



Policy on Accreditation Claims and Use of the IOAS Accreditation Symbol

A Preamble

A.1 Introduction and purpose of the policy

The contract for provision of assessment and surveillance signed by certification bodies (PL0502) requires certification bodies to abide by IOAS policy when making claims of accreditation and when using the IOAS accreditation symbol. This is referred to as policy. There is also a need to monitor and respond to incorrect or unauthorised uses and references to the IOAS name or graphical representations.

A.2 Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on the use and any limitations on the format of such claims and the IOAS accreditation symbol so as to ensure clarity on which activities of CBs are accredited. The policy covers issues regarding the use of claims made by any entity of being accredited by the IOAS including use of the IOAS logo and the IOAS accreditation symbol. Procedures are provided on measures to deal with incorrect or unauthorised claims of accreditation status, or misleading or unauthorised use of the accreditation symbol or logo. Incorrect and unauthorised use of the IOAS name or references by any entity that could be confused with IOAS are also covered. This policy does not cover use of the IAF MLA mark which is described in IOAS document [FR0914](#) and regulated by IAF document IAF PL 8:2016 Rules for the Use of the IAF Logo.

A.3 Definitions

Reference is made to the IOAS General Operating Manual for general definitions

A.4 Access and Distribution

This document is distributed to the CBs immediately upon finalizing any changes. In addition, it is distributed to the Board and Accreditation Committee annually. Staff are informed of changes as soon as they have been finalized. Interested parties may obtain a copy on request.

A.5 Authority and revision

This policy is approved by the IOAS Executive Director (ED) and it is responsibility of the IOAS ED to review the appropriateness of the policy from time to time. It may be revised when the need arises. Its effectiveness in meeting the quality policy of the IOAS will be assessed during Internal Review and any measures for improvement notified to the Executive Director.

B Policy

B.1 IOAS acronym, logo, accreditation claims and the IOAS accreditation symbol

B.1.1 Claims of being accredited or in some way approved by or linked with IOAS might occur through use of the IOAS acronym, logo, written or verbal statements or through use of the IOAS accreditation symbol.

B.1.2 The IOAS acronym is that indicated here, is legally registered and protected and is only for use by IOAS.

United States Patent and Trademark Office

IOAS

B.1.3 The IOAS logo is that indicated here. It shall not be used by any other entity unless specific permission has been given e.g. promotional, sponsorship or joint events with others.



B.1.4 Accreditation claims can be made by accredited CBs in the form of statements. The format and context of such statements is regulated below in section B4.

B.1.5 The IOAS accreditation symbol is that indicated in section B.4 below and can be used by CBs that have received an IOAS accreditation certificate.

B.2 Who can make claims

B.2.1 Claims of being accredited by IOAS through statements or by use of the IOAS accreditation symbol shall only be made by CBs that have been issued an IOAS accreditation certificate. The following entities shall not make any such claim:

- a) CBs that have applied to IOAS but have not yet been issued an accreditation certificate by IOAS;
- b) CBs that have been assessed by IOAS but have not been issued an accreditation certificate by IOAS. This applies to CBs in schemes where another entity makes the accreditation decision or where the CB has requested assessment but not accreditation;
- c) CBs, inspection bodies or other entities that are subcontracted by an IOAS accredited CB;
- d) Any other entities including certified operators or non-certified operators.

B.3 Obligatory and optional use by accredited CBs

B.3.1 In order that interested parties are correctly informed of the CB accreditation status, CBs that have received an IOAS accreditation certificate are required to declare their accredited status:

- a) On scope certificates issued to operators under the IOAS accredited scheme;
- b) On their web sites.

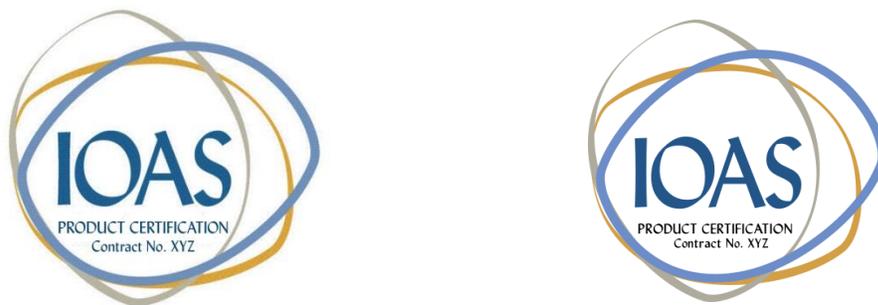
B.3.2 In both cases, the CB may choose between making written statements or using the IOAS accreditation symbol following the requirements in B4.

B.3.3 Written claims or use of the accreditation symbol are optional for accredited CBs on promotional materials, CB documents, letterheads and business cards.

B.3.4 Accreditation claims of whatever kind and location shall not be misleading about the scope of the accreditation (see B4).

B.4 Format of CB claims on operator scope certificates and web sites and other materials

B.4.1 The IOAS accreditation symbol is in the formats which appears below:



B.4.2 The symbol is based on the IOAS company logo with the addition of the words 'Product Certification' which denotes the activity to which the accreditation refers along with the contract number of the certification body allocated by the IOAS.

B.4.3 Each certification body will, on accreditation, be issued an electronic version of their unique symbol indicating the correct contract number.

B.4.4 This symbol must be used by all accredited CBs without alteration unless the text option stated at B.4.9 and 4.10 is preferred.

B.4.5 The IOAS accreditation symbol may not be used by CBs under schemes in which the IOAS does not make the accreditation decision.

B.4.6 In all cases the symbol may be used in its actual colour or in black and white and must keep its proportions. No other colour variations are accepted.

B.4.7 IOAS symbol shall only be used in conjunction with the logo of the CB and shall not be of larger size.

B.4.8 The size of the accreditation symbol shall not be so small that the contract number is illegible.

B.4.9 If the CB prefers not to use the accreditation symbol, statements on certificates are permitted such as 'This certificate is issued within the scope of the accreditation for product certification issued by IOAS. Registration number: (CB contract number with IOAS)'

B.4.10 Statements, rather than the IOAS accreditation symbol, may also be used on web sites. These statements should take the format:

'CB name is accredited by IOAS for the scope of product certification. Registration number: (CB contract number with IOAS). Please refer to www.ioas.org/accreditation/accredited-bodies/ for current information'.

B.4.11 If CB promotional material refers to any activity not covered by the accreditation scope, mention of accreditation shall be accompanied by limiting clauses as specified in B.4.9 and 4.10 above. The scope of accreditation is stated in the IOAS web site certification body list.

B.4.12 Promotional material that specifically mentions categories of activity that are not covered by the accreditation scope shall not mention the accreditation status without specifically referring to the accreditation scope. Thus, a brochure that for example mentions the certification of non-scope activities shall not include on the brochure the accreditation status without specifying the activities that the accreditation scope covers. 'Certifier X is accredited for etc'.

B.4.13 The same rule applies to promotional material that mentions other certification schemes operated by the CB that are not covered by the accreditation scope. Thus, a brochure that mentions (for example) that the CB operates a sustainable forestry certification scheme which is outside of the scope of accreditation shall not mention the IOAS accreditation status without referring to the scheme that is covered by the accreditation scope. In such a case the statement that 'Certifier X is accredited' is not permitted without clarifying language of the scope of the accreditation.

B.4.14 Materials that do not mention specific activities or schemes such as letterheads or business cards may refer to the accreditation status without limiting clauses if there are no schemes outside of the accreditation scope. If the Certification Body does operate other certification schemes the accreditation reference must specify the applicable scheme.

B.5 References to accreditation by operators

B.5.1 Operators may make statements regarding the accreditation status of their Certification Body in brochures and other promotional material as long as IOAS and any scheme owner rules are observed.

B.5.2 Accreditation statements shall clearly refer to the Certification Body and not any product. Thus, statements such as 'this product is certified by Certifier X, an IOAS accredited Certification Body' are permitted if in line with more specific scheme owner rules. A statement that states e.g. "Scheme name' accredited' on the promotional material is not permitted.

B.5.3 If the operator promotional material refers solely to products not covered by the accreditation scope no reference to accreditation shall be made.

B.5.4 If the promotional material refers to products, only some of which are covered by the accreditation scope, then reference to the accreditation shall state the categories of accreditation covered by the accreditation scope.

B.6 Accreditation or other misleading or confusing claims by other parties

B.6.1 Any reference to IOAS accreditation or use of IOAS logo or symbol by a not accredited third party is prohibited and IOAS will take corresponding actions.

B.6.2 IOAS shall monitor and follow up leads on any claims or use of the IOAS logo and acronym that may cause confusion in the market.

C Procedures

C.1 Surveillance and dealing with incorrect or unauthorised claims

C.1.1 The correct format and use of any accreditation claims and/or the accreditation symbol by clients of IOAS as described above shall be verified as part of IOAS assessment and surveillance measures.

C.1.2 Non-conformities shall be issued, and CB corrective actions taken to resolve such issues in line with the normal assessment process.

C.1.3 Incorrect or unauthorised use by other parties may come to IOAS' notice through complaints, leads provided by other sources and by active web surveillance.

C.1.4 Any potential misuse should be brought to the attention of the Quality Manager (QM). All notifications of potential misuse shall normally be made in writing or electronically containing any evidence (labels, brochures, etc.) to support the alleged misuse.

C.2 Investigation of misuse of accreditation status or IOAS logo/name use

C.2.1 Upon receipt of an alleged misuse of accreditation status or logo use, IOAS QM shall:

- a) Clarify the following information (if applicable):
 - name, address and telephone number of the party making the claim;
 - name of party alleged to misuse of accreditation status;
 - extent, location and/or circumstances where alleged misuse occurred;
 - date and time when alleged misuse occurred;
 - any witnesses and/or evidence to support the alleged misuse; and,
 - any other information deemed important.
- b) (If applicable) gather additional evidence from other sources to substantiate the claim.
- c) Within 3 weeks of receipt of the allegation notify the alleged party of the potential misuse and invite a response using document [FR0535i](#). This shall require a response within 2 weeks.

C.2.2 Following the response to notification letter the IOAS QM shall assess whether a satisfactory resolution of the misuse is imminent or may require further action.

C.2.3 If the resolution is satisfactory and imminent, QM shall, within 3 weeks of receipt of response to the notification letter, confirm the mutual understanding of the resolution by sending document [FR0535ii](#) which shall advise of possible action if the resolution is not adhered to.

C.2.4 If a timely and acceptable resolution is unlikely or if there is no response, QM shall, within 3 weeks of receipt of response (or due date) to the notification letter, invite a (further) response within 2 weeks by sending document [FR0535iii](#) which shall advise of possible action if there is either an unsatisfactory or no reply.

C.2.5 If this action results in an unsatisfactory or no reply the QM shall consult with the ED and ultimately the IOAS Board of Directors who will consider the need for legal action. This shall also apply to the use of the IOAS acronym and similar graphical representations by any entity. In all cases legal support may be required to determine appropriate actions and the likelihood of success.

C.2.6 When appropriate, IOAS shall post an advice on the IOAS [web site](#) to indicate that an entity has made an incorrect or unauthorised reference to IOAS or claim.

C.2.7 Complete records of such correspondence shall be maintained.