

Policy and Procedure for Notification and Consultation of Stakeholders on the IFOAM Norms

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define key stakeholder groups and record a procedure for their consultation in the process of the further development of the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS) and the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria (IAC), also known as the IFOAM Norms.

Background

The IFOAM Basic Standards for Organic Production and Processing (IBS) and Accreditation Criteria for Bodies Certifying Organic Production and Processing (IAC) are essential components of the IFOAM Organic Guarantee System (OGS). IFOAM develops and revises these norms through a process which includes committee work, stakeholder consultation, and a final decision process.

Policy

IFOAM shall consult relevant stakeholders, including IFOAM affiliates and others, in the course of developing the IFOAM norms. Stakeholders shall be informed when IFOAM commences work on a new section of the norms, and when IFOAM undertakes a revision of existing sections, and they shall be given an opportunity to comment on at least two drafts of the new/revised norms. The comment period shall be at least 60 days, except for urgent revisions. The comment periods shall commence with the electronic mailing of the norms to the relevant stakeholders or posting on the IFOAM website, whichever is later. IFOAM aims to distribute the draft norms electronically wherever possible. In cases where hard copies must be mailed to stakeholders that do not have adequate access to electronic versions, these copies shall be mailed from IFOAM within 5 business days of the start of the comment period.

IFOAM may decide to include other stakeholder consultation activities in addition to the comment process, e.g. web-based dialogues, workshops, focus groups, in the course of developing the norms.

This policy covers the consultation process only. The decision process for each norm is elaborated in Policies 20 and 43.

Definition of Norms Stakeholders		
Stakeholders for the norms are categorized as follows:		
1	Parties that are subject to the norms for the purpose of	The ACBs
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	accreditation	
2	Parties that use the norms for conducting accreditation	IOAS
3	Party that owns and is responsible for the norms	IFOAM: Relevant IFOAM bodies i.e. SC, CC, IFOAM members and other affiliates
4	Parties that set standards and conduct conformity assessment for process and production methods, especially in organic and other environmental and social fields	Examples: ISEAL and its members, organic certification bodies,
5	Intergovernmental agencies that are concerned with organic standards, harmonization of organic standards and conformity assessment	Examples: FAO, UNCTAD, OECD, UNECE
6	Governmental agencies that regulate organic standards, certification and conformity assessment:	various
7	Other international standardizing and conformity assessment institutions	Examples: ISO, national ISO accreditation organizations, IAF
8	Academic institutions, consultants, and other technical specialists in standards setting and conformity assessment, and/or active in environmental and social issues.	Various (selected)
9	Environmental consumer and trade NGO's concerned with environmental and social issues and labelling (primarily having international scope)	Examples: CI, CCC, WWF, IATP, Greenpeace,

The specific lists of stakeholders in the above categories are developed and managed by the Norms Management Committee.

Procedure for Notification¹

- Parties in Categories 1 through 5 of the table above receive notice of the commencement of the revision of the norms, and in the case of the IBS, an invitation to submit suggestions for revision.
- Parties in Categories 1 through 9 above receive notice of the publication of revision drafts of the norms, and an invitation to comment.
- Parties in Categories 1-3 above receive revision drafts in addition to an invitation to comment, and they also receive periodic reminders of the comment period as necessary.

Procedure for Response to Comments

- The Criteria Committee acknowledges receipt of all recommendations and comments received at all stages of the IAC revision. The Standards Committee acknowledges receipt of all recommendation and comments received at all stages of the IBS revision.
- The Criteria Committee and the Standards Committee prepare, post, and distribute to parties in Categories 1 and 2 and parties making submissions, summaries of their responses to the recommendations and comments each stage of their consultation processes.

Procedure for Other Forms of Consultation

- The SC and CC include consideration of other forms of consultation in the revision plans for the IBS and IAC respectively. The options include workshops, expert panels, subcommittees, and interactive website tools.
- The SC and CC notify the NMC of any other forms of consultation that are built into their revision plans.
- The NMC has the right and obligation to require the SC and CC to engage in additional forms of consultation as necessary.

Revision

The NMC may undertake periodic review of this Policy and Procedure, and recommend revision to the WB for approval.

*Amended by the IFOAM World Board, November 2006, Vignola
First decided by IFOAM World Board, 0409, Seattle*