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This year has been the end of an era and one of new beginnings. Ken Commins, founding Executive Director retired from day-to-day work at IOAS at the end of April 2019. We will all remain grateful for his vision, passion and drive for organic integrity and service, that has shaped IOAS into the highly respected organization that it is today.

We have also been grateful for David Crucefix, as our new ED, for stepping up to fill Ken’s big shoes and for carefully reviewing staff roles to enable IOAS staff to evolve and grasp the reins to take the IOAS forward into the next decade.

However, Ken has not left completely as he has committed to assist us in an exciting new venture. One of the many outcomes from our 20th Anniversary Seminar in 2017 was the Growing Organic Trust report which extends the long-term IOAS commitment to cultivating trust across the organic community. The projects that emerged from this report inspired the launching of the Alliance for Organic Integrity (AOI). The Alliance is a sister organization that will focus on building and sharing tools, strategies and training to better promote and protect organic integrity across organic platforms through partnerships and alliance-building with allies and organic stakeholder leaders around the world. It is envisaged that the development of AOI will expedite solving the many challenges that the organic sector faces due to our rapid and continued growth and success.

We have also welcomed a new and fruitful cooperative agreement with USDA-National Organic Program to conduct country-level studies of two distinct organic supply chains. The studies will inform the development of new tools and broad recommendations for improving the integrity and mutual cooperation across complex global supply chains. Both of these ventures fit with our commitment and enthusiasm to cooperate with all parties to maintain and enhance trust in organic products on a global level.

And finally, as always, we are grateful for all of the IOAS staff, board and our many clients, partners and allies that together make organic strong, and are major contributors to improving our soils, our people and the planet.

Michael Sligh, IOAS President

Alliance for Organic Integrity first preliminary board meeting May 2019. From left to right: Ken Commins, David Crucefix, Francis Blake, Jan Deane, Michael Sligh and Bo van Elzakker.
63 The number of Certification bodies who are clients of the IOAS as at 30 June 2019.

159 The total number of Accreditations the IOAS managed between July 2018 and June 2019.

8 The number of new Certification bodies which IOAS accredited between July 2018 and June 2019.

50 The number of Accreditation decisions made by our Accreditation committee between July 2018 and June 2019.

149 The number of countries in which our Certification bodies have operators.

Photos by Client Manager
Janning Kennedy
Uganda surveillance visit 2018.
IOAS Executive Director

It would be an understatement to say that these are exciting and challenging times as there seems to be movement and innovations everywhere – not least within the IOAS. Although IOAS is a service provider and is not prone to making headlines, it does not mean that we continue on year after year in the same old way. IOAS has always aimed to be an innovator and an organisation able to think and be different.

In his President’s message Michael has already mentioned the two major initiatives of the Alliance for Organic Integrity and the cooperative project with the NOP that evolved over 2018 and that we are taking forward in 2019. Both demonstrate the passion and commitment all IOAS personnel have for our mission of cultivating integrity and trust across the organic community.

Behind the scenes we prepared for and, from January 1, 2019, implemented a management transition in order for Ken Commins to retire at the end of April 2019. Although I have been in the organisation since 2000 and one of two Executive Directors since 2011, the task of going solo is both an honour and a challenge. Of course I am not alone as we have an amazing team of people within the staff and collaborators, the Accreditation Committee and the Board which together represents a quite unique cell of expertise being applied to our work in organic integrity.

Our cumulative expertise does not however breed complacency. We have much to do to continue to improve how we operate, and to deliver our core work of assessment of certification bodies in an efficient and effective way. This is a clear commitment I give to the various regulators, schemes owners, accreditation bodies and certification bodies we work with now and those we hope will work with us in future.

There is a lot going on in our working environment too. During and ongoing in these last 12 months regulators (e.g. Canada and the European Union) and scheme owners (e.g. COSMOS, GOTS, NATRUE and Textile Exchange) have been working on updating their standards, requirements and conformity systems. IOAS provides input to these processes as appropriate and supports CBs in understanding the changes.

And finally, I could not close this message without expressing my enormous gratitude to Ken Commins without whom IOAS would not exist and would not be the solid and happy organisation that it is today. We take our topic very seriously, but we had (and have) fun in not always taking ourselves seriously.

David Crucefix
Executive Director

David Crucefix and Brahim Houla of GCC Accreditation Center were facilitators at a Pacific Accreditation Cooperation training event held in November 2018.
About us

Helping improve the life of our planet and its human and animal population through organic, social justice and sustainable accreditation

IOAS is a non-profit organisation dedicated to assessing the compliance and capability of organisations providing certification claims in the field of organic and sustainable agriculture, environmental management, social justice and fair trade.

Founded by IFOAM Organics International in 1997, IOAS has evolved to providing leading accreditation services to Certification Bodies, governmental and private organisations around the world.

Providing expert assurance to governmental and private scheme owners

Our worldwide experience with organic and sustainable accreditation schemes has provided IOAS with a thorough knowledge of applicable requirements and standards, resulting in a unique skill set for monitoring the ongoing compliance of certification bodies operating in these fields.

IOAS is one of the few recognized by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to conduct evaluation work as a Conformity Verification Body. We also provide evaluation reports for use by the EU Commission under the equivalence option of EU Council Reg 834/2007.

Our clients benefit from a cost effective one stop service for multiple accreditation schemes

We work with private and regulatory scheme owners, providing CBs with an efficient and cost effective accreditation process so that they may have the ability to succeed in the organic and sustainable market.
Sign spotted in Sri Lanka.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Let us be them.
IOAS accreditation

As an independent not for profit organisation, the IOAS provides expert assessment and surveillance services delivered with fairness and rigour around the world. We offer assessment and accreditation to certification bodies for standards which are complementary to the IOAS mission. This means that the IOAS is open to applications that involve organic and sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, social justice, fair trade and related themes. Schemes may be set by legislation or developed privately to meet market demands and contribute to a more sustainable and fairer world. Accreditation for product certification normally entails assessment against ISO/IEC 17065 plus additional sector requirements set by the scheme owner or the certification body itself.
# Accreditation schemes

ISO/IEC 17065

ISO/IEC 17065 is often used as the basis for conformity assessment schemes for bodies certifying products, processes and services. Using this standard, IOAS provides accreditation for private schemes, as well as some country specific regulations (Mexico LPO, Chile, Australia, etc).

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<tr>
<th>Canada Organic Regime (COR)</th>
<th>The COSMetics Organic and natural Standard (COSMOS)</th>
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<td>The IOAS is an approved Conformity Verification Body and able to assess the competence of certification bodies both inside and outside of Canada as specified under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). The IOAS makes recommendations for accreditation to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).</td>
<td>A voluntary accreditation for organic and natural cosmetics operated by COSMOS-standard AISBL, an international non-profit association. The standard sets out innovative, challenging and progressive criteria that consumers can trust, and that are clear for the industry and good for the environment.</td>
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<th>European Union Equivalency</th>
<th>IFOAM</th>
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<td>IOAS performs assessment and makes a recommendation to the European Commission against ISO/IEC 17065 for equivalence to the European regulation (EC) 834/2007 on the production and sale of organic products in Europe including equivalence of imports from third countries.</td>
<td>IFOAM was the very first international verification of competence for certification bodies active in organic agriculture. IFOAM accreditation is awarded to certification bodies that comply with “IFOAM Accreditation Requirements” (IAR) and use compliant or equivalent standards as per the IFOAM Standards Requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Global Organic Textile Standard</th>
<th>NATRUE AISBL</th>
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<td>The GOTS voluntary standard ensures the organic status of textiles from the harvesting of the raw materials through high ecological, environmental and socially responsible manufacturing all the way to labelling in order to provide credible assurance to the consumer.</td>
<td>NATRUE has successfully worked with the IOAS since 2012 to develop an independent accreditation scheme to ensure the availability of quality natural and organic cosmetic products. There are now 31 countries around the world actively using the NATRUE label and over 5800 products from more than 250 brands.</td>
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<th>GLOBALG.A.P.</th>
<th>Textile Exchange</th>
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<td>A voluntary worldwide standard for the certification of agricultural products for safe and sustainable agriculture practices. Producers comply with widely accepted criteria for food safety, sustainable production methods, worker and animal welfare, and responsible use of water, compound feed and plant propagation materials.</td>
<td>A comprehensive range of voluntary standards and requirements recognised worldwide to support the textile industry on Content, Organic Content, Recycled, Global Recycled, Responsible Down and Responsible Wool Claims. The IOAS has worked with TE since 2010.</td>
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Client certification bodies

Social Certification Services Pvt. Ltd

Clients accepted by the IOAS as at 30/6/2019.
Highlights of 2018/2019

The organic industry has grown dramatically in the last 40 years. Growth and success has brought new challenges, new opportunities but also threats.

The first public session on Growing Organic Trust; the long-term organic integrity initiative spearheaded by IOAS took place at BioFach, Germany 2019.

Growing Organic Trust evolved from the work that was done at the IOAS 20th Anniversary Seminar, ‘Organic Inspection and Certification 2025’, held in India in November 2017. Key players from the organic sector were brought together to explore and discuss the status of organic inspection and certification, with the aim of identifying deficiencies and developing an action plan to help tackle them.

The Biofach session was the first step to engage with all sectors of the organic movement, and communicate the projects and goals that are proposed to further strengthen the integrity of organic certification, to reward good performance and to combat fraud.

As a result IOAS will form an independent not for profit organisation, the "Alliance for Organic Integrity" that will work with other interested parties to drive this initiative forward forward while functioning separately from the accreditation work of IOAS.

IOAS continues to strive for;

Worldwide equivalency – ensuring that the accredited certification bodies enforce equivalent standards and operate according to the same scheme criteria wherever they may be in the world,

Compliance with international norms – maintaining compliance as verified by peer review or other third parties with the current version of ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies,

Close cooperation and satisfactory service to scheme owners – working closely with scheme owners to ensure scheme objectives are met and providing feedback to assist in continuous improvement,

Rigor and empathy- implementing its accreditation services to the highest quality standard possible, taking into consideration the size of the applicant, its resources and the intricacies of organic certification programme accreditation.

Integrity at reasonable cost - providing a quality service of high integrity at the lowest possible cost to certification bodies.

Providing independent expert support and assessment services to governmental bodies.

As a result of our international expertise and independent status IOAS works with a number of countries to discuss and support the further development of international organic accreditation.

This year we have undertaken a project for USDA NOP to provide a country level commodity study. The scope of the project includes several months of preparation and planning, followed by in-country visits to perform studies on local and global supply chains.
Moving forward

Finding solutions and helping our clients face new challenges and new opportunities.

The Brexit situation remains uncertain in many regards, including how these changes will affect organic compliance of products produced and certified in the UK as well as those being imported into the UK, or exported to the EU.

IOAS has, with the cooperation of the EU commission, supported CBs facing the possibility of changes to the UK market using tools like geographical scope extensions and providing additional assessments.

IOAS recognise the organic market will face further challenges following the review of the EU regulation and we will continue to offer a number of options in terms of organic product certification that will be accepted in various global markets.

Improving focus and reducing risk

Over the last 2 years we have continued to develop our formal risk analysis, and are working towards implementing a more refined risk based approach to accreditation. The aim is to have a quantitative measurement tool that will allow us to increase surveillance for CBs that present a higher risk, and potentially reduce audit durations for low risk CBs as appropriate.

Over this period we have been collecting ‘risk data’ on each CB and have developed measurable risk parameters. We have then proceeded to score each CB during their most recent assessment and used this to assist the planning of the assessment and surveillance activity for the next accreditation cycle. In line with ISO/IEC 17011 requirements this supports the development of a more risk focused approach which will benefit all in the accreditation and certification business sector and ultimately improve consumer confidence.
This year marked several major changes in IOAS. David Crucefix became the sole IOAS Executive Director, Amaia Aldana taking on the role of Programme Manager, and Andrés Vásquez Millán becoming the Assistant Programme Manager. Gergana Nentcheva assisted with additional development work and Cristina Comezaña became our full time Quality Manager. Andreas Georgakakis, Dániel Szalai and Quynh Vo joined as Client Managers. We also welcomed Sandeep Bhargava and Mrs. Sahana C.A. to the IOAS Board and Accreditation Committee respectively.

Our thanks go to Diana Callear and Boudewijn van Elzakker who completed their board service and Patricio Parra and Qiao Yuhui who were part of the IOAS accreditation committee and have officially stepped down. Boudewijn van Elzakker has accepted a position on the IOAS accreditation committee.

Finally we said good bye to Ken Commins who officially retired as Executive Director (Business) as of April 30, 2019. Although retiring from the IOAS he has committed to supporting the new IOAS initiative of the Alliance for Organic Integrity.

IOAS Employees

Adel Enderson
Operations Assistant
UK

Amaia Aldana
Programme Manager
Spain

Andreas Georgakakis
Client Manager
Greece

Andrés Vásquez Millán
Ast. Programme Manager
Argentina

Andrea Tucker
Comms. Manager
UK

Cristina Comezaña
Quality Manager
Argentina

David Crucefix
Executive Director of Operations
UK

Iris Rendon
Assistant Executive Director
Canada

Quynh Vo
Client Manager
USA

Polonca Repič
Client Manager
Slovenia

Janning Kennedy
Client Manager
Africa

Dániel Szalai
Client Manager
Hungary

Jennyfer Karall
Client Manager
Brazil

Gergana Nentcheva
Client Manager
Germany

IOAS also use organic experts Jan Deane, Jochen Neundorff, Diane Malcangi, Marcus Brugel and Paul Espanion as specialist contractors.
Board and Committee members

Overseen by an international Board of Directors with technical decisions made by a separate accreditation committee chosen for their expertise

The IOAS Board

The IOAS Board is constituted in a manner that enables the participation of representatives from various sectors, who have been selected based on their support of the IOAS’ principles and their significant interest in the development and functioning of the accreditation system. The board members are Francis Blake, UK; Michael Sligh, USA; Peggy Miers, USA; Rikke Lundsgaard, Denmark; Robert Duxbury, UK; Sandeep Bhargava, India; Vitoon Panyakul, Thailand.

The IOAS Accreditation Committee

The IOAS Board appoints a committee to separate the decision-making task from the assessment activities in order to ensure an impartial decision. This technical committee is appointed to ensure a balance of interests, representation and geography as well as a wealth of expertise in conformity assessment. Current members are Boudewijn van Elzakker, Netherlands; Debbie Miller, Canada; Dorota Materia, Poland; Dr Jochen Neuendorff, Germany; Joyce Ford, USA; Roberto Setti, Italy; Mrs. Sahana, India; Vitoon Panyakul, Thailand.

Impartiality Policy and Committee

A new committee reflecting the value we place on impartiality in the IOAS.

Following the creation in 2018 of an impartiality matrix to assess and manage inherent risk, we continue to identify all potential sources of risks to impartiality that we might encounter during the course of doing our business. The process includes defining the likelihood and severity for some of the identified risks, describing the preventive measures already in place for some of the identified risks and developing additional mitigation measures we may consider for some of the risks.

As a result, to further improve the integrity of our work a new Impartiality policy has been developed and has been adopted, and we have formed an Impartiality Committee. The Committee’s function is to ensure that IOAS conducts its business in an impartial manner. It will be reviewing a sample of decisions made by IOAS and examining the appropriateness of IOAS policies and procedures related to freedom from conflict of interest of individuals and of the organization as a whole. The committee will also propose any additional action that may need to be taken to mitigate potential risks to impartiality. The four committee members are Jan Deane, Alexandra Thöring, Joelle Katto-Andrighetto and Pedro Landa.

Alexandra Thöring  Jan Deane  Joelle Katto-Andrighetto  Pedro Landa
Sanctions and integrity

An impartial and transparent system of conformity assessment is an important part of the accreditation service IOAS provides. Alongside this is the responsibility to ensure that procedures or practices that do not comply with the applicable standards are corrected.

IOAS uses a range of sanctions as defined in our policies and procedures which are applied to ensure certification bodies maintain compliance or quickly return to compliance should an issue arise. When sanctions are applied, the certification body is allowed the opportunity to appeal. Sanctions are applied in a progressive manner moving from light to severe which means that the same case, if unresolved, may be subject to a number of sanctions.

In the year ending June 2018 the IOAS issued the following sanctions.

![Sanctions Chart]

Appeals against IOAS decisions between July 2018 - June 2019

All CBs have the right to appeal against a sanction and we provide a formal appeal process as part of our own just and transparent system.

- Four appeals were received from certification bodies in the past year, with one being accepted, another partially accepted and two rejected.

Complaints from July 2018 - June 2019

We deal with complaints regarding clients and our own organisation seriously, continually reviewing and making sure we are fair and rigorous in our approach. Comments and complaints are always investigated with reports back to the informant on the validity of the issue and the outcome of the investigation.

- Five complaints were received and investigated regarding accredited certification bodies. Two were rejected, two were partially upheld and one remains under investigation.
- Two complaints were received against IOAS, both were partially upheld and procedures amended to prevent reoccurrence of the issues identified.

Fraudulent claims of accreditation and intentional misuse of logos from July 2018 - June 2019

- No reported cases.
The IOAS budget for 2018 anticipated a deficit due to various planned investments, the main one being gaining Food and Drug Administration recognition to provide accreditation under the US Food Safety Modernisation Act. Due to our decision to put that investment on hold pending gaining clarity on implementation and value for IOAS clients, 2018 expenditure came in much less than budgeted. Income was expected at just over 1 million USS and with expenditure less than budgeted our overall financial result was to break even. The 2019 IOAS budget also anticipates a deficit due to the change from a four-year to the five-year accreditation cycle which has brought IOAS more in line with the cycles of other accreditation bodies, which will better serve our mutual clients. Due to this change, fewer CBs than usual are undergoing re-assessment during 2019, however this dip in income will even out over the next few years as new CBs apply.

With a reserve of more than half of annual budget, and additional surplus available, the IOAS Board agreed to establish and provide seed funding for the Alliance for Organic Integrity, A US based not-for-profit corporation, the Alliance is intended to further the IOAS mission of integrity in organic production and to cooperate with other organisations to implement projects related to conformity assessment that will help maintain and enhance organic integrity. IOAS will support the Alliance through its formation, and will assist them in seeking other funding from the organic trade, governments and international organisations.

IOAS remains a financially stable and healthy organization, and is well positioned to continue to support regulators, scheme owners and CBs in achieving their ambitions for organic and sustainable production.

David Crucifix, Executive Director