What we do...

The IOAS is a not for profit, professional accreditation organisation dedicated to the growth of organic and sustainable agriculture to help improve the life of our planet and its people.

We aim to encourage increased demand for organic and sustainable products by building trust, market confidence and recognition.

How we achieve it...

We apply robust chain of custody standards set by organisations or international laws. We conduct accreditation assessments to these exacting standards on certification bodies who in turn inspect and verify farms and enterprises under the same stringent standards.

We then undertake continuous surveillance and monitoring of these certification bodies thus enabling consumers to have consistent confidence in their choice of products at the point of purchase.

Furthermore the IOAS helps certification bodies who may wish to meet more than one scheme at a reasonable cost, as we have designed our assessment system to handle many standards in just one assessment process.
Scheme Owners

Regulatory and other private schemes offered to Certification Bodies

IOAS

Authorises Certification Bodies according to scheme guidelines

Certification Bodies
Audit producers of organic products

Certificate Holders
Produce and trade organic products
Continued improvement...

The IOAS core values are quality, integrity, innovation and respect.

In 2013 the new IOAS accreditation symbol was introduced for use on certificates issued by IOAS accredited certification bodies. The use of the symbol is a way for accredited CBs to show their accreditation provenance and that the operator and products covered by the certificate is issued by a certification body under IOAS surveillance.

We have...

- Continued to expand our international client base.
- Moved from an associate to a full member of the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) to further facilitate trade and commerce among economies in the Asia Pacific region.
- Further developed our computer scheduling programmes.
- Introduced internal lead liaison roles for each scheme to improve client support.
- Improved the transparency of the IOAS and our procedures using our website to provide details of assessments, provision of information and publication of IOAS board minutes.
Compliance...

As an assessor and accreditation body we comply with ISO Guide 17011, the international guideline for accreditation. As well as undertaking our own internal monitoring to ensure compliance, we are also supervised by the Canadian government (CFIA) and by the US National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST).

In the last 12 months we had a successful full external reassessment by NIST (the IOAS is the only participating AB in the NVCASE organic scheme) and the Canada Organic Office conducted their 2013 IOAS surveillance visit in Argentina.

The IOAS is one of four Conformity Verification Bodies that have been designated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to assess, recommend and monitor certification bodies under the Organic Products Regulations of Canada. We are the major provider of this service outside of Canada and therefore play an important role with regard to imports. We currently verify COR requirements for 25 CBs around the world, including one in Canada.

The National Voluntary Conformity Assessment Systems Evaluation Program of NIST was established to assess US organisations’ conformance with established criteria so as to demonstrate their competence to foreign authorities. NIST assessed IOAS’ IFOAM and ISO Guide 65 programmes against ISO Guide 17011 and first recognised us as compliant in 2004. Since then it has conducted continuous surveillance and reassessment through on-site and remote office checks, witness audits at the premises of our clients and through teleconferences.
In 2013-14 we continued to consolidate our position as the international accreditation body of choice in the organic and sustainable sector with the following schemes:

**American National Standards Institute**

The IOAS signed an agreement with ANSI in 2011 for collaboration on the provision of assessment services for various food safety schemes including GlobalGAP.

**COSMOS Standard AISBL**

The IOAS is the main cooperating accreditation body for the COSMOS scheme which regulates the production and marketing of organic and natural cosmetics.

**Global Organic Textile Standard**

In 2009 GOTS signed an agreement with the IOAS as their preferred partner to accredit and supervise certification bodies that inspect and certify operations in line with the Global Organic Textiles Standard.

**International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements**

The IOAS operates two worldwide schemes; the IFOAM Accreditation Program (IAP) and the IFOAM Global Organic System Accreditation (IGOSA).

**Canada Organic Office (COO)**

In 2009 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency approved the IOAS as a competent Conformity Verification Body to assess certification bodies in all parts of the world for products certification under the Canadian Organic Regime, 2009.

**Sustainable Agriculture Network & Rainforest Alliance**

SAN and RA signed a joint contract with the IOAS in 2012 to operate the SAN/RA accreditation of certification bodies overseeing implementation of the SAN standards and use of the Rainforest Alliance logo on products.

**NATRUE AISBL**

NATRUE selected the IOAS to be their first accreditation body for their scheme covering organic and natural cosmetics. The scheme was launched September 2013.

**Textile Exchange**

The IOAS has worked with Textile Exchange since 2010 and has now implemented their new Content Claim Standard for organic textiles and recycled content claims.

The IOAS also performs assessment of certification bodies for equivalence to the organic regulation of the European Union (EC) 834/2007 and offers assessment against ISO Guide 17065 for an increasing range of scopes, including animal welfare, personal care products, natural cleaning products, fair trade and social justice.
Who we are...

Established by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) in 1997, we have an international Board of Directors with a diverse range of backgrounds and a wealth of knowledge.

Our rigorous approach to internal quality standards means that accreditation and technical decisions are made by quite separate committees again made up of individuals chosen for their expertise.

Our team of international and experienced staff work with a virtual and paperless office system with bases in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom and the USA.

**STAFF**

David Crucefix  
Exec. Director  
(Business)

Jan Deane  
Exec. Director  
(Operations)

Amal Aldana  
Ast. Programme Manager

Ken Commins  
Finance & Development Manager

Susan Hepper  
Office Administrator

Andrea Tucker  
Communications Manager

Angela Jackson  
Client Manager

Gergana Nentcheva  
Client Manager

Jennyfer Karali  
Client Manager

Cristina Comezaña  
Client Manager

Janning Kennedy  
Client Manager

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

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Training with the IOAS...

The IOAS offers training to personnel from government authorities and certification bodies covering conformity assessment in organic agriculture, management of organic certification and other custom courses.

We are the only conformity verification body active internationally with a specific focus on organic agriculture. This gives us an unparalleled perspective on the structure and functioning of certification bodies working in this field and the regulatory environment in which they work.

Most courses are of 3 day duration but can be adapted to specific needs. A mixture of training techniques are used with a heavy emphasis on exercises and case studies. All courses are available in English and Spanish. All participants receive a complete training manual.

“This was an excellent course - the best I have attended in 8 years in the industry”
International success...

Our success around the world is evident of the professionalism and reliability of the IOAS. We work with nearly 60 certification bodies with a wide range of characteristics; structure (non-profit, for-profit, government), size (from 2-3 staff to over 100) and whether working in a domestically regulated environment or not.

The geographical location of our clients' headquarters (chart 1) shows the importance of the IOAS’ role in developing countries with the majority of CBs engaged in more than one scheme (chart 2).

The addition of scopes of activity are an increasing trend. The relative size of schemes operated by the IOAS (chart 3) is changing as new schemes (GOTS, TE and SAN/RA) are taken up and as country to country equivalence agreements in the organic sector are signed.

![Chart 1: Location of headquarters of IOAS clients.](chart1.png)

![Chart 2: No. of CBs registered with multiple schemes.](chart2.png)

![Chart 3: No. of scheme accreditations as percent of total.](chart3.png)
Complaints, appeals, sanctions...

Complaints, false claims, and appeals

It is an important part of an impartial and transparent system of conformity assessment that an organisation like the IOAS is open to receive and deal with enquiries, complaints, possible misuse of accreditation and appeals. Information on possible misrepresentation, inappropriate practices or even fraud may come from government authorities, traders, producers, certifiers or other interest groups and the subject of these enquiries may well be producers, certifiers or the IOAS itself. Similarly, CBs must be given the chance to appeal against decisions made by the IOAS with an expectation that these cases be handled with fairness. All such cases may provide important information on overall performance of the conformity system and IOAS analyses the information for any trends and opportunities for improvement.

Sanctions

To provide confidence to the 'market' any conformity assessment system must have the power to require correction of procedures or practices that do not comply with the claimed standard. The IOAS manages enforcement by having clear contractual powers and linked policies and procedures that give us a range of tools to apply to CBs to ensure their continued compliance. Mistakes happen as they always will from time to time, but it is the system design, staff competence and underlying approach that are the main focus of our attention.

Complaints:
During 2013-14, 6 complaint cases were raised and resolved; 4 cases related to the Canada Organic Regime, 1 to the European Union and one to the SAN/RA scheme which was withdrawn. There were no complaints against IOAS.

False claims:
There were 9 cases of false claims investigated by the IOAS during 2013-14. 4 of these were against individual producer/processors and the remainder against certification bodies accredited or not accredited by the IOAS.

Appeals in 2013-14:
There have been no appeals against IOAS decisions.

Sanctions in 2013-14:
In this period 3 certification bodies accredited by the IOAS were issued with notices of intent to suspend, but all three took immediate action to resolve the issue before the suspension came into effect.
Performance...

Up until 2003 the IOAS only worked with IFOAM organic norms although we had also been providing equivalence reports to EU Member States since 1998. Since then (as the chart demonstrates) we have increasingly diversified into other organic schemes and more recently into sustainable agriculture under the SAN/RA scheme. Work linked with country regulations vs private schemes is currently evenly split. The growth of product certification under ISO Guide 65/17065 for other private schemes has also been another feature of recent years.

Accreditation is a demanding and detailed process requiring considerable expertise and as a result can be expensive. However, as a non-profit organisation the IOAS has always been committed to performing our work with integrity and for the lowest possible cost to CBs. Through considerable investment in IT and working with an increasing range of scheme owners, we have reduced the cost per accreditation by almost one third over the last ten years to around 5000 US$ per annum. The chart below shows that we have maintained this for the last few years.
Finance...

Breakdown of income, 2013.

2013 saw a consolidation of the previous year’s income of around 930,000 US$ representing an 8% increase over 2011 and a rise in net assets of just over 30,000 US$.
Most income came directly from accreditation and assessment. IOAS annual income is somewhat influenced by the spread of certification bodies within the four-year accreditation cycle. The 2014 budget is expected to break through the 1m US$ barrier for the first time.

Breakdown of Expenses, 2013.

The IOAS continues to invest in personnel and external supervision and these costs were up by 8% and 54% respectively in 2013 compared to 2012. Despite that, overall costs were substantially unchanged on 2012. In line with good financial practice, the IOAS Board has changed its auditor for the financial year 2014.
How to contact us...

Our head office: 119 2nd Ave. West Dickinson, ND 58601, USA.

Our website: www.ioas.org
Visit our website for news updates of IOAS, regulation and market developments.
Access information documents or subscribe to our newsletter.

Email
General enquiries: info@ioas.org
New clients seeking accreditation: aldana@ioas.org

Find us in person at Biofach or the IFOAM Organic World Congress.