



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC ACCREDITATION SERVICE

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Use of information from other certification bodies not involved in organic agriculture

IFOAM criterion 9.2.2 describes the various ways in which a certification body can recognise the work of another body as equivalent to its own. One of the options requires the other body to be accredited to ISO Guide 65.

Criterion 9.2.2b specifically states recognition can be based upon:

'ISO 65 accreditation with an organic certification scope carried out by an accreditation body that participates in a peer review system. The certification body shall verify equivalency of standards and additional aspects of these criteria which are not covered in ISO 65. Certification bodies shall obtain and assess the protocol for acceptance of prior certification practiced by the recognized certification body.'

The IOAS received and considered a request for an accredited certification body to be able to recognise the work of another certification body which met these criteria apart from the fact that their scope was not organic, but instead social standards. The argument was that where operators are certified organic and fair trade, there is currently duplication of most aspects of the requirements in the IFOAM standards Chapter 8 on Social Justice. In other words, the organic certification body would perform its normal inspection but rely wholly or partially on the work of the fair trade certification body for the assessment of the specific requirements on social justice.

The IOAS Board decided that it was reasonable and justifiable that criterion 9.2.2b could be extended in such circumstances as long as the IFOAM accredited certification organisation has made and recorded an assessment of the equivalence of the specific checks by the fair trade certifier and all other relevant requirements of section 9.2 (e.g. 9.2.3) are observed. Individual operator records would have to make transparent and maintain documentation to justify the use of this allowance.

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