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## Comparison between two accreditation criteria

*A report on the differences between the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria and ISO 65 (EN 45011)*

IFOAM recently presented a detailed comparison of the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria<sup>1</sup> and ISO 65 (EN 45011)<sup>2</sup>. The comparison, conducted by Ken Commins, Executive Director of the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS), supports the argument that IFOAM accreditation covers the requirements of ISO 65 as well as many other additional items. Some of the additional requirements are sector specific to organic agriculture, but IFOAM Accreditation Criteria (IAC) also cover many additional topics that do not specifically relate to organic agriculture. For example, IAC implements risk-assessment as an integral part of each inspection, an issue that is not covered by ISO 65. IAC sets timelines, e.g. annual inspections, annual management review, while ISO defines the provision without a timeline. Other issues, such as sanctions, inspection requirements and certificates, are further developed in the IAC though not in ISO 65. For instance, IAC requires inspection reports, certificates etc. to be signed by authorised persons and applicants to give a statement regarding previous certification, in addition, applicants may not recommend or choose the

inspector. These provisions are not included in ISO 65. Generally, the IAC is more specific, e.g. it regulates what kind of general information may be provided by the certification body, whereas ISO 65 just defines that the certification body shall not provide advice. For the training of personnel ISO requires training while IAC requires initial and ongoing training. Some additional requirements of IAC focus on issues only relevant to organic agriculture, for example it covers topics such as certification of wild products or smallholder groups.

In total the comparison revealed 114 issues that are addressed by IAC but not by ISO, and 32 issues that, though addressed by both, were covered more comprehensively by IAC. In contrast, there are only three issues addressed by ISO but not by IAC and eight issues where ISO 65 has additional requirements compared to IAC. The issues not covered by IAC are the following:

- ISO requires certification bodies to give notice of intended changes in their requirements for certification. IAC requires the involvement of interested parties in the development and revision of standards but for all other changes in the certification

IAC implements risk-assessment as an integral part of each inspection, an issue that is not covered by ISO 65.