

POLICY **Revision of the IFOAM Norms**

NO: 20

REVISED DATE: Dec 2010

Purpose

To ensure that the decision making regarding the IFOAM Norms (IFOAM Standard, IFOAM Standards Requirements and IFOAM Accreditation Requirements) is based on open consultations and efforts to achieve consensus in line with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

Scope

All changes to the IFOAM Norms, including:

1. regular revisions
2. inclusion of new items
3. urgent revisions
4. changes resulting from Norms Interpretations
5. changes to the lists of Inputs, Additives and Processing Aids

The IFOAM Norms contain the following documents:

- The IFOAM Standards Requirements
- The IFOAM Accreditation Requirements
- The IFOAM Standard

IFOAM develops and revises these norms through a process which includes staff and committee work, stakeholder consultation, and a final decision process.

For every type of revision, this policy describes the following processes:

- a. *Initiation:* The parties eligible and the main steps to be taken for making a proposal for a revision.
- b. *Decision to Commence:* The party eligible to take the decision to commence with the revision.
- c. *Revision Process:* The **main** components and parties involved in the actual revision process.
- d. *Decision Making:* The main parties involved in the revision and procedures for approving a revision (e.g. membership vote).
- e. *Implementation:* The period within which approved changes have to be implemented by Norms users.

Definitions

Official Publication: The date of the publication of the English version of the Norms as defined in the electronic version available on the IFOAM website OGS section.

Other Stakeholders: Non-members as listed in Appendix 1: Norms Stakeholders.

Responsible Committee: The committee responsible for revising each document of the Norms, more precisely:

- The Standard Committee for the IFOAM Standard.
- The Standards Requirements Committee for the IFOAM Standards Requirements.
- The Accreditation Requirements Committee for the IFOAM Accreditation Requirements.

Revision Plan: Document, which outlines the main revision areas and changes and basic timelines for the revision of an IFOAM Norm document.

New Area: Categories of production or processing (e.g. catering) or products (e.g. paper, cosmetics) or concepts (e.g. Climate Change) not currently addressed in the Norms.

1. Revisions and inclusions of new areas

- a. **Initiation:** Any IFOAM member, IFOAM staff, the Responsible Committee, or Other Stakeholder can suggest or express a need for revisions of the Norms or inclusion of new areas. The Responsible Committee, taking into account input from IFOAM members and associates, other stakeholders and other relevant bodies and sources, assesses periodically whether a revision (including proposals for changes resulting from Norms Interpretations) or an inclusion of a new area is needed and makes a recommendation (Draft Revision Plan) to the OGS Manager. The revision plan shall address how interpretations are taken up in the next norms revision. The OGS manager informs the World Board of the overall revision plan, and seeks approval on strategic decisions such as the decision to initiate work on new areas.
- b. **Decision to Commence:** The OGS Manager, based on the strategic decision taken by the WB, takes the decision to commence the implementation of the revision plan. The OGS Manager shall update the list of Norms Stakeholders (Appendix 1). Following decision to commence, a summary of the revision plan, including steps and timelines, is communicated to the membership and other stakeholders.
- c. **Revision Process:** For all Norm documents, there will be two revision drafts (unless all issues can be resolved through one consultation round), subject to consultation with the IFOAM Membership and Other Stakeholders as defined under *Appendix 1: Norms Stakeholders*. The comment period shall be at least 60 days, commencing with the electronic mailing of the norms to the relevant stakeholders or posting on the IFOAM website, whichever is later. The World Board may decide to shorten this period to no less than 30 days with public justification. 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 revision process. The respective last revision draft will be subject to motions from the IFOAM membership.
- d. **Decision Making:** For all 3 Norms documents, there will be a motions reconciliation process done by the responsible committee and resulting in a final revision draft which will be subjected to membership vote, with decision taken by simple majority of the votes cast.
- e. **Implementation:** Within two years after Official Publication.

2. Changes to the lists of Inputs, Additives and Processing Aids of the IFOAM Standard.

For the addition, deletion or other revision of substances in the Appendices of the IFOAM Standard, the following processes apply:

- a. **Initiation:** Any party may request that IFOAM consider adding, deleting, or changing the status of an input. The Standard Committee may itself decide to initiate this procedure. A dossier shall be prepared by the party requesting the change, containing an assessment of the concerned substance according to the Criteria for the Evaluation of Substances annexed to the IFOAM Standards Requirements. IFOAM shall set reasonable fees to pay the cost of the evaluation of dossiers, including staff time, administrative overhead, Standard Committee meeting costs, and the hiring of outside experts. Fees may be waived by IFOAM in cases where other funding is available. A list of requests submitted and their status shall be made publicly available.
- b. **Decision to commence:** The Standard Committee will review all requests and decide if the evaluation will proceed, according to this policy and its corresponding procedures.
- c. **Revision Process:** The Standard Committee shall evaluate the information in the dossier against the relevant Criteria in the IFOAM Standards Requirements and the best available information, and decide if the requested change will be incorporated into a subsequent revision draft of the IFOAM Standard. At its discretion, the Standard Committee may engage the services of outside experts to assist the Committee with its evaluation. The Standard Committee may incorporate changes to the lists of substances in either a first or second revision draft of the IBS and the change must be subject to at least one round of comments.
- d. **Decision Making and implementation:** the decision making and implementation process of the IFOAM Standard applies.



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Publication of new Norms and other Changes

The revision plans and all decisions related to Norms revisions shall be announced promptly. Approved Norms shall be published promptly and shall be made available for free in electronic format.

Complaints

Complaints with regard to this Policy and its related Procedures are handled according to IFOAM Policy 27.

Procedures

Further detailed procedures are defined by IFOAM and approved by the Executive Director. Detailed procedures shall, to the extent possible, ensure compliance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

Responsible for revisions of this Policy: The IFOAM World Board.

First approved by membership vote, 4 September to 4 October 2007 and IFOAM Executive Board, January 2008. Last revision: Executive Board, November 2010. Approved by the IFOAM World Board on 13th December 2010.

Appendix 1: Norms Stakeholders

Definition of Norms Stakeholders		
Stakeholders for the norms are categorized as follows:		
1.	Parties that are subject to the norms for the purpose of accreditation	The ACBs (CBs accredited for both the IFOAM accreditation and the System accreditation)
2.	Clients of the IFOAM Standard	Those who signed a contract for use of the IFOAM standard, list available from IFOAM OGS database.
3.	Parties that use the norms for conducting accreditation	IOAS
4.	Party that owns and is responsible for the norms	IFOAM: Relevant IFOAM bodies i.e. responsible committees, IFOAM members and affiliates.
5.	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 and private standard setters
6.	Intergovernmental agencies that are concerned with organic standards, harmonization of organic standards and conformity assessment	Examples: FAO, UNCTAD
7.	Governmental agencies that regulate organic standards, certification and conformity assessment	Various (competent authority representatives whenever available)
8.	Other international standardizing and conformity assessment institutions	Examples: ISO, national ISO accreditation organizations, IAF
9.	Academic institutions, consultants, and other technical specialists in standards setting and conformity assessment, and/or active in environmental and social issues.	Various (selected)
10.	Environmental consumer and trade NGOs 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 OGS Manager.