

Steps to Organic Certification

1 Preparation: The idea of organic should basically be understood and convinced about organic agriculture philosophy. The operators who want to participate should be informed about the various requirements of applicable Regulations/Standards and implement in the selected area of operation.

2 Application: Once you decide to participate, write to IMO. IMO will send applications. Fill in and revert. An application to IMO should be handed in as soon as possible as with the application the official conversion period may start. The application contains a description of the operator production program. The certifier ensures full confidentiality of information obtained during the process of certification.

3 Cost estimate: The certification body will submit a cost estimate to the applicant for negotiations and approval. It will contain all costs that are normally to be expected. By approving the cost estimate, the operator mandates IMO to start working. The cost of certification depends on the time taken for the on-site inspection and travel and for the evaluation and certification procedures in the certifier's office.

4 Inspection: During an on-site visit by a qualified expert, the production system of the operator is being inspected and validated against the applicable organic standards. This process includes, but is not restricted to on-site verification of all facilities, fields, documents, interviews with the responsible persons, sampling and residue analysis. Major deviations are identified and discussed with the operator. All the production, processing, storage, packing, marketing and export activities must undergo inspection.

5 Corrective actions: For each non-compliance, with the standards the necessary corrective actions have to be defined and agreed, including the time span for implementation.

6 Certification: On this basis and all other information available, IMO will be able to issue a certification for the operator and the relevant produce. This certificate is valid for one year.

7 Updating: In the course of the year, information on all major changes occurring in the operators business have to be submitted to IMO so that the certification body is always up-dated on the latest situation.

8 Annual Inspection: The physical inspection procedures have to be repeated in annual intervals in order to safeguard the reliability of the quality assurance program. IMO will try to use local experts wherever possible in order to reduce costs. Unannounced inspection visits are done in addition to the regular annual inspections.

9 Transaction certificates: For a number of countries (and also for some buyers) specific import authorisations and a certificate for each consignment of certified products is necessary. IMO provides this market support via internet.

10 Combinations: In a globalised market there are numerous quality schemes such as EUREPGAP, Utz Kapeh, Natural textiles, FSC etc to be followed. IMO offers a wide range of such support and helps the operator the select the right partners.