

Public Revision Plan for the IFOAM Standard for Organic Production and Processing in 2018-2020

Draft version, open for stakeholder comments until April 22, 2018.

Background, history and purpose of the IFOAM Standard

The IFOAM Standard for Organic Production and Processing is one of the 2 organic standards on earth (the other being the Codex Organic Guidelines) which are truly designed to be international organic standard and as such serve as international references and to build international consensus, whenever possible, around organic standard issues. The IFOAM Standard is the only one whose development and approval lies in the hand of the organic movement (represented by the membership of IFOAM-Organics International).

The IFOAM Standard for Organic Production and Processing comes from a long history of organic standard development within IFOAM-Organics International. The first IFOAM Basic Standard was published in 1980. From there, it underwent regular revisions and new versions were published through to 2007. In 2010, a major revision of the IFOAM Guarantee System led to a change of nature from the IFOAM Basic Standards, which was a “Standard for standards” to the IFOAM Standard for Organic Production and Processing which is a certification “off-the-shelf” standard. Version 1.0 of this revamped standard was approved by the IFOAM General Assembly in August 2012. A new round of revision took place in 2012-2014, resulting in Version 2.0 being approved by the General Assembly and published in July 2014. This version, which is the current version (with minor edits in 2017) is available here: https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ifoam_norms_july_2014_t.pdf

The IFOAM Standard serves as an inspirational document and a starting point for all those (whether governments or private actors such as national organic movements) who want to develop their own national organic standard, or who want to deepen their standard on some under-addressed or new issues (such as nanotechnology requirements, aquaculture requirements, etc.). The IFOAM Standard is also often used by external actors wanting to compare and assess organic standards with other socio-environmental scheme: they often use the IFOAM Standard as a case-in-point of what an organic standard contains. Certifiers or other stakeholders who do not wish to develop their own standard can also sign a contract with IFOAM-Organics International to use the IFOAM Standard as such, and make related claims on their markets.

The IFOAM Standard is one of the standards approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards and as such can be used by certification bodies wanting to obtain IFOAM Accreditation. A number of certification bodies in the IFOAM Accreditation program choose to use the IFOAM Standard or to maintain compliance of their private standard to the IFOAM Standard: in doing that, they can make an additional claim to their IFOAM Accreditation status, i.e. by using the “IFOAM-Accredited, IFOAM Standard compliant” seal.

Reasons to revise the IFOAM Standard

Since the publication of Version 2.0 of the standard, in July 2017, new issues have come up that are likely to require changes in the IFOAM Standard:

- A need to review the substances lists, which have not been actively reviewed for many years. There is a need to analyze the evolution of substances lists in other organic standard and see whether any updates are necessary for the IFOAM Standard. One of the issues is that the IFOAM General Assembly in 2014 has adopted a motion on closing nutrient cycles, which has led to the creation of a working group on this topic. The work of the working group is still on-going but will likely lead to the consideration of new substances to be potentially allowed for use in organic production (revision of the Appendices to the IFOAM Standard) and might lead to some proposed changes to the content of the standard as well.
- The IFOAM General Assembly in November 2017 has adopted a motion on organic aquaculture, which needs to be translated into concrete requirements for the IFOAM Standard. A working group on aquaculture is still active to help the IFOAM Standard Committee deal with this work area.
- The IFOAM General Assembly in November 2017 has adopted a motion on organic insect and invertebrate production, which mandates IFOAM-Organics International to develop specific requirements for those production systems under the IFOAM Standard.
- A motion was submitted to the IFOAM General Assembly 2017 requesting a change to the conversion period requirements. This motion was rejected by the membership, presumably due to a preference to include a review of this topic in the regulation Norms revision process. The WB committed to have the Standard Committee look at the issue at the time of revising the IFOAM Standard.
- Any other issue that will come up during the consultation on this plan or during the revision period.

Revision steps and timeline

Steps	Timeline (tentative)	Opportunity for stakeholder involvement
Finalization of the public revision plan and renewal of the IFOAM Standard Committee	April-May 2018	Publication through special announcement. All stakeholders officially invited to comment on the plan, in particular to submit other needs for revisions. Stakeholders can also apply to be on the Standard Committee.
Standard Committee develops the first draft of the revised IS	2018	No public document available, but suggestions related to the topic can be submitted any time to ogs@ifoam.bio . Consultation of specific stakeholders (e.g. insect producing companies and experts, aquaculture working group) will take place during the drafting phase, as per the needs of the Standard Committee.

Public consultation on the first draft	Early 2019	Official comment period open to all stakeholders
Standard Committee prepares the second draft based on public inputs received on the first draft	Mid 2019	Wait for second draft
Public consultation on the second draft	Mid 2019	Official comment period open to all stakeholders
Standard Committee prepares the final draft based on inputs received on the second draft.	Second half of 2019	Wait for motion process
Open period for motions by IFOAM members on the final draft	End 2019	IFOAM-OI full members can make motions.
Motion reconciliation process and production of the final version.	Early 2020	Wait for final vote
Membership vote on final version	2020	IFOAM-OI full members can vote the norm up or down.

How to comment on this revision plan

Stakeholders can provide comments on any part of this revision plan, including on:

- The proposed steps and timeline.
- The areas that have been proposed as focus areas for this revision round.
- Other possible areas which stakeholders find should also be considered in this revision round.

Comments must be sent by email to ogs@ifoam.bio before April 22, 2018.