



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM)

Headquarters: Bonn, Germany

Countries with affiliate members: 108

Budget: €1.9 million (2007)

Employees: 15

Website: www.ifoam.org

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1972, IFOAM is an international non-governmental umbrella organisation for the organic agriculture movement worldwide, with over 750 member organisations (farmers, grassroots organisations and producer associations) in 108 countries. IFOAM represents the interests of the international organic movement in negotiations with inter-governmental organisations, such as the United Nations, and provides a certification system, which acts as a guarantee for the organic credentials of an organisation.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

IFOAM is governed by the General Assembly (GA), which is composed of all member organisation and meets every three years. The executive body is the World Board, which has ten members who are elected by the GA for three-year terms. On the basis of recommendations from the IFOAM membership, the World Board appoints members to official committees, working groups and task forces.

Accountability Initiatives signed up to:

- ISO recognition as an Official Standards Setting Body
- The International Social and Environmental Labeling Alliance (ISEAL)
- IFAT - International Fair Trade Association

ACCOUNTABILITY SUMMARY

TRANSPARENCY

The *Policy on Classification of Documents* outlines the documents that are produced on governance-related issues, who has responsibility for them, and how they are made available. The *Policy on Media and Publications* also defines categories of publications and sets rules for their disclosure. Transparency commitments are also part of the duties of the IFOAM Standards Committee and the Criteria Committee. The organisation commits to responding to taking action on all requests for information within two working days. However, there is no narrowly defined set of conditions for non-disclosure, and no appeals process if a request for information is denied.

The Senior Manager for Outreach has responsibility for all external communications and responding to information requests. The Organic Guarantee Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring relevant documentation is made available on the website. Staff are made aware of IFOAM policies as part of the induction process, and receive specific training on those policies that fall within their areas of work. Both the *Policy on Classification of Documents* and the *Policy on Media and Publications* are available in English online and in hard copy upon request.

2008 GLOBAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT RATINGS			
Dimension	Score	INGO Rank	2008 Rank
Transparency	66%	1	3
Participation: External Stakeholder Engagement	95%	1	1
Participation: Member Control	100%	1=	1=
Evaluation	76%	6	14=
Complaints & Response: Internal	56%	6	19=
Complaints & Response: External	32%	6	14
Overall	71%	1	1

= denotes tied ranking

PARTICIPATION – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The work of the Standards Committee, which develops the *IFOAM Basic Standards*, the Accreditation Committee, which develops the *IFOAM Accreditation Criteria*, and the Norms Management Committee, which manages the process of the Organic Guarantee System (OGS), is combined to produce the IFOAM Norms. The *Terms of Reference* and *General Rules of Procedure* for each of these committees contain commitments to consulting with stakeholders. The *Policy and Procedures for Notification and Consultation with Stakeholders on IFOAM Norms* as well as *Policy and Procedure on Revision of IFOAM Norms* provide details about the stages of the Norms development process at which stakeholders can expect to be engaged. Stakeholders are informed about the purpose of engagement and the extent to which their involvement will influence final decisions. External stakeholders may initiate engagement with the organisation, and a commitment is made to making public the outcomes of external stakeholder engagement.

The Norms Management Committee has general responsibility for ensuring that consultations for the *Basic Standards* and the *Accreditation Criteria* follows IFOAM policies, and the OGS Manager ensures that stakeholders are engaged regularly in the development and revision of IFOAM Norms. There is also a formal commitment to making the members of IFOAM committees representative of external stakeholders, demonstrating an institutionalised commitment to external stakeholder involvement in the governance of the organisation. The *Policy and Procedures for Notification and Consultation with Stakeholders on IFOAM Norms* and the *Policy and Procedure on Revision of IFOAM Norms* documents are available on the IFOAM website in English.

PARTICIPATION – MEMBER CONTROL

All members of the General Assembly are able to attend meetings and add items to the agenda. Members vote for all seat on the World Board, and candidates are elected by majority. Each member casts a single vote, and no single member can block changes to the governing articles. IFOAM thus conforms to all key good practice principles for equitable member control.

EVALUATION

The *Monitoring and Evaluation Principles* document guides the evaluation of projects. Evaluation is also built into the ongoing process of reviewing the IFOAM Norms, as stated in the *Policy on Revisions of the IFOAM Norms* and the *Procedure for Revision of the IFOAM Norms*. IFOAM commits to using the results of norms evaluation to inform future decision making, and to being open and transparent about evaluation results. However, no commitments are made to evaluating performance in relation to key internal management and administrative policies.

Responsibility for the evaluation of IFOAM Norms lies with the committees that revise the *Basic Standards of Accreditation Criteria*. The evaluation of IFOAM projects is the responsibility of the project manager, and annual internal evaluations of projects are undertaken with the support of both the International Projects Manager and the Projects and Quality Controlling Manager. Evaluation training has been provided to managers and coordinators. There is no systematic process for sharing the results of evaluation within the organisation.

COMPLAINT AND RESPONSE – INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

IFOAM's *Policy and Procedure on Management of Complaints* regulates how staff, IFOAM members and external parties can report complaints against IFOAM staff and members and how these allegations will be handled. The policy covers complaints on issues such as disregard of policy and/or operating procedure, financial mismanagement and unethical behaviour. *The Procedure on Management of Complaints* clearly outlines the channels a complainant can use to make a complaint to avoid a conflict of interest, and provides a clear timeframe for the Executive Director to acknowledge and assess the complaint. *The Policy on Management of Complaints* ensures that those assessing, investigating and responding to a complaint are independent of the subject of the complaint and the complainant and commits to maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant, however no commitment is made to non-retaliation against those who come forward and to offering an appeals independent of the line management mechanism.

The Executive Director is responsible for handling complaints, but no training is provided to staff on how to handle and investigate complaints. While reference to the complaints procedures is made in documents that are in the public sphere and staff are made aware of the policy in its manual and as part of their induction, the policy is only available in English and is not made publicly available on the IFOAM website.

PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

IFOAM is the overall top ranking organisation in the 2008 Global Accountability Report. It tops all other organisations in its participation capabilities, as it meets all good practice principles for equitable member control and almost all for stakeholder engagement. IFOAM, for example, allows stakeholders to initiate engagement with the organisation and to be informed of the purpose of engagement as well as the extent to which their involvement will influence final decisions. Beyond consultation, there is a formal commitment to making the members of IFOAM committees representative of external stakeholders, thus allowing them to be part of the governance structure of the organisation. IFOAM also tops the INGO sector in transparency capabilities, as it has specific policies guiding transparency practices. IFOAM also outperforms all sector averages in evaluation, due to the periodic review of norms. Complaints handling is the only dimension in which IFOAM does not outperform all sector averages due to gaps in protections for complainants.

