

See Policy for Norms Revisions.

### Procedures

#### 1. *Regular Revisions*

##### a. *Initiation:*

- All members, other stakeholder and other relevant bodies can make recommendations, suggestions and requests for changes on existing standards at any time.
- The Responsible Committee
  - within one year after its official publication invites IFOAM Members to make proposals for any kind of revision of the respective Norm.
  - every two years after the official publication of the respective Norm assesses the need for a revision taking into account external circumstances, the continued relevance and effectiveness of the standard, the objectives that the standard seeks to achieve and if these can be met, Interpretations according to Policy 28, and any recommendation, suggestion and requests for changes as proposed by Members and Other Stakeholders and, whenever possible, approved requests for inclusion of New Areas (see 2 below). Approved request for inclusion of New Areas may also be addressed and processed according to a separate Revision Plan.
  - develops by addressing the points in the previous bullet point a Draft Revision Plan, and invites Members and Other Stakeholders to comment within 60 days on the Draft Plan. The Revision Plan states that the respective Norm is developed according to the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards. The Policy and Procedure for Norms revisions are made available together with the Revision Plan.
- The Norms Management Committee, taking into account the Draft Revision Plan and all comments received, makes a recommendation (Revision Plan) to the World Board.

b. *Decision to Commence:* World Board approval of the Revision Plan.

c. *Revision Process:* The Responsible Committee

- produces the 1<sup>st</sup> revision draft
- invites or gives all Members and Other Stakeholders the opportunity to comment within a period no less than 60 days on the 1<sup>st</sup> revision draft. Comments can only be made on areas that are subject to the ongoing revision as per the Revision Plan. Comments/suggestions will be published.
- produces and publishes
  - based on a review and due consideration of the comments and suggestions made, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Revision Draft,
  - all substantial comments/suggestions and its responses to these.

In **exceptional cases** and upon approval by the Norms Management Committee the Responsible Committee

- invites or gives all Members and Other Stakeholders the opportunity to comment within a period of no less than 60 days on the 2<sup>nd</sup> revision draft. Comments can only be made on areas that are subject to the ongoing revision as per the Revision Plan. Comments will be published.
- produces and publishes
  - based on a review and due consideration of the comments and suggestions made, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Revision Draft.
  - all substantial comments/suggestions and its responses to these.

The Responsible Committee invites the IFOAM members to respond with motions within a period no less than 60 days on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (if applicable 3<sup>rd</sup>) revision draft. Motions can only be made on sections or text that had been revised or on which comments had been made in the 1<sup>st</sup> (if applicable 2<sup>nd</sup>) Revision Draft

d. *Decision Making:* The Responsible Committee

- publishes the motions and suggestions for the reconciliation of every motion (Motions Reconciliation Suggestion).
- invites all Members and Other stakeholders to comment within a period no less than 30 days on the motion and Motions Reconciliation Suggestion.
- under the auspices of the Norms Management Committee, consult with the motion maker and other stakeholders if needed in order to reach consensus on how to reconcile the motions (Motions Reconciliation Consultation).
- develops a Final Revision Draft, which consists of
  - **when no motion was made:** the text of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (if applicable 3<sup>rd</sup>) Revision Draft,
  - **when motion was reconciled and resulted in non-substantial change:** text resulting from motions reconciliation consultation. In case of doubt it is assumed that change is substantial.
  - **when motion was reconciled and resulted in a substantial change:** text resulting from the motions reconciliation consultation as well as text of second (if applicable 3<sup>rd</sup>) draft.
  - **when motion could not be reconciled:** text of original motion or motion as amended by motion maker, text of 2<sup>nd</sup> (if applicable 3<sup>rd</sup>) revision draft and/or alternative text proposed by responsible committee.

- invites IFOAM members to vote within 30 days on the Final Revision Draft and the alternatives presented therein. The decision is based on a simple majority of the votes cast.

The final standard includes a statement making clear that the standard was developed according to the ISEAL Code of good Practice for Setting Environmental and Social Standards

*e. Implementation:*

- *IFOAM Basic Standards:* Changes resulting from the revision are adopted in relevant certification standards within two years after the official publication of the new IFOAM Basic Standards. Operators shall implement the changes to the certification standards according to the normal implementation policies and procedures of the standards owner.
- *IFOAM Accreditation Criteria:* Changes resulting from the revision are implemented by Accredited Certification Bodies within two years after the official publication of the new IFOAM Accreditation Criteria. For changes needed on the operator level, the certifier may specify a different implementation period, provided that the need for the deviation can be justified.

**2. Inclusion of New Areas**

*a. Initiation:*

Five members and or Other Stakeholders or the responsible committee, may submit a request to the Norms Management committee for inclusion of a new area at any time.

The requesting party

- nominates a project leader,
- clearly outlines the scope of the new area,
- clearly explains the need for and benefits of the new area of any potential adverse effects.
- lists existing national, regional, international standards and standards development projects in the respective area,
- outlines possible sources of funding
- outlines possible sources of non-financial support, such as organizations or individuals willing to contribute time and expertise.

*b. Decision to commence:*

- The NMC taking into account the information provided in the request makes a recommendation to World Board
- The World Board based on the Norms Management Committee recommendation takes the final decision. A decision against a request for a New Area is subject to ratification by the next General Assembly.
- Approved requests for inclusion of new areas are subject to the procedures for developing and consultation of Revision Plans as outlined under 1a and 1b above.

*c. Revision Process:* As laid down in 1c above.

*d. Decision:* As laid down in 1d above.

- e. *Implementation:* In case the new area was developed alongside a regular revision 1e above is applicable. In case the new area was developed independent of a regular revision the implementation period will end together with the one of the next regular revision.

### 3. *Urgent Revisions*

- a. *Initiation:* Any IFOAM member, the Responsible Committee, or Other Stakeholder may request an urgent revision in the form of a proposed revision text by addressing the criteria under 3b below. The request clearly substantiates the urgency of the revision.
- b. *Decision to commence:* The Norms Management Committee based on a recommendation of the Responsible Committee and the body responsible for carrying out IFOAM accreditation invokes the revision process if the matter is urgent and if at least one of the following criteria is fulfilled:
- Contradictions within the Respective Norm or between the IFOAM Basic Standards and the Accreditation Criteria
  - Issues that could severely damage IFOAM's credibility as standard (Norms) setting body
  - Issues that could severely damage the credibility of organic products in the public's perception
  - Issues that are creating serious problems in the accreditation process or the accreditation status of a substantial number of certifiers
  - Issues that would severely affect the implementation of the IFOAM Accreditation Program.
- c. *Revision Process:*
- All members and stakeholders according to Policy 61 are invited to comment, within 30 days of its publication on the proposed revision text.
  - The Responsible Committee will produce and publish
    - based on a review and due consideration of the comments and suggestions made, a revision draft,
    - responses to all substantial comments/suggestions.
- d. *Decision:*
- The World Board takes a final decision.
  - The WB reports the use of the Urgent Norms Revision Procedure to the General Assembly.
- e. *Implementation:*
- Urgent revisions of Norms currently under implementation: The period for implementing urgent changes is identical to the ongoing implementation period as defined according to 1e above.
  - Urgent revisions of Norms currently effective: The change is implemented immediately.

### 4. *Changes Resulting from Norms Interpretations (Policy 28)*

- a. *Initiation:* The Responsible Committee 28 will address in the Revision Plan if and how interpretations are taken up in the next norms revision.
- b. *Decision to commence:* According to 1b above.
- c. *Revision Process:* According to 1c above.

- d. *Decision:* According to 1d above
- e. *Implementation:* According to 1e above.

**5. Changes to the lists of Inputs, Additives and Processing Aids**

These changes are handled according to IFOAM Policy 60.

**Publication of new Norms and other Changes**

The revision plans and all decisions related to Norms revisions are announced promptly and via appropriate means, e.g. IFOAM periodicals, IFOAM website, errata. Approved Norms are published and announced within one month after their approval via appropriate means.

**Complaints**

Complaints with regard to this Procedure are handled according to IFOAM Policy 27.

**Approval and Revision of this Procedure:** Norms Management Committee (after membership approval of Policy for Norms Revisions).