



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Federation
of Organic Agriculture
Movements



United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB) 4th draft

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Outline

- **History of the document**
- **Terms of Reference for developing IROCB**
- **Nature of IROCB**
- **Difference between first study and recommendations discussed last year in Stockholm and IROCB 4th draft**
- **Comments**
- **Issues for discussion**



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History of the document

(see also IROCB consultation plan)

- ITF study “Requirements for Certification – Situation and Scope for Harmonization” (1st study of 2005):
 - Identify the **main similarities and differences**
 - discuss the **value or otherwise of the various ISO 65** requirements
- Discussion and results of the ITF Accreditation workshop and ITF meeting (December 2005, Tunisia)
- Study and Recommendations for International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (2nd study of 2006): Preliminary recommendations for essential certification requirements
- Discussion and results of the ITF Accreditation workshop and sixth ITF meeting (October 2006 Stockholm)



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Main similarities and differences of the evaluated regulations

- There are many more similarities than differences between the different regulations
- Common objective is trust building and consumer protection
- Third party conformity assessment is the tool accepted worldwide
- EU Regulation, JAS reference ISO 65 in its entirety
- IAC have been based upon ISO 65
- Compared to all other regulations NOP is the most independent set of requirements



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Comparable requirements related to structure and organisation of a CB

Common “good rules” in order to ensure:

- Transparency
- Impartiality (division of functions)
- Confidentiality
- Non discriminatory approach
- Competence
- Repeatable and objective decisions
- Traceable decisions



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Different roles of the designated CBs

- CBs act as governmental agents with limited authority or as private body fully authorized to implement the respective scheme
- Recent JAS revision strengthened private sector responsibility
- USDA claims authority on fundamental certifier functions (appeals, withdrawal of certification) although being the accreditor at the same time.



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Assessment of the value of ISO 65 requirements - *general* -

- ISO 65 has gained worldwide acceptance (also in the organic sector) and hereby also contributes to the broad acceptance of organic quality systems
- ISO 65 has already led to harmonized CB structures and organization, although differences still exist in the way requirements are applied (e.g. accreditation and approval procedures, interpretation)

However concern has been expressed

- that the ISO/IEC Guide 65 applies too much bureaucracy
- that it is not adequate to safeguard organic integrity? It does not provide enough guidance on how to implement organic certification



Additional requirements addressing sector specific needs

Additional to ISO 65 requirements

- Are included in all regulations (e.g. chain of custody, storage, surveillance of feed production, conversion, parallel production, sanctions ...)
- Sector specific concepts addressed in the IAC: **Group certification, wild collections, parallel production**
- Safeguarding the qualification of inspectors with definite qualification requirements (JAS) vs. continuous training and performance review (IAC)



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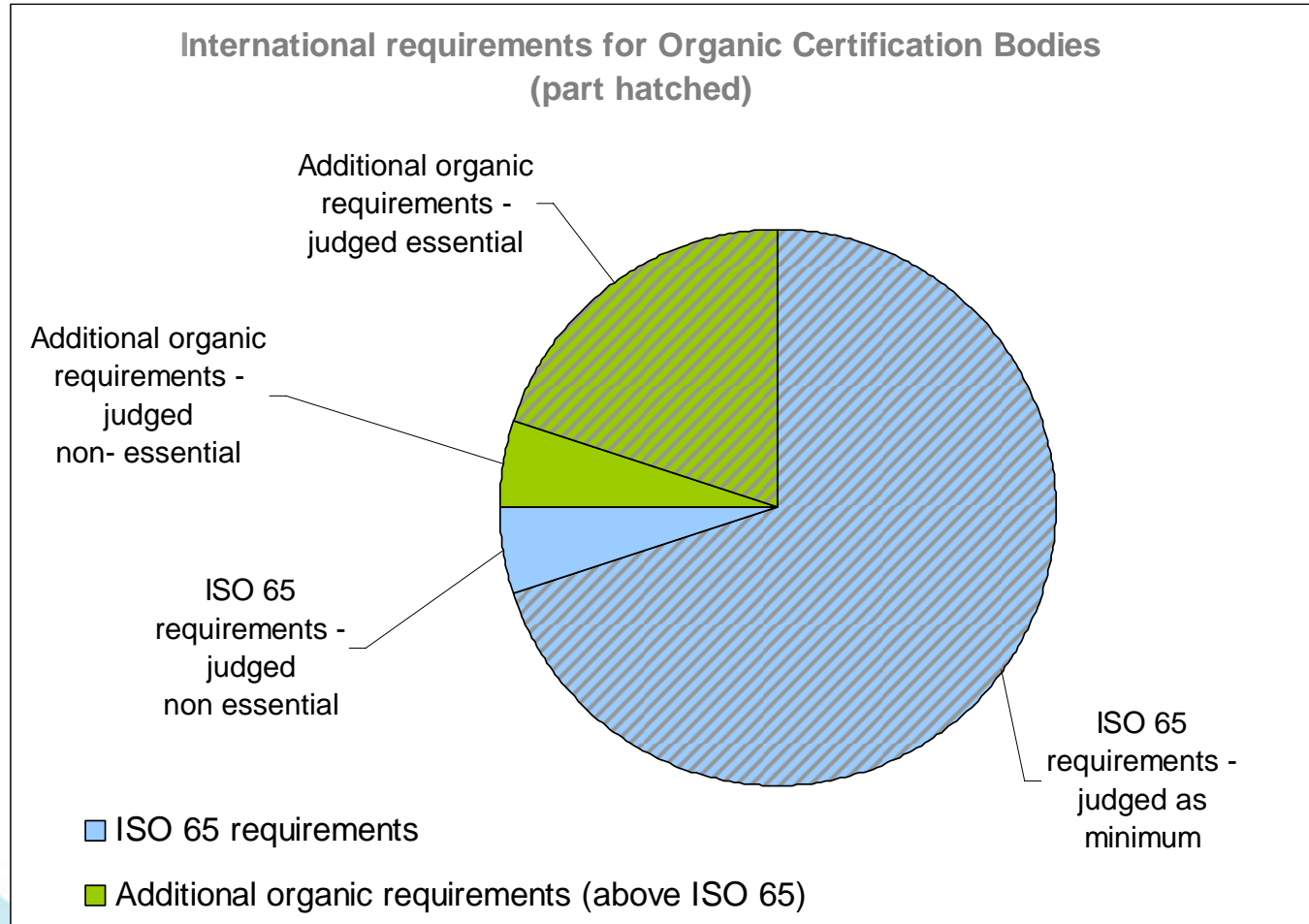
Terms of Reference (IROCB)

- Draft a common set of International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies
- “set” is understood as those requirements that certification bodies must meet in order for their certification services to be recognized in the course of international trade
- IROCB should be limited to essential requirements, appropriate to the organic sector
- (recommend flexible requirements for scale and stage of development of certification bodies.)
- it shall be based on ISO/IEC Guide 65 however not necessarily adhere to all ISO/IEC Guide 65 requirements
- Structure and language appropriate for the organic sector



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Concept



Nature of IROCB

- IROCB should serve as a guide for equivalence and discussion for further harmonization
- for direct accreditation (format and style)
- available for use in countries where new organic guarantee systems are being developed
- it shall be based on ISO/IEC Guide 65 however not necessarily adhere to all ISO/IEC Guide 65 requirements



Difference between first study and recommendations and the IROCB (4th draft)

►2nd draft

consulted at BioFach 2007, discussed with the EU Commission and with an IROCB working group

►3rd draft

Stakeholder consultation

19 commenters submitted comments, reviewed by the Steering Committee to instruct developing the 4th draft

►4th draft

Changes between 3rd and 4th draft are viewed in track changes



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Difference between first study and recommendations and the IROCB (4th draft)

The first study lists all ISO Guide 65 requirements and provides for additional

- sector specific explanations
- essential organic requirements

The draft categorizes the requirements into the following:

m: minimum/essential

p: progress requirement

d: respective ISO Guide 65 requirement is judged as not being applicable/relevant in organic certification (for some an alternative/modification is proposed)

+ indicates that it is something additional to ISO



Difference between first study and recommendations and the IROCB (4th draft)

Different in language: much more independent from ISO language

‘additional rounds to focus on the essentials’

IROCB has been restructured:

1. Introduction
2. General Requirements (structure, responsibility, QMS)
3. Process requirements to conduct organic certification (application, evaluation, decision on and renewal of certification)



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General Comments

- Requesting more adherence to ISO/IEC Guide 65, add requirements to cover all ISO/IEC Guide 65 requirements
- Comments generally questioning the purpose of this document
- Consider OGS, Participatory Guarantee Systems
- Reference to regulations
- Level of detail: ‘annual’ inspection’



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