



IFOAM - Organics International

# Extraordinary General Assembly Report 2026



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# 1. Welcome

Dear members,

IFOAM – Organics International is at an important moment in its journey. As a global movement rooted in shared values and diverse perspectives, our strength lies in our ability to evolve together while staying true to our principles.

The upcoming Extraordinary General Assembly represents a unique opportunity to shape how we govern ourselves in the years to come. Governance is not only about structures and processes, but it is also about how we collaborate, how we represent our global community, and how we ensure that all voices can contribute meaningfully to our collective direction.

Over the past months, significant work has gone into exploring governance models that can support a more responsive, inclusive, and effective organisation. This process has been guided by consultation, reflection, and a deep respect for the diversity that defines our network.

Now, we enter the most important phase: member engagement. Your participation is essential. The decisions ahead will influence how IFOAM – Organics International continues to serve the organic movement worldwide, and they should reflect the perspectives and aspirations of our membership.

I warmly encourage you to watch the informative sessions, available in several languages, contribute to the feedback forum, and join the Extraordinary General Assembly. By engaging in this process, you are helping to shape a governance model that is fit for the future and grounded in our shared commitment to organic principles.

Together, we can ensure that IFOAM – Organics International remains a strong, representative, and forward-looking organisation for years to come.

Thank you.



Karen Mapusua  
President



Dear members,

Over the past year, we have been working step by step to bring this governance reform process to a point where members can engage with clear and concrete proposals. Following discussions at the 2024 General Assembly, the World Board mandated the Governance Advisory Board (GAB) to examine how our current governance system operates in practice and where adjustments may be needed. This included looking at how decisions are made, how different parts of the organisation are represented, and how we can better support collaboration across our network.

The Governance Advisory Board carried out this work through a series of consultations and exchanges with members and stakeholders across regions and sectors. Their task was not only to generate ideas but to translate these into workable options that could realistically be implemented.

Earlier this year, these proposals were shared with members during the BIOFACH Network Meeting. The feedback received there was taken into account, and the World Board reviewed the proposals in March and agreed on a refined set of governance models and motions that are now being presented to the membership.

At this stage, the focus is on ensuring that members have access to the information and clarity needed to navigate the proposals. The coming weeks are structured to support this, with opportunities to review the models, raise questions, and understand the implications of each option ahead of the vote.

The staff will continue to support this process by providing the necessary materials, facilitating exchanges, and ensuring that the process runs smoothly and according to our statutes. This will ensure that the decision taken at the Extraordinary General Assembly is grounded in clarity, preparation, and due consideration.



Ravi R. Prasad  
Executive Director



## 2. Background & Context

The governance review process of IFOAM – Organics International originates from discussions held during the General Assembly in 2024 in Taiwan. During these exchanges, members reflected on whether the organisation’s existing governance structures continue to effectively support its global network and evolving role.

As IFOAM – Organics International has grown in scope, and areas of work, questions have emerged around representation, decision-making processes, and the overall functioning of its governance system. Members and self-organized structures expressed the need to explore whether adjustments could strengthen the organisation’s ability to respond to current and future challenges. In the General Assembly from 2024, the World Board motion ‘Building a fit for the future IFOAM Structure and governance’, mandated the World Board to work out a concrete proposal for IFOAM – Organics International governance.

As a response, the World Board initiated a governance review process with the aim of assessing existing structures and identifying potential improvements. The intention has been to ensure that governance arrangements remain aligned with the organisation’s mission, support effective collaboration across its diverse membership, and enable efficient and transparent decision-making.

To carry this work forward, the Governance Advisory Board (GAB) was mandated to examine the current system and develop possible governance models. This marked the beginning of a structured process that has since progressed through consultation, analysis, and proposal development, overseen by the World Board, which then took the input received to create a comprehensive governance model proposal.

This report presents the outcome of that process to date and introduces the next phase, in which members are invited to engage with the governance model and contribute to the final decision-making at the Extraordinary General Assembly.



### 3. Development of the Governance Models

Following the mandate from the World Board, the Governance Advisory Board (GAB) was tasked with examining the current governance system and developing potential models for consideration by the membership.

The work of the GAB was chaired by Raymond Auerbach, whose leadership helped guide the process from initial consultations to the development of concrete proposals. His commitment, along with the contributions of the GAB members, was instrumental in advancing a complex and collaborative process across the global network. Robin Roth, an external consultant, moderated the GAB meetings efficiently, ensuring the optimal use of time and focus on the discussions.

The GAB's work focused on identifying practical options that address key aspects of governance, including representation, decision-making structures, and the functioning of regional bodies. The objective was to translate the initial reflections from members into concrete and workable governance models.

To inform this work, the GAB engaged in consultations with a wide range of stakeholders across the IFOAM network. This included representatives from different regions, sectors, and self-organized structures. These exchanges provided insights into how the current system is experienced in practice, as well as expectations for future governance.

The development of the models was carried out in an iterative manner. Initial ideas were refined through internal discussions within the GAB and exchanges with the World Board, allowing for continuous alignment between the advisory and decision-making bodies.

Once a set of proposals was developed, it was submitted to the World Board for review. The Executive Board subsequently shared an initial assessment<sup>1</sup> with members during the BIOFACH Network Meeting in February 2026, opening the discussion to the wider membership.

Building on the feedback received, the World Board met in March 2026 to further review and consolidate a proposal. This resulted in a streamlined set of motions, which are now being presented to members as part of the lead-up to the Extraordinary General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2 WB Assessment GAB's options



## 4. From Proposals to Member Engagement

With the governance model now consolidated, the process is moving into a phase centred on member engagement.

An initial exchange took place during the BIOFACH Network Meeting in February 2026, where the governance options were presented to members, and early feedback was gathered. This discussion highlighted the importance of providing members with sufficient time, information, and opportunities to engage with the models before a final decision is taken.

In response, the World Board structured the next phase of the process to support informed participation. This includes a series of informative sessions, a dedicated feedback forum, and the Extraordinary General Assembly, where members will be invited to vote on the proposed governance model.

These steps are designed to ensure that members can first understand the proposals, then reflect and provide input, and finally take part in the decision-making process. The following sections outline how members can engage at each stage.

### 4.1. How Members Engage in this process

Members were invited to take part in the governance reform process through a series of steps designed to support understanding, exchange, and decision-making.

#### **Informative Sessions (Mid-April 2026)**

The informative sessions were the first step in the engagement process. They are designed to help members become familiar with the proposed options, the consolidated governance model, and understand how the overall process will unfold.

During these sessions, members will:

- Receive an overview of the governance reform process
- Be introduced to the proposed options and the consolidated governance model
- Learn how to participate in the feedback and voting phases
- Have the opportunity to ask questions during a live Q&A



## Feedback Forum (Mid-April 2026)

Following the informative sessions, members were invited to participate in a dedicated online feedback forum.

This platform served as the ‘floor’ of the Extraordinary GA and allowed members to:

- Review the governance model and motions in greater detail
- Share comments and perspectives
- Propose and second amendments to the motions
- Raise questions and request clarifications
- Engage in an exchange with the World Board

Participation in the feedback forum provided an opportunity for members to contribute to the discussion ahead of the final decision-making stage.

## Extraordinary General Assembly (June 2026)

The process will culminate in the Extraordinary General Assembly, where members will be invited to vote on the proposed governance models.

- **Dates:** 1 & 5 June 2026<sup>2</sup>
- **Participation:** All members may attend
- **Discussion:** The agenda allows for discussion of motions, either clarifying questions or comments. The opportunity was provided for amendments through the Feedback Platform which served as the floor of the Extraordinary GA.
- **Voting:** Reserved for eligible voting members

Members are encouraged to prepare for the Assembly by reviewing the proposals and taking part in the earlier engagement opportunities.

## 4.2. Agenda for the Extraordinary General Assembly 2026

The agenda for the Extraordinary GA has been revised by the World Board and will be voted for approval during the event.

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<sup>2</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> GA session is confirmed for 10 June. It will be used for additional voting if required. If not the results of the Extraordinary GA will be announced at this time.



## **Day 1 — Governance Reform Motions**

**1 June | 13:00–17:30 CEST**

### **13:00–13:15 | Opening of the Assembly**

- Welcome and introduction
- Confirmation of quorum
- Adoption of the agenda

### **13:15–13:25 | Context and Process Overview**

- Recap of the governance reform process
- World Board general assessment

### **13:25–14:00 | Presentation of Governance Model**

#### **Topic 1 | World Board Composition**

- Motions 1a & 1b

#### **Topic 2 | Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organised Structures**

- Motion 2

#### **Topic 3 | Regional Representation and Group Structures**

- Motions 3 & 4

### **14:00–15:30 | Discussion Rounds**

- Motions 1a and 1b
- Motion 2
- Motions 3 and 4

### **15:30–15:40 | Break**

### **15:40–16:00 | Presentation of Independent Motions**

- Motions 5 to 8

### **16:00–17:00 | Discussion Rounds**

- Motions 5 to 8

### **17:00–17:10 | Voting Procedure**

- Explanation of the voting process

### **17:10–17:30 | Closing**

- Closing remarks
- Opening of online voting
  - Voting window: 1 June – 2 June, 23:59 CEST



## **Day 2 — Results and Independent Motions**

**5 June | 13:00–15:30 CEST**

### **13:00–13:10 | Opening of the Assembly**

- Welcome and introduction
- Recap of Day 1

### **13:10–15:00 | Presentation of Results**

- Results of governance reform motions
- Member interventions and questions
- Clarifications from the World Board

### **15:00–15:10 — Voting Procedure**

- Explanation of the voting process

### **15:10–15:30 — Closing**

- Closing remarks
- Opening of online voting
  - Voting window: 5 June – 7 June, 23:59 CEST



# 5. IFOAM – Organics International’s Current Governance Framework

## World Board Composition

From the statutes § 7 elections:

Every regular General Assembly elects ten World Board members.

WB members are directly elected by the GA for 1 term (3 years).

No limitations or WB composition requirements are applied.

## Self-Organized Structures

From policy 23 on Self-Organized Structures

“ ...

II. Purpose and Benefits of Self-Organized IFOAM – Organics International Structures

The SOSs represent the diverse interests of IFOAM’s membership by geographic regions and sectors or interests. IFOAM – Organics International is the collective and overarching voice of all organic movements world-wide at global level as well as in those regions and areas wherein there are no Regional Bodies established.

The self-organized structures interact with IFOAM – Organics International and other bodies of the IFOAM Network in a participatory manner to mutually promote the vision and mission of IFOAM – Organics International.”

From the SoS Manual:

“ ...

- **IFOAM Regional Bodies (also referred to herein as “IFOAM RBs”)** are usually regional and in some cases national initiatives based on IFOAM affiliates in specific regions and countries and connected to IFOAM through a “franchise system”. IFOAM RBs mirror IFOAM’s structure and follow IFOAM’s principles as they relate to various geographically defined regions. In order to increase its worldwide regional coverage, IFOAM actively encourages the establishment of these bodies. Just like IFOAM, the IFOAM RBs are designed to lead, unite and assist the organic movement in its full diversity across all sectors related to the movement, yet they do so in a particular region. Thus, IFOAM RBs serve the interest of the organic movement in a particular region by promoting and facilitating regional activities in accordance with the IFOAM principles.
- **IFOAM Sector Platforms (also referred to herein as “IFOAM SPs”)** are sector-specific initiatives organised on the basis of IFOAM affiliates belonging to particular sectors of the organic movement. IFOAM SPs allow affiliates to organize themselves and integrate



sector-specific knowledge, concerns, positions, and issues into the work IFOAM conducts at the global level. Similar to IFOAM RBs, these initiatives are connected to IFOAM through a “franchise system”. Moreover, as is clearly illustrated by their title, IFOAM SPs are organised with the goal of enhancing the whole of the organic movement through representation that focuses on a particular sector of organic movement, as opposed to directly, on their own, representing the full diversity of the organic movement.

## Subsidiarity

The SoS are independent organisations, using IFOAM – Organics International’s name. Many RBs registered their own legal entity.

The use of the name is regulated by contract, which binds the SoS to implement and promote IFOAM – Organics International positions and principles.

IFOAM – Organics International collects the **annual membership fee** for itself and, at the same time, for IFOAM Organics Asia and IFOAM Organics Europe.

While IFOAM Organics Asia agreed the fee scheme with IFOAM – Organics International (25% of the global fee), IFOAM Organics Europe independently fixes its fee scheme. Up to 25% of the global IFOAM – Organics International membership fee has been invested since 2012 in regional development and shared with Regional Bodies where those exist.

For coordinating and communicating within the IFOAM Network, the **Networks Council** was created in 2020, replacing the Network Committee established earlier. The purpose of the Networks Council is:

“...to facilitate communication and collaboration between the IFOAM – Organics International and its Network of Self-Organized Structures (SOSs) and to maintain open channels for coordination and exchange among its various internal bodies. This council is meant to be a platform where we can discuss and share information/strategies/best practices.” From the NetCo TOR.

## Criteria to elect OWC’s bidders

OWC bidders are selected by the GA through voting. The bidder securing the highest number of votes hosts the OWC and GA. OWC bidders should follow the documents and agreement stipulated in Policy 15<sup>3</sup>.

## Organic Scientific Expert Panel

Currently, no expert panel advising the WB exists.

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex 3 – Policy 15 and 15a



***TIPI – Technology innovation Platform of IFOAM*** was approved as Sector Platform in 2013.

From TIPI's Statutes:

**TIPI's mission** is to foster international collaboration in organic agriculture research; engage and involve all practitioners and stakeholders that benefit from organic agriculture research (incl. advocacy of organics to policy makers); to facilitate exchange of scientific knowledge of organic food and farming systems; and to help disseminate, apply and implement innovations and scientific knowledge consistent with the principles of organic agriculture.

One out of 10 objectives of TIPI is:

- d. to support IFOAM – Organics International in basing their policies on good science.



## 6. Proposed Motions

At the Extraordinary General Assembly, members will be invited to vote on a set of motions related to the proposed governance model by the World Board.

These motions are the result of the process described in this report and represent concrete options for the future governance of IFOAM – Organics International. Each motion will outline a specific approach or element of the governance framework.

The full text of each motion, along with supporting explanations, is being shared with members ahead of the Extraordinary General Assembly. This will allow sufficient time for review and consideration before the voting takes place.

When reviewing the motions, members are encouraged to:

- Consider how each option addresses key governance questions such as representation, decision-making, and organisational structure
- Reflect on the practical implications of each proposal
- Consider the diversity of the global membership and the organisation's functioning.



# 7. World Board Consolidated Governance Model

## Preamble

The World Board acknowledges and seeks to address the points of criticism and commentary on the current governance and culture, increasing diversity, accountability, transparency, and correcting for resource inequalities and hidden hierarchies.

Member consultations and written feedback provided on the governance models have revealed that several challenges are as much related to organisational **culture** as organisational **governance**. For instance, those impacted by decisions are often not adequately heard, and the pathways to influence are unclear, and too little is done to protect against controlling majorities and privilege-based entitlements.

While reform options presented attempt to address some of these issues via governance **structure**, the World Board also commits itself to developing an enabling and collaborative organisational **culture**, regardless of which governance motion is adopted. We want governance and culture that creates and nourishes an organisation of the members, by the members and for the members, contributing to the greater good. The World Board is just one part of governance. To genuinely strengthen all in their work and solidarity requires more opportunities for participation, and entry points for influence and exchange of information, insights, and views beyond the World Board.

IFOAM – Organics International’s World Board will initiate work to describe an organisational governance culture, consistent with the principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care. The future governance culture must create practices and culture consistent with inclusion, equity, transparency, and subsidiarity, where responsibilities are decentralised, and talent is mobilised worldwide. This will require investments in capacity-building that address economic inequalities hindering fair access to influence and member engagement opportunities. And it will provide clarity on the importance of a close dialogue, co-creation, and agility between staff, self-organized structures, and members in developing and implementing our work.

The WB and IFOAM – Organics International will take steps to foster a shift in organisational culture, to address issues already raised by members regarding transparency, accountability, equal access to decision-making, and organisational culture. Among these steps will be:



- Prioritise fundraising and capacity building in less consolidated regions within our academy and advocacy activities, to enhance their influence and impact
- Strengthen the focus of the World Board and IFOAM – Organics International on clear and timely dialogue with regional bodies, sector platforms, and members on core work areas, e.g., Advocacy, Academy, and project initiatives.
- Enhance transparency on World Board Candidates’ qualifications in advance of WB elections at the General Assembly.
- Enhance accountability by clarifying that all World Board members are accountable to all members worldwide, and internal World Board performance assessment processes and Internal Auditor reports are utilised to monitor individual performance, including initiating formal processes where WB obligations are not met.
- Evaluate the process of virtual participation and voting at the next General Assembly through the lens of fairness and feasibility as a step to increase equal access to decision-making and correct for unequal access to resources.

**Regarding the governance models presented**, the work of the Governance Advisory Board appointed as a result of the 2024 General Assembly provided inspiration and concrete models for the World Board to consider and work with to develop the Motions presented to the Extraordinary General Assembly. Their work is greatly appreciated.<sup>4</sup>

The World Board recognises and echoes the aspirations of the members for reform and seeks governance innovation that strengthens our movement by improving how we develop and coordinate our work, builds on our collective strengths, and creates momentum for further development across the globe.

**The World Board has assessed models for their contribution to:**

- **Clarity and simplicity**—Are they understandable, implementable?
- **Representation and fairness**—Does it address unequal access and unequal resources?
- **Effectiveness and functionality**—will it unite our movement in a cost/time efficient way?
- **Feasibility**—Is it legal? Operational?
- **GA acceptability**—Does the model resonate with our members and their feedback?
- **Participation**—Does it create entry points for members and promote engagement?

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex 1 - GAB report.



## 7.1. World Board Consolidated Governance Model

The World Board presents this proposal as its consolidated governance reform option for decision by the extraordinary General Assembly in June 2026. It draws inspiration from the work of the Governance Advisory Board and the two options the GAB developed — Option 1 (incremental changes) and Option 2 (federated subsidiarity model) — without adopting either in full.

**The WB composition reform** (Part I) follows the incremental logic of Option 1, introducing structured representation through continental and constituency seats while preserving GA-level democratic accountability.

**The Council** (Part II) takes up the core federating ambition of Option 2, giving Regional Bodies and Self-Organized Structures a formal, permanent voice in governance without creating parallel executive authority.

**The subsidiarity motions** (Part III) and the independent **modular motions** (Part IV) address governance gaps identified across both options and in member consultations.

Together, the motions form a coherent but modular package: Parts I and II are interdependent, while Parts III and IV can be adopted independently of any other decision. The preamble commits the WB to cultural change regardless of which motions are adopted.



## 7.2. Motions Overview

### Part I — World Board Composition

The World Board proposes a comprehensive restructure of its composition. Additionally, it submits one alternative motion that considers what was proposed by the GAB.

Status Quo: Every regular General Assembly elects ten World Board members. WB members are directly elected by the GA for 1 term (3 years). No limitations or WB composition requirements are applied

Motion 1a and 1 b are competing motions for the World Board composition.

#### Motion 1a

##### World Board composition

1. Restructures the World Board to 10 seats: 6 continental, 1 INOFO constituency, 1 Council Chair (ex officio as an observer), and additional open seats, bringing the World Board to 10.
2. Defines the continental pre-selection procedure.
3. Defines the constituency nomination procedure.

*or*

#### Motion 1b

##### World Board Composition Diversity Criteria

Amends the Statutes and working procedures of IFOAM – Organics International to change the composition of the World Board, and reflect the federated nature of the organisation, balancing regional representation.<sup>5</sup>

### Part II — Council of RBs and Self-Organized Structures

The World Board proposes the creation of a new formal organ of the Federation, offering RBs, **thematic** groups, and constituencies a structured voice. This consolidated

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<sup>5</sup> **Note 1:** Should both Motions fail to achieve the required majority (two-thirds of the registered votes during the voting window), the current Statutes regarding World Board composition remain unchanged. Remaining Motions are still valid and should be voted on by the GA.

**Note 2:** Should Motion 1a or 1b receive only a simple majority in the first voting window, it will proceed to the second voting window in an attempt to obtain the two-thirds majority required for a statutes' amendment.

**Note 3:** If in the first round one motion receives a two-third majority, that motion will pass, and a second vote will not be required.



Council model is close to GAB's proposed option 2, and it strengthens and clarifies the potential gap in that model.<sup>6</sup>

Status Quo: A Network Council was established to facilitate communication and collaboration between the IFOAM – Organics International and its Network of Self-Organized Structures and to maintain open channels for coordination and exchange among its various internal bodies. This council is meant to be a platform to discuss and share information/strategies/best practices. It has an advisory role but no direct connection to the IFOAM – Organics International governance structure, and it has not met regularly in the past two years.

## **Motion 2**

1. Establish Council as fourth organ of the Federation
2. Council co-decision rights on major content positions

## **Part III — Subsidiarity**

These can be adopted regardless of how the GA votes on Parts I and II

### **Motion 3**

- Seeks Subsidiarity in regional representation
- Defines the engagement and alignment with Thematic and Constituency Groups

### **Motion 4**

Defines the formal typology distinguishing Constituency from Thematic Groups.

## **Part IV — Independent Modular Motions**

### **Motion 5**

Proposes the continental rotation of the Organic World Congress.

### **Motion 6**

Redefines the *Force majeure* scenario for the Organic World Congress.

### **Motion 7**

Confirms the validity of the “One Membership”.

### **Motion 8**

Creates an Organic Scientific Expert Panel.

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<sup>6</sup> This is in line with Annex 2- World Board Assessment



## 7.3. Part I — World Board Composition

The World Board Composition is addressed by two mutually exclusive motions: Motion 1a and Motion 1b. Motion 1a is part of the consolidated governance options developed by the World Board. Motion 1b is drawn from the federated subsidiarity model proposed by the Governance Advisory Board.

Since both motions cannot be adopted simultaneously, the General Assembly will proceed in two steps.

First, members vote to determine which motion is brought to a substantive vote. The motion receiving the greater number of votes in this preliminary round proceeds to a final vote. If in the first round one motion receives a two-thirds majority, that motion will pass, and a second vote will not be required.

Second, the selected motion is put to a vote and requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast, as both motions involve amendments to the Statutes.

If the selected motion does not achieve the required two-thirds majority, the current statutory provisions governing World Board composition continue to apply.

### 7.3.1. MOTION 1a | World Board Composition

■ **2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE – *Mutually exclusive with Motion 1b***

#### **Motion text**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to take forward the following changes to the current World Board Composition

#### **1 - Amend § 7 of the Statutes to read as follows:**

#### ***7. Elections***

*Every regular General Assembly elect World Board members as follows:*

**(a) Continental seats:** One seat is reserved for each of the six major geographical regions of continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America (Including Mexico and Central America,) North America (all English-speaking countries), and Oceania. Candidates for continental seats shall be pre-selected by the IFOAM members affiliated with that continent through a process established in the Rules of Procedure. The continental pre-selection shall elect two to three candidates per seat, from whom the General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International elects one.

**(b) Constituency seats:** One seat is reserved for each constituency as defined by the World Board. The constituency group shall nominate two to three candidates through its own



democratic procedures, from whom the General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International elects one. The General Assembly may, by ordinary resolution, recognise additional constituencies and assign them a reserved seat, provided the total number of seats does not exceed ten (10) without a further statutes' amendment.

**(c) Free/open seats:** The remaining seats shall be filled by open election from an unrestricted pool of eligible candidates. Any individual meeting general candidacy requirements may stand.

*Candidacies for all seats must be received at least three months before the regular General Assembly and must be endorsed by five members. A presentation of the candidates must be sent to the members at least 60 days before the General Assembly. The World Board chooses an Executive Board (see § 8) from amongst the elected members before the end of the General Assembly. The World Board may co-opt up to three further World Board members to address gaps in competencies, and to correct systemic imbalances, prioritizing candidates from underrepresented voices in our movement e.g. regions, youth or farmer interests less well financed and capacitated today.*

Co-opted members have full World Board voting rights.

The elected Chair of the Council of Regional Bodies and other Self- Organized Structures (§ 11b) shall sit in the World Board as an observer for the duration of their term as Council Chair. This position is ex officio. Observers hold the same rights and duties of a World Board member, except voting rights.

*The World Board may elect additional Executive Board members and replace them as appropriate during the term.*

## Rationale 1

The current statutes (§ 7) provide only for election of ten members by the General Assembly with no structural requirements on representational balance. This amendment introduces a federated composition that guarantees representation of all continents, INOFO as farmer constituency while preserving direct democratic accountability to the full membership through the GA election. In regard to the definition of **constituency** reference is made to motion 3 and 4 presented by the WB to this eGA.

The IFOAM Council chair will be granted observer status in the World Board, with all rights and duties of a World Board member, except voting rights. This will assure a direct and timely communication and coordination between WB and IFOAM council. By requiring continental pre-selection to elect 2–3 candidates, the mechanism combines regional participation, vetting and legitimacy with genuine GA choice.

The role of the Nominations Committee is to support identification of appropriate skills and experience, diverse representation, address systemic imbalances and. identify candidates from underrepresented voices in our movement.

Existing co-option powers are retained.



**Statute sections affected:** § 7 (Elections). Cross-reference: new Council article for subsection (c).

## **2. Establish the Continental Pre-Selection Process**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International instructs the World Board to establish, within six months of adoption of Motion WB-1, a Continental Pre-Selection Procedure as part of the Rules of Procedure for the World Board Elections, covering the following elements:

- Definition of continental affiliation: The World Board shall define clear criteria for the continental affiliation of IFOAM members (place of incorporation, primary area of operation, or member's own declaration subject to WB approval).
- Pre-selection mechanics: At least ninety (90) days before each General Assembly, a continental caucus process shall be convened (e.g. by electronic ballot or virtual/physical meeting) through which members affiliated with each continent may nominate and vote to produce a short-list of two to three candidates.
- Facilitation: The IFOAM – Organics International office shall facilitate the continental pre-selection process and publish the results, together with candidate profiles, at least sixty (60) days before the General Assembly. Where existing Regional Bodies exist, there is an option for the regional body to facilitate elections of representatives from that continent where they can demonstrate capacity and procedures ensuring transparent elections accessible for all IFOAM – Organics International members on the continent.
- Fall-back provision: If a continent fails to produce a valid short-list within the prescribed deadline, the position shall be filled as a free seat (§ WB-1(d)) at that General Assembly, and the World Board shall investigate the cause and report to the subsequent General Assembly.

### **Rationale 2**

The pre-selection mechanism is the procedural engine of the continental seats describe above. It ensures that the people ultimately elected by the full GA have genuine support from their regional constituency, without creating a separate, parallel election outside the GA.

## **3. Constituency Pre-Selection Process**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International instructs the World Board to establish, within six months of adoption of Motion WB-1, a Constituency Nomination Procedure as part of the Rules of Procedure for Elections, covering the following elements:

1. Recognised constituencies: Each constituency holding a reserved seat under § WB-1(b) shall submit to the World Board, at least three months before the General



Assembly, a short-list of two to three candidates, together with a description of the democratic process used to select them.

2. Approval: The World Board shall review the process description and confirm its alignment with democratic principles. It shall not substitute its own judgment on the merits of individual candidates.
3. Transparency: Candidate profiles shall be published together with those of all other WB candidates at least sixty (60) days before the General Assembly.

### Rationale 3

This motion operationalises the constituency seats created by Motion WB-1(b). It ensures that the internal processes of constituencies like INOFO are transparent and democratic, while respecting their autonomy. The two-to-three candidate requirement prevents constituencies from presenting a single uncontested nominee to the GA, preserving genuine GA choice.

## 7.3.2. MOTION 1b | World Board Composition Diversity Criteria

■ **2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE - *Mutually exclusive with Motion 1a***

### Motion text

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to take forward the following changes to the current World Board Composition

**1 - Amend § 7 of the Statutes to read as follows:**

#### ***7. Elections***

*Every regular General Assembly elects World Board members as follows:*

**(a) Recognised and active Regional Bodies** are entitled to one (1) reserved seat per RB, ensuring predictable and structural representation of regional perspectives. 'Recognised and active' Regional Bodies must meet mandatory, live-activity indicators.

**(b) INOFO** is entitled to one (1) reserved seat, reflecting its specific constituency role.

**(c) In each major geographical area where there is no recognised Regional Body, rules shall be established to ensure geographical representation in the World Board. The rules shall define the election of at least one (1) representative from each major geographical area not covered by a Regional Body.**



The nomination of representatives to the reserved seats shall be the responsibility of the respective Regional Bodies or constituencies, in accordance with their own internal procedures.

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International shall ratify both the individuals nominated to occupy the seats allocated to Regional Bodies, INOFO and other regions, and the rules and procedures used to select them, ensuring overall accountability and consistency with the organisation's Statutes and values.

*Candidacies must be received at least three months before the regular General Assembly and must be endorsed by five members including an endorsement by the member organization with which the candidate is affiliated. A presentation of the candidates must be sent to the members at least 60 days before the General Assembly. The World Board chooses an Executive Board (see § 8) from amongst the elected members before the end of the General Assembly. The World Board may co-opt up to three further World Board members. The World Board may elect additional Executive Board members and replace them as appropriate during the term.*

### **Rationale**

Guaranteed seats for Regional Body and sector platform representatives on the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International help ensure fair and balanced global representation. IFOAM – Organics International is a worldwide federation with members from very different regions, each facing unique agricultural, political, and market realities. Without formal seats, decision-making becomes concentrated in larger, wealthier, or more organised constituencies. Guaranteed representation ensures that every recognised region and sector platform has a voice at the highest level, strengthening legitimacy, fairness, and trust across the federation. All strategic deliberations will be based on structured regional/thematic consultation rather than based on purely individual mandates. The World Board members, including those occupying reserved seats, would not represent the interests of their region as a constituency delegate.

This kind of structured representation on the World Board improves contextual policy intelligence, continuity across election cycles, and better communication between global and regional levels. In a federated governance model, this kind of representation is not a privilege but a constitutional mechanism that protects inclusivity, prevents centralisation of influence, and ensures that global strategy reflects the realities of organic movements across all regions.

### **World Board Note:**

Considering Motions 1a and 1b World Board believes that Motion 1a. provides a more robust and clearer basis for inclusive World Board elections with less risk for the organisation and its governance.

### **Why the World Board does not support Motion 1b**

- Motion 1b proposes guaranteed WB seats for each recognised and active Regional Body. The World Board identifies the following fundamental problems with this approach.
  - **It duplicates the Council.** Motion 2 creates a Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organised Structures to give RBs a formal governance voice. Replicating that



function in the World Board itself creates structural overlap without the clarity of a properly designed bicameral system.

- **The board would grow without limit.** Every newly recognised Regional Body automatically generates a seat. There is no ceiling. A continuously expanding board cannot function effectively as a strategic decision-making body.
- **Regional boundaries cannot be cleanly defined.** Which body holds a seat, and who qualifies to nominate, depends entirely on regional definitions that are in many parts of the world contested, historically sensitive or unresolved. The motion cannot function without resolving these definitions first and resolving them is not straightforward.
- **Overlapping bodies produce double representation.** Some members belong to two Regional Bodies simultaneously. Under 1b they would nominate candidates for two separate seats, creating unequal voting influence with no mechanism to address it.
- **Large parts of the world have no Regional Body.** Gap seat provisions require prior agreement on which areas are unrepresented — which returns to the boundary problem above.
- **'Active' cannot be easily defined or enforced.** Regional Bodies differ enormously in capacity, legal form and level of activity. Setting and applying an activity threshold consistently, and revoking seats when it is not met, is politically and operationally very difficult in practice.
- **Uneven capacity entrenches existing imbalances.** Each Regional Body must run its own nomination process. Well-resourced bodies will engage far more effectively than others, reinforcing rather than correcting current inequalities.
- **No fallback if the GA refuses to ratify a nominee.** The motion requires GA ratification of nominees but provides no procedure for the case where ratification is refused, leaving a potential vacancy with no resolution.

## 7.4. Part II — Council of Regional Bodies and other Self- Organized Structures

The Council is a new governance body. It requires two main components: one establishing its existence, composition, and mandate (statute change 11a); one granting it co-decision rights on major content positions (statute change 11b). Motion 2



is deliberately separated so that the WB and GA can deliberate on the scope of co-decision independently of the Council's establishment.

## 7.4.1.MOTION 2 | Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organized Structures

### ■ 2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE

#### Motion text

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to:

#### 1. Establish a Council of Regional Bodies and other Self-Organized Structures by:

1. Amending § 4 of the Statutes (Organs) to add the Council of Regional Bodies and other Self-Organized Structures as a fourth organ of the Federation, reading:

#### 4. Organs

The Federation's organs are the General Assembly, the World Board, the Executive Board, and the Council of Regional Bodies and other Self-Organized Structures. The Executive Director carries out their decisions.

2. Inserting a new § [11a] into the Statutes establishing the Council, as follows:

#### § 11a — Council of Regional Bodies and other Self-Organized Structures

**Composition:** The Council comprises one representative per recognised and active Regional Body, one representative per recognised Constituency, and one representative per recognised Thematic / Subsector Group. Representatives are designated by their respective body in accordance with its own internal governance procedures.

**Chair:** The Council elects its Chair by simple majority of its members. The Chair shall serve for a term aligned with the World Board term. The Chair of the Council will sit as an observer in the World Board. The Chair may not simultaneously hold another elected position on the World Board or Executive Board.

#### **Mandate:**

The Council shall:

- Exercise co-decision rights on major content positions as defined in new § 11b of the statutes.
- Contribute to strategic orientation and governance matters;



- Conduct assessments of regional and global initiatives that affect the organic movement and provide its findings to the World Board;
- Identify issues impacting the organic movement globally and at regional level, and bring them to the attention of the World Board;
- Develop and propose positions and recommended actions to the World Board on matters within its mandate;

**Limits:** The Council does not substitute the World Board. It does not exercise executive or management functions and is not involved in day-to-day operational decision-making. Its role is complementary to, and not in competition with, the World Board.

**Functioning:** The World Board establishes Rules of Procedure for the Council, including meeting frequency, quorum, definition of active & operational Regional Body and consultation timelines. The next regular GA will formally ratify the RoP. Minutes of World Board meetings shall be made accessible to Council members under applicable confidentiality rules. Vice versa minutes of the Council are made available to the WB. Where the World Board proposes decisions that significantly and directly affects the mandate or resources of Regional Bodies, Constituency Groups, and Thematic Groups, it shall consult the Council in advance. The World Board is not bound by the outcome of such consultation but shall document its response to the Council's views.

**Support:** IFOAM – Organics International provides institutional and logistical support to the Council presenting issues and generating dialogue in timely and professional way conducive to effective participation and co-creation.

## Rationale

The existing 'Network Council' has operated informally and without formal governance status. Formalising it as an organ of the Federation gives it predictable standing, clear mandate, and genuine leverage to contribute to strategic and political decisions — without creating dual executive authority. The council provides a new entry point for regional, thematic and constituency groups into IFOAM's work, including the work of the World Board, increasing their influence in IFOAM and improving the work of the World Board, while also increasing exchange and co-creation across our network. The Council Chair's observer position on the WB creates a structural bridge between the regional/sectoral dimension and global governance. Clarity on mandates and roles provides clear accountability for coordination and consultation.

**Statutes sections affected:** § 4 (Organs); new § 11a. Cross-reference: § 7 for Council Chair's WB observer status.

## 2. Define Council's Co-Decision Rights on Major Content Positions

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to insert a new § 11b into the Statutes establishing co-decision rights of the Council, as follows:

### § 11b — Council Co-Decision

**Scope:** 'Major content positions' for the purpose of this article are defined as formal IFOAM policy positions on organic agriculture standards, food systems, global declarations and alliances or environmental policy intended for public advocacy;



**WB-initiated positions:** Where the World Board has adopted a major content position, it shall transmit the adopted text to the Council without delay.

The following two-stage review process applies:

**First stage — Council vote within 14 days:** The Council shall vote on the position within fourteen (14) days of transmission. A quorum of at least half of the Council members must participate for the vote to be valid. If the Council approves by simple majority, the position is confirmed. If the Council fails to reach a quorum or to submit a vote within the 21-day deadline, the position is deemed approved.

**Second stage — Return and final Council vote:** If the Council rejects the position by simple majority in the first stage, the position is returned to the World Board. The World Board may adopt the position unchanged or modify it in light of the Council’s objections. The (modified or unchanged) position is then resubmitted to the Council for a final vote within **14 days**. In this second stage, the Council may only reject the position by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of its members (subject to quorum as above). If the Council fails to reach this threshold or to submit a vote within the deadline, the position is deemed approved.

**Quorum:** At least half of the recognised and active Council members must participate in any vote for it to be valid. The World Board shall establish quorum rules in the Council’s Rules of Procedure, including provisions for abstentions and no-response.

**Council-initiated positions:** The Council may, by 2/3 of its members, adopt its own positions on matters within its mandate. Council positions on major content matters shall be transmitted to the World Board and shall be considered as IFOAM positions only upon approval by the World Board. Where the World Board declines to approve, it shall record its reasons and transmit them to the Council within thirty (30) days.

**Urgency:** In cases of genuine urgency, the World Board may adopt a provisional position without prior Council review, provided it notifies the Council immediately and the Council is given the opportunity to review the position within seven (7) days of adoption.

**Dispute:** Where persistent disagreement exists between the Council and the World Board on a major content position, either body may refer the matter to the next General Assembly.

## 7.5. Part III - Subsidiarity

### 7.5.1. MOTION 3 | Subsidiarity in Regional Representation

#### ■ SIMPLE MAJORITY

##### Motion Text

The General Assembly asks the World Board to establish working procedures, that in detail describe the following:

#### 1. Subsidiarity in Regional Representation



1. While IFOAM – Organics International leads in global affairs, including multilateral and intergovernmental fora, global policy processes and international partnerships and events, in regions with a well-established and active Regional Body, the Regional Body shall lead in regional affairs, including:
  - o External representation,
  - o Political advocacy,
  - o Institutional relations

Regional Bodies are responsible for inclusive, transparent member consultations in the region.

2. These working procedures will also describe roles in promotion of the brand in regional activities.

3. Where IFOAM – Organics International conducts regional advocacy or representation activities IFOAM – Organics International shall liaise with members or recognised Regional Bodies in the relevant region.

4. Where IFOAM – Organics International develops projects and initiatives or engages in global campaigns involving direct intervention in one or more regions, IFOAM – Organics International will liaise with recognised Regional Bodies, INOFO and relevant members in the regions regarding development, implementation and dedicated leadership for projects, avoiding competition and maximising synergies.

5. Regional Bodies recognise the leading role of IFOAM – Organics International in global affairs. Regional Bodies will liaise and align with IFOAM – Organics International on any initiative, events and campaign that will have a global impact.

### **Rationale**

The principle of subsidiarity requires placing decision-making as close as possible to those impacted by decision making. Empowerment and value creation close to members is also important in building our movement.

In regions with a recognised and active Regional Body, that Regional Body is usually best placed to represent IFOAM at regional level. They possess knowledge of local political contexts, cultural realities and regional membership dynamics. IFOAM – Organics International may conduct regional advocacy or representation activities worldwide but in close coordination with, respect for and by agreement with recognised Regional Bodies.

Recognised Regional Bodies that are still in development may request support from IFOAM – Organics International in carrying out such activities. Global contexts – such as multilateral and intergovernmental fora, global policy processes, initiatives and international partnerships – remain the responsibility of IFOAM – Organics International. Regional Bodies will only take activities in that field in coordination with IFOAM – Organics International.

## **2. Engagement and alignment with Thematic Groups**



IFOAM – Organics International seeks alignment and active involvement of recognised thematic groups in the development of global positions, campaigns and initiatives relevant to their scope.

**Rationale**

Equally, recognised thematic groups will liaise and align with IFOAM – Organics International on any initiative, event or campaign that connects to their area of scope.

## 7.5.2. Motion 4 | Structural Distinction: Sector Platforms / Constituencies vs. Thematic Groups

■ **SIMPLE MAJORITY — Statutes amendment required only if § 11 reference to “Sector Platforms” is updated**

**Motion text.**

The General Assembly instructs the World Board to adopt a formal typology of Sector Platforms distinguishing between (A) Constituency Groups and (B) Thematic Groups, as defined above, and to establish clear criteria and requirements for recognising and approving the functioning status of each type. The World Board shall develop and publish these criteria within six months of this resolution and shall report on the reclassification of all existing structures to the next regular General Assembly.

**Type A — Constituency Groups**

Constituency Groups represent a major, distinct constituency directly within the organic value chain — for example organic farmers (INOFO), processors and traders, retailers, or consumers. Their defining characteristic is that they represent a broad, cross-regional membership constituency rather than a single thematic or technical focus. Constituency Groups are eligible for a reserved constituency seat on the World Board under § WB-1(b). They are full members of the Council and participate in co-decisions.

This would require approval of the GA through an amendment to Policy #23.

**Type B — Thematic / Subsector Groups**

Thematic Groups focus on a specific technical, sectoral, or issue-based domain — for example seeds, apiculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, or technological innovation (current examples include IAHA, Seeds Platform, TIPI). They function primarily as knowledge and coordination networks within the IFOAM network. Thematic Groups are members of the Council and participate in its advisory and co-decision functions. They are not eligible for a constituency seat on the World Board.

## 7.6. Part IV — Independent Modular Motions



The following motions are fully independent of the proposed governance model. They address specific governance gaps identified in the Governance Advisory Board report and the earlier Governance Task Force.

### 7.6.1. Motion 5 | OWC Continental Rotation

#### ■ SIMPLE MAJORITY

##### **Motion text**

The Organic World Congress (OWC) must always be held on a continent different from the continent where the two immediately preceding OWCs have been located. The World Board shall take this requirement into account when evaluating and recommending candidate bids to the General Assembly.

##### **Rationale**

The exclusion rule preserves flexibility in the bidding process while guaranteeing continental rotation over time. It does not require any continent to host on a fixed schedule, which avoids placing the burden of hosting on regions with limited organisational capacity at any given moment.

This is a procedural and operational motion, not a governance motion in the strict sense. It addresses access, inclusion, and cost equity rather than decision-making authority. It does not require a statute change — it can be implemented as a GA resolution and operationalised through World Board policy.

### 7.6.2. Motion 6 | Extension of the World Board term owing to Force Majeure

#### ■ SIMPLE MAJORITY

##### **Motion text.**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International authorises the World Board to extend its term by up to four months, should the OWC organizers in the Philippines find it necessary to reschedule the Organic World Congress and General Assembly beyond its originally scheduled date in November 2027. Any rescheduled OWC and General Assembly must take place no later than April 2028.

##### **Rationale:**

The OWC organizers in the Philippines are facing two concrete challenges that may require rescheduling the event. First, the energy crisis and economic downturn following the conflict in Iran are expected to affect travel and logistics through 2027. Second, November and December are months of extreme weather conditions in the Philippines. Should rescheduling prove necessary, this authorisation allows the World Board to extend its term accordingly, avoiding the need to call an extraordinary General Assembly solely for this procedural purpose.



### 7.6.3. Motion 7 | Confirmation of One Membership Model

#### ■ SIMPLE MAJORITY

##### **Motion text.**

IFOAM – Organics International and its self-organized structures (SoS) introduce one membership where feasible, desirable and agreed with the Self-organized Structure. Members of IFOAM – Organics International are also members of their respective Regional Bodies and Sector Platforms, and vice versa.

##### **Rationale**

Since SoS and IFOAM – Organics International are legally independent, membership is organised separately. This is confusing to members and potential members. The principle of one membership streamlines administration (database and invoicing) and provides clarity for members and potential members. One membership would reduce confusion for members, but implementation must be by agreement and build on capacity to implement.

### 7.6.4. Motion 8 | Organic Scientific Expert Panel

#### ■ SIMPLE MAJORITY — no statutes change required at this stage, as the World Board may establish advisory committees under § 8 of the current statutes

##### **Motion text.**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International directs the World Board to explore the establishment an Organic Scientific Expert Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to advise and support the World Board, the Council, and the organisation as a whole with independent scientific knowledge and expertise relevant to organic agriculture, food systems, and related natural, formal, social, and applied sciences. The Panel shall provide scientific grounding for IFOAM's advocacy positions and content work. The World Board shall report its findings to the next regular General Assembly in 2027.

**Rationale:** IFOAM plays a leading global role in advocating for science-based recognition of organic agriculture. A dedicated Expert Panel, independent of any specific Thematic Group or Regional Body, strengthens the credibility of IFOAM's policy positions by ensuring they are grounded in current scientific evidence. The Panel complements rather than replaces the Thematic Groups by providing a dedicated, independent scientific interface to the World Board and Council.

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# General Assembly Report 2026

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The background of the page features a large, light brown silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. The person's right hand is raised with fingers spread, and their left hand is holding a rectangular sign. The overall aesthetic is minimalist and symbolic, representing community, governance, and communication.

# Annex 1: Governance Advisory Board Report

## Process Report for the IFOAM-OI Governance Advisory Board

Prof Raymond Auerbach, TIPI President, NOARA Chair & SAOSO Board

### Summary of initial findings and process:

The overwhelming results from the process were two: Members have a deep love and respect for IFOAM – OI, and members do not feel that there is a need for radical reform.

The IFOAM-OI GAB set up a Core Working Group to carry out certain tasks, and developed two questionnaires in order to find out what the main concerns of members are about the *status quo* at IFOAM-OI, and to explore other possible models of governance. One questionnaire dealt with models of governance, while another asked groups to outline the way their group works. Much useful information was received about how the various groups function. Members were also asked to consider various other governance models, and to suggest elements of appropriate structures to address shortcomings. A general email from the Chair to all members also asked for suggestions, in the light of a poor initial response.

My GAB Chair's Report summarised 25 questionnaires assessing various governance models, with 15 responses assessing the *status quo* at IFOAM-OI, 5 assessing the "Federation Model", and two for "Incremental Change", one each FairTrade, La Via Campesina and World Farmers Organisation. About 40 individual responses were received to my emails to the IFOAM-OI membership; some called for statutory representation of Africa on the World Board: having two members for Africa, having five members for Africa (one each for N, W, E, S and Central African Regions), and also to ensure that there were at least one woman and one man representative from Africa. There were also calls for representation of the Arab countries, and for more representation of individual farmers (through INOFO).

There were several complaints that IFOAM – OI has become irrelevant, or does not carry out sufficient activities of benefit to members. Some see it as elitist and cliquey. The major findings of the *status quo* at IFOAM-OI questionnaire were that there are four areas of general discontent:

- Little to protect against cliques and privilege-based entitlements;
- Those who are affected by decisions are not adequately consulted through appropriate protocols and processes;
- (Does not) actively subsidize/support innovations where everyone gains;
- (Does not) ensure JUST economies and decolonisation.

**Many members feel vulnerable, and many feel that they are not seen.**

### GAB Process during November and December 2025:

As the Core Working Group had not really worked as a core group, meetings were opened to the whole GAB, and were held every fortnight. First, Raymond summarised Option One during a meeting, simply proposing an adaptive, incremental process to address the issues.

During the next meeting, David, Marian and Constantinos outlined how Option Two could work, giving some detail about what would change. Finally, Robin gave some novel ideas in an “Option Three” discussion which looked at different (non-hierarchical) ways of organising IFOAM, partly based on a shared network, holocratic approach. Markus later made a presentation on an adapted Option Three, showing how the process approach could enrich either Option One or Option Two.

As homework, the GAB members were asked to consider what the implications of the process thus far are for governance reform, and what should be proposed to the World Board. Raymond, Julia and Markus met and exchanged ideas which resulted in a document being circulated by Markus outlining possible GA resolutions flowing out of Options One (Appendix One) and Markus’ adapted Option Three proposals (Appendix Three). Markus also tabled an “Option 0” – no change, and some suggestions on process.

The revised proposal for Option Two was received on Tuesday 16 December, and comments were open on the link until 19 December. It is included as Appendix Two.

On Tuesday 16 December the GAB discussed the three proposals to be sent as options for consideration by the World Board; comments were called for until Friday 19 December. These final versions in the appendices. An IFOAM - OI General Assembly is scheduled for 1 June 2026. A communications initiative will see webinars with members to discuss the options during the first four months of 2026.

The Term of the GAB now expires; members are happy to continue to assist; we await instructions from the World Board.

These are the three options proposed to the World Board:

## Appendix One: Option One

### **IFOAM - Organics International: Governance Advisory Board Proposal for Governance reforms to be brought forward to the General Assembly**

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#### **Option 1: Incremental changes**

##### Background

The governance system of IFOAM Organics International is both appreciated and challenged. Member consultations of the GAB led to the conclusion that the current governance system is effective, but that there are challenges that require attention and solutions. The following points were extracted from the feedback:

- There is little to protect against cliques and privilege-based entitlements.
- Those who are affected by decisions are not adequately consulted through appropriate protocols and processes.
- (Does not) actively subsidize/support innovations where everyone gains.
- (Does not) ensure JUST economies and decolonisation.

*IFOAM OI has successfully fulfilled its purpose when it unites and leads the membership in its full diversity in the food system transition with excellent content competence and broad legitimacy.*

The member feedback yielded information and issues that should be addressed on operational, strategic, and governance levels. Concerns and their effects often address more than one level. In the GAB context, we focused on the governance-related issues, which we grouped into 6 clusters that may require a governance response.

We propose that once the principle of incremental changes is agreed upon, the clusters of issues and their solutions should be discussed one by one, and that each will elicit a distinct response from the GA.

The issue clusters can be summarized in the following list:

- 1) The World Board representation is not geographically or sector balanced, and it doesn't cover all required competencies.
- 2) The Organic World Congress doesn't rotate well among the continents.
- 3) IFOAM Organics International has had stagnant membership for decades. At the same time, the sector has experienced a significant increase in its turnover, and the need for a transition in the food system is increasingly being recognized. Paid membership is a hindrance.
- 4) Not all Self-Organised Structures (SoS) have the same voting rights (voting rights for SoS exist only for Regional Bodies and INOFO), which is perceived as unfair and a bias to geographic over global content interests. Furthermore, there's a need to re-evaluate the distribution of resources within the network.
- 5) The relationship of IFOAM Organics International with its SoS (Regional Bodies and Sector Platforms) needs more clarity and structure.
- 6) Members are confused about the distinction between membership in IFOAM Organics International, in its Regional Bodies, and in its Sector Platforms.

Overall, regardless of the governance model, members also expressed concerns about the values, noting a lack of precise positioning on decolonization and democracy. Values needed to inform on how IFOAM Organics International promotes inclusivity and fairness.

### Exclusiveness of the motion

This option is independent of Option 3 (Process-driven approach) but not independent of Option 2 (Federation model). This means the GA may eventually accept both Options 1 and 3, but it can't accept Options 1 and 2 simultaneously.

If the GA votes for this option, each of the reform steps must be accepted or rejected separately.

### Motion

**Opening Motion:** The Governance system of IFOAM Organics International shall remain intact. Reform steps are decided one by one.

If the opening motion is carried, the following motions apply:

**Motion 1a):** Introduction of Geographical, Sector, and Social quota among the 10 World Board members as follows: A) **Geographical:** Minimum 1 person each from Europe, Asia, Oceania, North America, Latin America, and Africa. B) **Sector:** Minimum 1 person each from farming, processing/trade, consumption, sector services, and research. C) **Social:** Minimum 4 women/men, 2 persons below 35 years old. Each World Board candidate possesses at least one of each geographic, sectoral, and social qualification that is made transparent. The voting procedure is unchanged; each voting member has one vote. The counting procedure considers votes and quotas to determine the elected persons. If a vote yields no coverage of a qualification, the seat remains vacant, and the World Board would co-opt a person with the required geographical, sectoral, and social qualifications.<sup>1</sup>

There are two variants of **Motion 1b):**

1. The Organic World Congresses (OWC) must always be on a different continent from the last two OWCs.
2. The venue of the OWC rotates among the 6 continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, Oceania) so that only proposals from one continent are accepted for vote.

**Motion 1c):** IFOAM Organics International strives to broaden its membership base to increase the legitimacy and power of its advocacy work. For that purpose, it introduces a low-administrative free individual membership without voting rights, with access to IFOAM's information.

**Motion 1d):** All Regional Bodies and Sector Platforms of IFOAM Organics International have a voting right at the General Assembly. The statutes are adapted as follows: *"All Regional Bodies and Sector Platforms of IFOAM Organics International are given one voting right per body at the General Assembly"*<sup>2</sup>

**Motion 1e):** IFOAM Organics International streamlines and publishes its SoS policy and updates the contractual agreements with the SoS with clear guidelines on the required operations and exchanges.

**Motion 1 f):** IFOAM Organics International and its self-organised structures (SoS) introduce one membership where feasible, desirable and agreed with the Self-organised Structure.

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<sup>1</sup> While for voters little would change, the counting of votes requires competencies. FIBL Experts can provide training for functionaries on how to operate the system for vote counting and establish the voting result.

<sup>2</sup> The motion needs to identify the paragraphs in the statutes. There may also be text to be erased. The GAB does not have the statutes and they are not published on the Internet, so that the WB would need to do the finishing work here.

This Motion needs 2/3 of votes since it changes statutes

Members of IFOAM Organics International are also members of their respective Regional Bodies and Sector Platforms, and vice versa.

### Rational

The values of IFOAM Organics International include decolonialisation and democracy. Those overarching values position the organic movement and promote inclusivity and fairness. The Governance response to the present issues does not require a distinct hierarchy model, but rather improvements to address issues and capitalize on opportunities for enhancing the governance system of IFOAM Organics International. Once this principle is agreed, the various reform items can be analysed one by one:

- A. The World Board requires being representative of the movement and the membership in many terms, including geographic origin, content competence, and social representation. As each person brings at least one of each, quota in the World Board can help to guarantee that the World Board is balanced and has minimum representation in these three aspects. With this step, the overall qualification of the World Board gets priority over regional representation.
- B. The OWC needs to rotate around the globe to facilitate access to the OWC for as many people as possible. The proposed reform step does not touch the principle that the GA votes for the next OWC based on members' proposals, but sets the condition that the following OWC comes from a different continent, or, for the second option, that each continent has an equal chance to host the OWC.
- C. An organisation with thousands of members has more advocacy weight than an organisation with 800 members. Therefore, it is helpful to increase the membership base. Since it has proven to be challenging to find new (paying) members, we propose to have a low-key membership category (calling them, e.g., participants) with no voting rights but with the right to use the "proud to be part" emblem.
- D. Presently, there are no equal rights of the Self-Organized Structures. The voting rights are only granted to the Regional Bodies and INOFO. We propose that all approved SoS that have a World Board-approved contract with IFOAM Organics International get a voting right at the GA of IFOAM Organics International. This requires a statute change.
- E. The big revision of the SoS policy of 2011 (GA in Goesan, South Korea), improved the environment of the SoS and had a significant impact. Consequently, various new SoS were created (e.g., TIPI, IAHA, Seeds platform, IFOAM Asia, IFOAM North America, IFOAM Central Asia, ISAN, IFOAM Iran, etc.). After 15 years, it is time to review and improve agreements, reliability, and quality management. The World Board shall address this matter in a joint working group with representatives from the various SoS.
- F. Since SoS and IFOAM Organics International are legally independent organisations, membership is organised independently. However, this is confusing to members and potential members. The principle of one membership streamlines administration (database and invoicing) and provides clarity for members and potential members. Where it is not practical for various reasons, exceptions can be agreed with the SoS.

## Appendix Two: Option Two (Refederation Model)

### **IFOAM (RE)FEDERATION BRIEF (see [hyperlink](#) for comments)**

#### **An Inclusive Governance Structure for IFOAM's Global Network**

Dec 4th 2025, Version 2

**(Definition Used:** *Governance goals aim to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in organizations to achieve strategic objectives and create long-term value for all institutional members and stakeholders.*)

**Goal:** IFOAM will become successful when it establishes an Inclusive Governance that incorporates for the first time all members and internal stakeholders of the IFOAM global institutional network.

**Premise:** IFOAM operates as a membership-based organization, governed by the General Assembly and managed by the World Board. According to the current Statutes, even though so far we have not officially made the distinction operationally, members of the GA -thus of IFOAM Organics International- consist of:

1. Individual members
  - a. Business Entities (retailers, certifiers, farmers, etc)
  - b. Non Business Entities (trade associations, civil society organizations, academia & researchers, umbrella organizations that represent their internal membership).
2. Regional Bodies
3. And the special/extraordinary/ad-hoc case of INOFO

Note 1: Private Membership is not encouraged nor facilitated.

Note 2: IFOAM's GA has decided not to sanction the operation of Country or National Bodies, even though it allows the existence of 3 exemptions (Japan-France-Iran) acknowledging their legacy right to operate.

Note 3: To clarify what is mentioned above as Members: the definition of a member in most democratically organized associations or membership-based organizations includes the right of voting and being voted/represented. In our current Statutes RBs and INOFO are granted the right to vote, thus in a strict legal approach having already the status of a member. At the same time, they lack the 2nd aspect of full membership, the right to be represented (right to get voted).

**Representation Deficit:** At the moment Categories 2+3 are not officially nor legally represented nor included in most of our Governance processes. The origin of this key discrepancy in terms of governance between the 3 Categories, is that members of Category 1 enjoys Full Suffrage which is the norm in democratically

governed organizations, whereas RBs and INOFO have the right to vote but not to be voted.

**Reform:** To remedy the above described discrepancy and to offer RBs and INOFO the right to be represented at the World Board, as well as having their representatives been democratically chosen, we propose a new Structure for the WB that will be incrementally implemented in future steps over the years and according to Tri-Annual plans and decisions of the GA.

### **New Structure of World Board**

The statutes of IFOAM Organics International currently allow for a World Board of 10 members. However, having recognized the lack of governance processes that guarantee geographical and cultural representation of the global membership, through the process of co-opting today's WB consists of 11 seats.

In this proposal the WB increases for 11 to 12 seats, with further incremental additions/reductions and relevant operational modifications predicted for the future.

#### Mandated Seats representing RBs

All Regional Bodies get a de-facto seat at the World Board or 6 seats.

IFOAM AgriBioMediterraneo

IFOAM America Latina

IFOAM Asia

IFOAM Europe

IFOAM Euro Asia (not active)

IFOAM North America

IFOAM Southern African Network (confirm active status)

#### **Mandated Seat representing INOFO**

INOFO gets 1 de-facto seat at the World Board.

#### Prerequisites & Eligibility

- RBs must be already officially accepted/endorsed/sanctioned as part of IFOAM Organics International, at least since the previous GA before they are eligible for a representation seat in the World Board. INOFO is already sanctioned.
- RBs eligible for participation in the World Board must be currently active and operational. The same applies to INOFO (or other SPs). Process and methodology defining and vetting "active" status, will be developed by the World Board, sanctioned retroactively by the next GA and implemented/facilitated/verified by the International Secretariat and/or other scope-specific Committee.
- RBs and INOFO are solely responsible to inform the GA of the person that will represent them at the next WB.

- RBs and INOFO are responsible to develop, submit for approval by the WB and subsequently by the GA, and implement their own methodologies for identifying their representative. Said methodologies may differ between RBs, but all have to adhere to democratic processes that also allow cultural norms customary to the region where the RB operates. Examples and options may include:
  - Election within the RB membership to choose their representative
  - Rotation from within the RB Council/Board/Countries
  - Designation/Assignment (for example Honorary assignment)

In any case, to guarantee a transparent and also democratic process, said methodologies must be approved by the RB's and INOFO's GAs and in the long-term ideally incorporated or described as processes in the RBs' and INOFO's Articles of Association, Bylaws and/or updated ratified Operational Procedures.

- People acting as representatives of RBs and INOFO in the World Board, must originate from the RBs' and INOFO's membership. Representatives belonging to the personnel of the RB or INOFO will not be eligible.
- When and if in the future, more RBs are sanctioned by the GA and become operational, they would also be automatically eligible for a de-facto seat on the WB at the next GA following their accession.

### **Seats decided by an election process at the GA level**

All IFOAM members/affiliates (not RBs or INOFO) retain the right of voting and being voted, to fill the remaining 5 seats.

### **Eligibility Criteria for Candidates**

Remain the same as today.

### **Special Quotas**

- Gender Balance?
- Geographical Representability: Areas that do not have operating RBs in place, are guaranteed seats on WB through the open membership election procedure, to achieve a diverse and equitable representation in our Governance processes.
  - At the moment, Central Africa and Oceania are the 2 geographical areas without RBs to represent them, so 2 out of 6 of the membership-seats on the WB, must come from candidates representing an IFOAM member from these areas.

When and if in the future, RBs representing these geographical areas become operational, the respective "special quota" ceases to be valid.

## **Problems Solved and Goals Achieved**

### **IFOAM Entities Working Systematically Working Together**

Even though, Regional Bodies have been officially part of IFOAM's strategy for global development and to achieve a more diverse representation around the world for almost 30 years (*IFOAM Agribiomediterraneo was incorporated as the mediterranean IFOAM Body in 1997*), we still have not achieved as a network the level of potential alignment and collective synergies available to us.

Common strategies as the **One Membership** have been significantly delayed, as a closer alignment and collaboration based on a common governance basis, is by now not only evidently lacking but also becoming a hurdle.

The mutual co-dependence between the already existing IFOAM entities, is obvious and by definition critical, but not properly described neither on Governance nor on Operational levels. Thus creating from minor but long-term bottlenecks, serious missed opportunities to grow together, even grave threats like the financial stresses of 2022-23. Sometimes it even creates unneeded internal competition, that translates to wasted resources.

### **More Members, Better Representation, Bigger Impact**

The goal is to achieve more together, to go further especially in attracting a wider membership both in terms of numbers and diversity, to continue IFOAM's leadership of all Organic Stakeholders globally. A similar to a federated alliance is the basic prerequisite to base such common membership engagement strategies as the One Membership, to highlight an obvious benefit.

### **Elevating the International Secretariat**

Beefing up the capacity of one common International Secretariat

### **Proportions, Representation and Percentiles**

The above described schemes consists of a 12 member WB (11 today) with 6 seats reserved for established RBs, 5 retained by the General Membership and 1 going to INOFO representing the vital constituency for IFOAM the smallhold farmers.

However, this is just a framework. Percentiles are open to discussion and modification, and should be provisions that allow their fluctuation in the future.

#### Example:

6 seats for RBs + 6 for General Membership + 1 for INOFO. Total 13 seats

6 seats for RBs + 1 for INOFO + 3 for General Membership. Total 10 seats

The potential combinations are endless, a fluidity based on circumstances and goals can be predicted in the Statutes.

### **Future Representation outside the "bubble"**

A further expansion of the WB or the Council (see below) to include the true diversity of IFOAM stakeholders in the future, can include "non-executive" or "non-members" seats reserved for partners like FiBL, BIOFACH, FAO, IUCN, etc.

### **The case of the Sectoral Platforms**

At the moment there is no urgency based on a legal basis (i.e. discrepancy in the Statutes on voting and getting voted) to open the subject of Sectoral Platforms' participation in the Governance.

### **INOFO as a Constituency Groups or as a Sectoral Platform**

However the previous inclusion of INOFO creates a precedent, if of course INOFO is still considered a Sectoral Platform, as in reality it is mostly identified as what's often called in Governance terms: a specialized bottom-up Constituency Group (CG). In our case, INOFO already operates and in the future could be deemed a sanctioned CG representing Organic Farming Associations. Other CGs could consist of Women in Organic Agriculture, the Organic Youths, etc

### **Constituency-Based Platforms and Sector-Based Platforms**

As explained above, there is a distinction to be made between Constituency-Based Platforms (for example: People with Disabilities in Organic Agriculture) and sectoral and expertise-based internal networks or Working Groups of IFOAM, like the current SPs of IFOAM (animal husbandry, apiculture, aquaculture, seeds, technological innovation). The latter's main goal of operating is an efficient knowledge transfer and advancement of a particular sector (for example TIPI) and the first revolve around promoting the inclusion and rights of specific and usually underrepresented societal groups (for example protecting the livelihoods and traditional farming methods of Indigenous People).

Incremental Changes & Provisions Note: A future discussion of how to design a governance system that will further develop Constituency Groups within IFOAM, could be an option for future GAs to consider. A useful point of reference would be to study the already proven scheme of the [UN's Major Groups and other Stakeholders \(MGoS\)](#)

### **SPs in the WB**

Considering the future inclusion of SPs as voting members of the GA, could be of course an option. In this case, there could be several directions to consider and to choose from, including mandating de-facto seats:

- The complete parity of SPs with RBs, thus a de-facto seat for each SP in the WB.
- A rotation between SPs, where SPs receive 1 seat at each WB.
- Elections amongst SPs, to designate a common SP representative for a seat at the WB.

### **SPs as part of RBs and as Working Groups of IFOAM**

Another option could be to continue facilitating the cross sectional incorporation of SPs within RBs and to centrally improve their interoperability as IFOAM Working Groups, as a priority. Thus, refrain from proposing further governance changes regarding SPs at the moment. At the same time, to include them in future deliberations of Governance improvements, as part of a continuous, long-term and incremental development plan.

## **Future Operational Implications & Incremental Changes**

### **Future RBs**

By finally elevating RBs to the highest decision-making aspects of IFOAM's Governance, we are symbolically renewing our belief of RBs' instrumental role to

further develop the Organic Movement globally and to be as inclusive as possible by representing all geographical areas and cultures of the planet.

This implies a future change in goal setting and at the operational level, that will require more than symbolisms. In other words, a goal setting proposal would be a GA's decision to develop new IFOAM Bodies in areas where RBs are not currently present. Oceania is the obvious example. Africa is another case, where several options could be considered as North Africa is currently represented by IFOAM Mediterranean and South Africa by ISAN. A new, from scratch, IFOAM Africa is an obvious option, an expansion of ISAN to represent the whole continent would be another and so on.

Besides a political mandate from the GA, an operational capacity would have to be designed where the WB and Secretariat would nurture and support the development of new Bodies, and the existing RBs would act as custodians of this further global network growth.

### **RBs Cooperation and Network Management**

The management of IFOAM's global network would also have to be described in future operational changes to achieve the potential of a greater alignment. Examples of renewed processes and operational capacity:

- The launching of a new **Operational Group, i.e. the Directors' Council** (consisting of operational personnel, not elected officials). A similar but improved Working Group, as the Network Council in the past.
- A new personnel role/staff position within the **International Secretariat (i.e. Network Manager)** that will nurture the development of the network, facilitate interoperability, assist new Bodies in their launching, etc.
- The establishment of a purpose-specific **GA Network Committee** responsible for overseeing IFOAM sanctioned Bodies in respect to governance reforming, in order to continuously support the WB and Secretariat in further governance network decision making processes, to provide solutions and proposals to the GA for issues that will arise. (examples: Is "Regional" Body the correct term since geography is not the only defining factor anymore? Should geography be the only defining factor? Should Regional Bodies have subregional denominations, like IFOAM Gulf States operating as part of IFOAM Asia?). This new Committee could be viewed as the evolution of the current temporary Governance Advisory Board to a long-term GA Committee needed to provide guidance for the expected incremental changes and the long-term supervision of any Governance reforms's implementation, based on the decisions of the Extraordinary GA of 2026.

### **Provisions for Future WB Structure**

It is evident that in the future the number of seats of the WB will most likely increase, primarily by the addition of new Bodies or the re-activation of older ones. Or by the inclusion of Sectoral Platforms based on future GA mandates.

As a first step, provisions in the Statutes regarding flexibility in the numbers of seats of the WB, have to be predicted.

A future governance reform regarding the function of the World Board has to be predicted and provided for. A growing in-numbers WB runs the risk of becoming too big and to lose its capacity to deal efficiently with certain aspects of managing the organization. Especially with the business functions of the organization, where the Secretariat might require speedy reactions and flexibility in the decision making to perform their duties.

The solution most often witnessed in other global organizations that faced similar hurdles, would be the evolution of the World Board to a bi-cameral body. Where a smaller team within the WB, for example an Executive Committee, is responsible for managerial decisions, but where political decisions remain the responsibility of the wider body, for example the World Council.

To offer a recent example of an organization with similar activities with IFOAM, in 2023 the European Environmental Bureau's Board had reached an unmanageable number, as more than 40 European national environmental coalitions/alliances/bodies that are members of the organization were entitled to a seat at the Board. The need for a more efficient governance scheme was evident, however without risking the parity of all members in the decision making and equal representation. Their governance reform resulted in the following:

- All members from all countries form the GA.
- All members from one country gather to designate their national representative.
- Said national representative is a de-facto member of the Organization's Council, responsible for all political governance issues, very similar to IFOAM's World Board.
- A smaller Board (flexibly consisting between 6 and 12 members), gets elected with the responsibility to manage the business affairs of the organization, very similar to IFOAM's Executive Board.

A similar governance is observed by IFOAM Europe with 3 main governance bodies: General Assembly of IFOAM Members, Council of European National Representatives, European Board.

IFOAM Mediterranean's recent General Assembly of 2025 also decided to develop a similar governance structure, for the purpose of the increase of membership and deeper synergies with the members from each country of its regional activity.

## IFOAM - Organics International: Governance Advisory Board (GAB) Proposal for Governance reforms to be brought forward to the General Assembly

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### Option 3: A process-driven approach to continuous change

#### Background

Extensive member consultations of the GAB revealed a high appreciation for the democratic nature of IFOAM Organics International and a strong desire for participation. The GAB observed simultaneously high levels of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current governance functioning. People felt that minorities are not appropriately considered

*IFOAM OI has successfully fulfilled its purpose when it unites and leads the membership in its full diversity in the food system transition with excellent content competence and broad legitimacy.*

and little is done to protect against cliques and privilege-based entitlements, and that those affected by decisions are not adequately considered. Members often did not call for new structures and rules, but for a different culture and practice within the present structures.

IFOAM Organics International has a strong tradition of democracy. Democracy is built on the decisions of the majority and may leave a significant minority behind. There is always a risk of polarization and division within the community, which can compromise its overall strength. Democracies have numerous ways of mitigating these risks, such as minority representation of focus groups (e.g., smallholders), protecting the rights of minorities, privileging certain groups, qualified votes, parallel parliaments (e.g., of youth), quotas (e.g., gender), multistakeholder consulting, or fostering a culture of compromises, etc.

In recent years, numerous movements have emerged worldwide to enhance participation and governance, all of which require the development of a new culture of discussion and decision-making. These movements, their ideas, and their experience present an opportunity for IFOAM Organics International. We pick the concepts of **Consensus** and **Consent**.

#### About Consensus and Consent

**Consensus** in decision-making is an ideal situation to overcome the phenomenon of minority discrimination and exclusion. In its pure form, it is oftentimes not practical. Traditional (e.g., indigenous communities) and modern approaches (e.g., through IT algorithms, new methodology of systemic consensus finding) have been developed to enhance the consensus and robustness of decisions in institutions. There are many schools and applications in civil society, governments, and the private sector.

While **Consensus** seeks agreement and the endorsement of decisions by everybody, the concept of **Consent** seeks a lack of objections. This makes consent iterative, adaptive, and scalable. This approach has also traditional applications and more modern developments (e.g. Holacracy in business).

Both approaches gain momentum in modern organisations, which want to make a difference and have an impact, particularly when agility is required in increasingly volatile environments and amid higher stakeholder expectations.

### Exclusiveness of the motion

This option is independent of the other proposed reform options. It can be applied together with a) no other reforms, b) with incremental changes, and c) with the federation model. Hence, members can agree or disagree with this motion regardless of the votes for/against the other options.

### Motion

IFOAM Organics International commits, as far as practicable, to the principles of Consensus and Consent in its decision-making at both operational and strategic levels. It aims to reach the following objectives in the next few years:

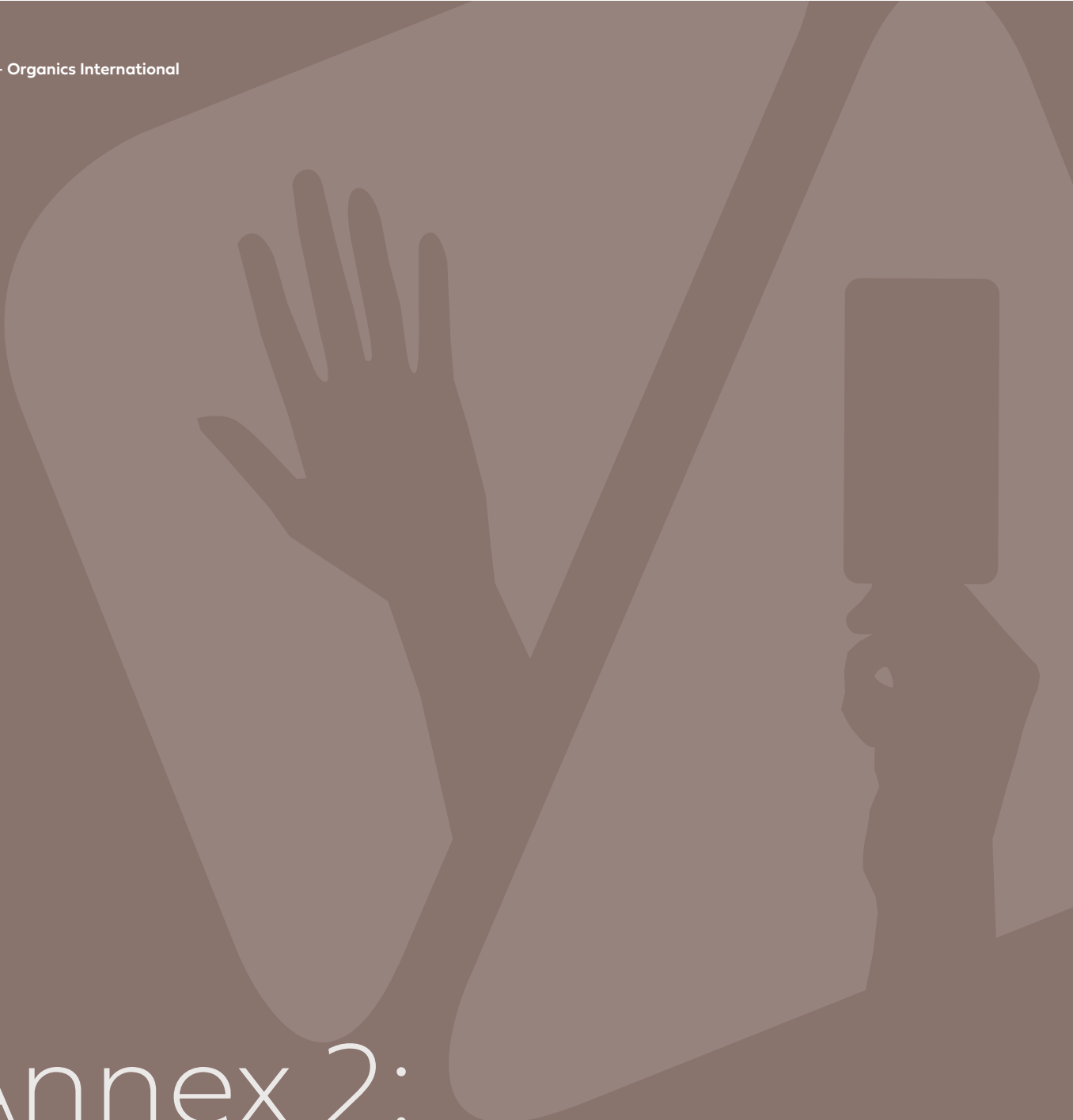
- IFOAM Organics International finds its own expression of an **organisational governance culture, which** is coherent with the Principles of Organic Agriculture, fosters respect and inclusiveness, and builds on Organic 3.0.
- IFOAM Organics International invest in developing **inclusive structures and decision-making rules and procedures** on membership, organisational governance, and operational levels, which make the organisation agile, outside-oriented, efficient, and impactful to its strategic objectives.
- IFOAM Organics International has **described its governance culture** in practical and straightforward language in a concise and binding way.
- IFOAM Organics International has **built capacity and mainstreamed** its new organisational culture in its exchanges with members, self-organised structures (regional and sectors), elected bodies, staff, and volunteers (e.g. the Ambassadors).
- IFOAM Organics International is agile and sensitive to its members, principles, and the organic visions.

The World Board and the Head Office will develop the content, implement it, and bring the necessary amendments to the Rules and Regulations to the next ordinary GA for the membership to vote and decide.

### Rationale

IFOAM OI is committed to democratic principles, and it has adhered to the “Robert’s Rules of Order” with great precision. Fifteen years ago, IFOAM was recognized among the NGOs that were “best in class” in establishing its governance based on democratic principles. At the same time, it was also considered a model when the organisational form of “Global Action Network” (GAN) was discussed.

However, in the meantime, we see limits and challenges of what was pioneering in the past. With Consensus and Consent, newer organisational governance and decision-making mechanisms emerge that provide solutions to issues prevalent at IFOAM Organics International. Those concepts also offer opportunities for being a pioneer in participatory governance with flat hierarchies. We don’t propose blueprints from outside, but rather an up-to-date space for the development of governance among members and the leadership at IFOAM Organics International. The proposal is sensitive to the history and principles of IFOAM Organics International, while also presenting opportunities for the organic movement to lead and serve as a model for fostering transitions that benefit the well-being of people and the planet.

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# Annex 2: World Board Assessment

## Criteria used by the WB for analysing options

- **Clarity and simplicity.** Are they understandable and minimise complexity,
- **Representation and fairness.** Does it address unequal access and unequal resources?
- **Effectiveness and functionality.** Will it unite our movement in a cost/time efficient way?
- **Feasibility.** Is it legal? Operational? Implementable?
- **Participation.** Does it create entry points for members and promote engagement?
- **GA acceptability.** Does the model resonate with our members and their feedback?

## Option 1

### Plus Points

- ☑ Promotes **representation and fairness** by recognising farmer constituencies and other self-organised structures, while actively improving diversity across regions, gender, and age through nomination and voting processes.
- ☑ **Strengthens democratic participation** by maintaining a central role for the General Assembly, preserving the principle of *one member, one vote*, and ensuring broad member involvement in elections.
- ☑ Achieves **high member and GA acceptability** by aligning with consultation feedback from individual members, while remaining **cost-neutral** for direct World Board expenses.

### Minus Points

- ☑ **Maintains unequal representation and voting access**, as power remains centralised in the General Assembly, with no decentralisation and unresolved risks of bloc voting.
- ☑ **Limits meaningful participation and subsidiarity**, relying on a technocratic, quota-driven approach that does not empower regions or groups to choose representatives reflecting their lived contexts.
- ☑ **Creates complexity and lack of clarity**, with opaque and confusing voting procedures, unclear eligibility criteria (especially for mixed identities), and risks of reduced transparency and trust at the GA.

## Option 2

### Plus Points

- ☑ Establishes **guaranteed, structured representation** for Regional Bodies, Sector Organisations, and INOFO on the World Board and Council, ensuring a formal and recognised voice in strategy and co-decision making.

☒ **Strengthens subsidiarity and participation** by enabling regions and sectors to nominate or choose their own representatives, motivating engagement through the Council and encouraging the formation of new regional bodies and self-organised structures.

☒ **Clearly formalises and protects INOFO's constituency role**, securing its representation and influence at both World Board and Council levels while improving overall multi-stakeholder engagement.

### Minus Points

- **Risks reinforcing power imbalances**, as stronger, recognised Regional Bodies gain early and disproportionate influence, including potential gatekeeping over recognition of new RBs.
- **Excludes or weakens participation of many members**, particularly those not affiliated with Regional Bodies or in under-resourced regions, with no guarantee of diversity across gender, sector, or social dimensions.
- **Creates governance and feasibility challenges**, including unclear roles between Council and World Board, uncertain GA ratification of nominees, complexity in managing Board size, and increased administrative burden and indirect costs.


## Consolidated assessment of the Option 1 and Option 2

### Plus points

- **Improves representation and fairness** by recognising farmer constituencies, Regional Bodies, Sector Organisations, and INOFO, and by intentionally promoting diversity across regions, gender, age, and sectors.
- **Strengthens democratic participation and subsidiarity** through a continued strong role of the General Assembly, one-member-one-vote principles, and empowering regions and sectors to nominate or choose their own representatives.
- **Provides more structured and inclusive governance** via formalised roles, guaranteed seats, and clearer channels for member input into strategy and decision-making.

### Minus Points

- **Reinforces unequal power and representation**, either through centralised GA control or the dominance of stronger, recognised Regional Bodies, while leaving unaffiliated members and weaker regions with limited voice.
- **Limits genuine participation, subsidiarity, and diversity**, failing to fully address bloc voting, gatekeeping risks, or ensure inclusive representation across gender, sector, and social contexts.
- **Introduces significant governance and feasibility challenges**, including procedural complexity, unclear roles and eligibility criteria, uncertainty around GA ratification, administrative burden, and increased indirect costs that may undermine transparency and trust.

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# Annex 3: Policy 15 and Policy 15a

# Policy on the IFOAM Organic World Congress (IFOAM OWC) and / General Assembly (GA)

NO: 15.

VERSION: 1.3

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2008-01

REVISED DATE: January 20, 2024

## Purpose & Scope of this Policy

1. Set out the criteria and outline decision-making processes for hosting the IFOAM Organic World Congress (IFOAM OWC)/ IFOAM – Organics International General Assembly (GA).
2. Provide a framework for cooperation with the host organization(s).

## Introduction

**IFOAM–Organics International owns the brand of the ‘IFOAM Organic World Congress’ (IFOAM OWC) and has been enjoying stakeholders’ trust since 1977. The IFOAM OWC and The General Assembly (GA) takes place every three years. The GA decides on the location and the host of the next IFOAM OWC/GA three years before the event. In exceptional circumstances, the World Board reserves the right to alter this decision.**

*The overall objective of the IFOAM OWC is to lead, unite and assist the organic movement in its full diversity to foster the adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture.<sup>1</sup>*

Other objectives include:

- Uniting the organic world to achieve IFOAM - Organics International’s mission and creating a platform for the organic movement
- Gaining public and media attention for the organic cause in general and IFOAM - Organics International campaigns specifically
- Boosting the organic sector and organic scientific research in the host country and region

## Event Concept

The IFOAM OWC (3 days) includes three components: Conference, Fair and Festival. A strong emphasis is placed on the first component. The second and third components may be entrusted to a partner. The conference includes a variety of methodologies (e.g. presentations, discussions, posters, open space etc.) in order to ensure adequate interaction and attract various groups (e.g. members of the organic movement, scientist, farmers, private sector and government representatives,). Plenary speakers give keynote speeches and provide a conference digest. Official ceremonies, social events and special performances or sub-events create an engaging and distinctive atmosphere. The event should be inclusive and partnerships with like-minded movements/institutions are encouraged. Pre-conferences (1-2 days) attract groups with specialized interests and provide opportunities to deepen specific topics. Organizers are expected to attract between 1.500 and 2.000 participants (for the conference only), with a minimum of 50% national and neighboring country participation.

The GA (1-2 days) is the highest governing body of the global organic movement. The consortium provides all logistical arrangements for this event, while IFOAM–Organics International is in charge of the agenda and

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.ifoam.org/principles](http://www.ifoam.org/principles)

the implementation of the Assembly itself. The GA also includes a Motions Bazaar and social events. About 250–400 attendees can be expected for the GA.

### **Requirements for Host Organization(s)**

- Willingness and commitment to organize and host a successful IFOAM - Organics International -branded IFOAM OWC/GA for the organic world, and to carry the risks and benefits in line with this IFOAM - Organics International policy 15 and the contract with IFOAM - Organics International;
- Demonstrated experience or ability to organize and host an international event of the dimension (ca. 2.000 participants) of the IFOAM OWC/ GA;
- Proven capacity to manage finances and risks in the context of the successful organization of an IFOAM OWC/ GA;
- Capacity for strategic and operational management of the events, including program and message development;
- Readiness to collaborate with a Congress Steering Committee (CSC) that takes binding strategic decisions and provides guidance;
- Capacity and commitment to involve IFOAM - Organics International's local membership in the planning and implementation of the IFOAM OWC;
- Competencies in event communication at all levels, before and during the events (e.g. promotion, management of information flows, creation of an excellent event atmosphere);
- Capacity to provide logistics, including professional simultaneous interpretation of key events into at least three languages;
- Commitment to a green event, including but not limited to organic foods and beverages (preferably locally sourced); recycling, composting and separation of waste; offsetting the events' carbon footprint including participants travels and environmentally friendly sourcing;
- Assistance to participants with their logistics (including visa assistance) and sponsorship of the attendance of financially challenged participants

### **Financial framework: Funding, sponsorship and risk**

- The host organization is responsible for the congress budget. It takes the financial risks and benefits. During preparations, the budget development is regularly reported to the CSC, for information and feedback.
- Sponsorship may be financial or in-kind. The fees, the sponsorship packages and the sponsorship acceptance criteria are subject to approval by the CSC.
- Local sponsorship shall be acquired by Organizer.
- International sponsorship shall be acquired by both parties and divided between Organizer and IFOAM Organics International. International and regional sponsorship will be shared according to ratio to be defined by the World Board each time. The fee and sponsor possibilities should be agreed on when the contract is signed.
- Up to five strategic partners of IFOAM - Organics International have the right to be promoted as sponsors without further payment to the organizer.
- Organizer shall pay to IFOAM Organic International flat fee. The fee consists of an operational fee and a fee for international communication and promotion. Any local VAT if applicable is to be paid by the Organizer. The flat fee grants the organizer the right to use the IFOAM - Organics International name and logo and the brand "*IFOAM Organic World Congress*" as well as support in communicating and promoting the congress.
- The World Board will decide for each IFOAM OWC on the flat fee. It may define a mechanism for adjusting the flat fee for countries with less financial capacities.
- The payment could be discussed with the organizer according to their own capacities/legislation from their country.
- Host retains all income from ticket sales.
- Host retains all income from own sponsorship acquisition
- Host retains all income from exhibition where applicable.
- IFOAM - Organics International affiliates receive a discount of 20% on registration fees (all categories).

- Host budgets for and covers travel and accommodation as well as congress tickets for 10 World Board members, 11 staff members and 30 guests as well as meeting/travel costs for any preparatory meetings.

### **Bidding, approval and contract**

Bids for hosting the *“The IFOAM Organic World Congress and the IFOAM - Organics International General Assembly* are called for by the IFOAM - Organics International Office through a special announcement to affiliates latest 10 months prior to the previous ordinary IFOAM - Organics International General Assembly. The deadline is set out in the call for bids.

Only IFOAM - Organics International members or a consortium led by an IFOAM - Organics International member is eligible to bid. The bidders present an event concept note including descriptions of the partners and their qualifications, the event objectives, themes and tracks, event highlights, communication, logistics and budget. The bid also responds to the requirements set out in this policy 15. The concept, including annexes and visuals, has a minimum of four and a maximum of eight A4 pages. Bidders shall also submit, together with their application, a signed statement accepting all conditions as outlined in this policy and pledging to implement all conditions upon approval.

The IFOAM - Organics International World Board assesses before the General Assembly if the requirements are fulfilled and whether the bid qualifies to be presented to the General Assembly. The abstracts of all qualified proposals are published and distributed to members prior to the General Assembly. The General Assembly decides by single majority vote.

After the bid approval by the General Assembly, the host prepares a comprehensive written proposal and budget to be approved by the IFOAM - Organics International World Board. This concept is part of a written contract between IFOAM - Organics International and the host that is signed within six months following the General Assembly decision.

### **Miscellaneous regulations**

**Congress Steering Committee (CSC):** The CSC is set up after signing the contract with mutually agreed upon roles, responsibilities and representation e.g., one representative from the World Board of IFOAM - Organics International, one independent representative, and up to two organizer representatives, and one representative from IFOAM – Organics International.

The Congress Steering Committee approves by majority the concepts including the (inter)national marketing/ communications plan, the price schemes, the program, the logistical concept and the Gantt chart. The CSC receives quarterly updated budgets and financial reports for information and feedback and provides half-yearly progress reports to the World Board. Elaborated by the Congress Management Committee, the CSC submits to the World Board for approval the following elements:

- event concept including an (inter)national marketing/ communications plan;
- price schemes;
- budget;
- logistical concept;
- Gantt chart; and
- Program.

**The Congress Management Committee (CMC):** A CMC could be created if necessary. The CMC reports to the Congress Steering Committee (CSC). The CMC is responsible for the overall management of the congress. It hires and supervises the secretariat staff, depending on the local legal needs for procurement and organizational set-up. It appoints and supervises a Congress Director (or coordinator, as appropriate). It sets up the sub- committees that in turn report to the CMC. The CMC ensures the development, implementation and updating of the logistical concept and project management tools with the input of the specialist committees.

**The Conference Director(CD):** The CD will be appointed by the CSC, although she/he can also be mandated to fulfill this role via an event organizing company. The conference director (CD) reports to the CMC, if

created or to the CSC. She/he acts as the Secretary of the CSC, is present at all meetings and reports to the CSC on behalf of all the operational structures. The Conference Director does not hold any voting right in the CSC.

**The Conference Organizer:** The conference organizer is a professional entity responsible for on-the-ground organization and logistics, including the venue, food, transport, visa facilitation, tourist information, accommodation offers etc. The conference organizer may be part of the event organiser, participating in the risk/benefit of the event organization, or it may act as an external service provider to event organiser.

**Reporting and ownership:** The host submits complete activity and financial reports at the latest three months after the event. IFOAM - Organics International reserves the right to audit the financial records. IFOAM - Organics International has the right to use the congress preparation materials for future Organic World Congresses. The host assures that all papers and presentations are published and are made available to the public.

**Cancellation:** In case the IFOAM OWC does not take place and/or Organizer cancels the contract for whatever reason, the flat fee will not be reimbursed.

If the congress host fails to adhere to this or other relevant IFOAM - Organics International policies, IFOAM - Organics International reserves the right to cancel the event outright or assume responsibility for the organization of the event. In this case, the flat fee will not be reimbursed.

## Application Procedure for Organic World Congress and General Assembly Bids

NO: 15a - Board procedure  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2007\_08\_10

VERSION: 4  
REVISED DATE: 15\_03\_2024

### Purpose:

This procedure provides organizations intending to bid to become the host of the next IFOAM – Organics International Organic World Congress (OWC) and the IFOAM – Organics International General Assembly (GA) with information about the application process. It provides further criteria and requirements for the OWC bids as laid down in Policy 15.

### Bidders: Requirements

- Commitment to organize and host, as part of the consortium, a successful IFOAM – Organics International branded OWC/GA, in line with Policy 15 and the consortium contract (see annex to this Policy). This includes the commitment to the strategic vision of IFOAM – Organics International and to membership-approved landmarks (e.g. Organic 3.0);
- Capacity to manage finances and risks in the context of the successful organization of an OWC/GA;
- Ability to assign the responsibility over procurement<sup>1</sup> to one (or more) organization(s) to ensure necessary cash flow;
- Capacity for the strategic and operational management of the international events for about 1.500 – 2.000 participants, including national and international mobilization, as well as program and message development;
- Readiness to set up, collaborate with and report to a Congress Steering Committee (CSC), in line with Policy 15 requirements, that has oversight, takes binding strategic decisions and offers guidance;
- Capacity and commitment to involve IFOAM – Organics International’s local membership and other local actors of the organic and sustainability sectors in the planning and implementation of the OWC. This entails an inclusive attitude to actors inside and outside the organic movement;
- Competency to plan and conduct event communication and outreach before, during and after the events (e.g. marketing and promotion, information flow management, sponsor acquisition, etc.);
- Capacity for logistical planning and implementation, including the provision of professional simultaneous interpretation of key events into at least three languages;
- Commitment to a green event;

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<sup>1</sup> The local consortium partners must indicate in their bid which party/ organization is responsible for procurement and whether a (new) legal entity needs to be put in place to fulfill this role, in line with national legal requirements.

- Capacity to provide logistical assistance to participants (e.g. visa) and mobilize sponsored participation for the attendance of financially challenged participants;
- Time allocation for and support of the compulsory external audits, continuous monitoring and evaluation (External audits by an independent external auditor must be conducted throughout the duration of the contract to check all finances. The consortium submits complete and audited activity and financial reports at the latest three months after the event to IFOAM – Organics International.);
- Availability to contribute to post-event debriefs and lessons learnt exercise.

## Bid Proposal

Bidders submit:

- Bidders submit the completed OWC Concept and Budget Templates, made available in the call;
- A 1-page summary – your sales pitch – in Word or high-resolution PDF format, that will be used for online promotion and will be printed in GA report;
- Bidders must submit, with their application, a signed statement accepting all conditions as outlined in Policy 15 and the contract template and pledge to implement all conditions upon approval by the GA;
- Bidders may submit up to a maximum of 10 pages of *additional* documents in one file (PDF or Word) to support the bid (e.g. supporting letters, links to websites or promotional videos, or touristic information).

The assessment is based on the submission based on the OWC Concept and Budget Templates only. As detailed in the OWC Concept Template (see check list), it must include:

- **The host country:** Background information on the organic movement in the country/region and reasons to invite the global organic movement to hold the OWC/GA;
- **Goals and objectives:** Objectives to be reached with the event;
- **Event:** Overall event framework, facts and figures;
- **Content:** Thematic focus and narrative of the event;
- **Institutions:** Partners and supporting institutions, locally, nationally and internationally;
- **Governance and management:** Organizational set-up, operations planning and working principles; monitoring, evaluation and audit plans;
- **Logistics:** Touristic information and hospitality.
- **Communication & promotion:** Interaction with (potential) delegates, advocacy and other relevant communications targets
- **Finances:** Budget and budget assumptions, expenditures and income opportunities.
- **Miscellaneous:** Opportunities, challenges and other information

## Process of Bid Evaluation and Decision-Making

Members of IFOAM - Organics International have the right to submit a proposal to host an upcoming IFOAM - Organics International Organic World Congress and Global General Assembly based on a call published by IFOAM - Organics International. Proposals in line with the rules and regulations of Policy 15 and this Procedure 15a are subject to an assessment and, if approved, are proposed to the membership. The General Assembly votes for the bidding host of the upcoming OWC with a minimum of 50% of the votes cast.

IFOAM - Organics International follows this process:

1. IFOAM - Organics International **calls for bids** 4 years before the OWC (one year before the upcoming OWC) with a submissions' deadline for bids of up to 6 months before the upcoming OWC.
2. Bidders **submit their proposals** at the latest by the published deadline. They confirm that, in case they win, they commit to enter a collaborative partnership with IFOAM - Organics International and to implement the event under the conditions described in Policy 15.
3. IFOAM - Organics International **confirms the receipt of the proposal** and informs bidders about the number of proposals received and the detailed process leading up to the vote by the GA (including opportunities to promote their bid e.g. in the exhibition of the OWC, during the Motion Bazaar or during the GA social evening).
4. IFOAM - Organics International makes a **basic technical (not political) assessment** (see *Acceptance of the application* chapter for assessment criteria), of the application within 6 weeks of the bidding deadline. It reserves the right to exclude proposals that are not technically sound and inform affected bidders accordingly. The evaluation focuses on five criteria, namely completeness of the bid, governance, finances, inclusiveness and content (more details in the section **Acceptance of Application**). The World Board confirms the selection.
5. IFOAM - Organics International **publishes the 1-page summary of the selected bids** online, includes it in the IFOAM - Organics International In Action GA Edition (the guiding document for members at the GA) and provides further promotion opportunities (e.g. link to own websites/videos or booths/presentations at the OWC/ Motion Bazaar<sup>2</sup>).
6. The bidders may actively **promote their bids** to the Members of IFOAM - Organics International before and during the OWC and the GA. They present the bid to the GA plenary as part of the GA agenda just before voting for the next host. Depending on the number of bids being presented to the GA, the time allocated for this presentation may be between 5 and 10 minutes.
7. The members of IFOAM - Organics International **vote in 2 rounds**.

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<sup>2</sup> The Motion Bazaar is a forum hosted the night before to allow members of IFOAM – Organics International to prepare their positions on the different motions to be voted on during the GA. It is an opportunity for bidders to showcase their proposal and lobby for it to be voted on favorably by members. The Motion Bazaar typically lasts between 2 and 3 hours. Applicants can be creative in their presentation although coordination with the IFOAM – Organics International is required.

1. The winning bidder **signs a consortium contract** with IFOAM - Organics International.

## Acceptance of the Application

The technical assessment checks if the proposal is complete and sound, and if it can be presented for vote to the General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International. The minimum requirements are:

- The completeness of the documents submitted;
- The meeting of the submission deadline; and
- A minimum rating of 2 points in each of the five criteria and a minimum average overall rating of 3 points overall.

The result of the rating (approved by the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International) in the 5 criteria given below (there is no ranking) is communicated to the bid proposers only and not to Members. Members are only informed of bids that have qualified.

IFOAM - Organics International uses the following criteria for the assessment:

1. **Completeness:** Proposal (6-8 A4 pages) that covers the checklist in line with the template including Summary (1 A4 page), Budget, Cash flow calculation, timely submission (must criteria)
2. **Governance:** Goals/objectives, Governance/management, Logistics and Miscellaneous: Quality of the proposal and compliance with policy 15/Procedure 15a.
3. **Finances**  
Finances: Content of budget and cash flow planning as well as robustness of assumptions.
4. **Inclusiveness**  
Involvement of national organic movement, institutions/partners: Strength of consortium and stakeholder involvement.
5. **Content**  
Event and Content: Coherence with the organic landmarks and the strategic plan of IFOAM - Organics International.

Evaluators rate the 5 criteria with marks from 1 to 5, while a 1 in 1 criterion means the proposal has failed in the assessment. (5=excellent, 4=good, 3=issues/risks existent, 2=high risks, 1=exclusion from the GA vote).

## Reference

Reference is made to IFOAM - Organics International Policy 15 on the OWC/ GA, the OWC Concept and Budget Templates.



# Annex 4: Update on Option 2

## **OPTION 2 – Federated subsidiarity model with global coherence**

Introductory note for the World Board and General Assembly

This document responds to the mandate given by the General Assembly (GA) in Taiwan to review the governance of IFOAM Organics International and to explore options that better reflect the evolution of our Federation. It builds on the work and recommendations of the Governance Advisory Board (GAB), on discussions held across Regional Bodies (RB's) and Self-Organised Structures (SOS's), and on reflections within the World Board and membership.

The proposals presented here are to support the World Board in its role. It aims to clarify roles, responsibilities and procedures so that IFOAM Organics International, Regional Bodies and other structures can collaborate more predictably and transparently, in line with the subsidiarity principle.

The motions and “how to achieve it” sections therefore focus on concrete legal and procedural steps the World Board and General Assembly may wish to consider. They are offered as a basis for dialogue and refinement in the lead-up to the June 2026 extraordinary General Assembly, with the understanding that final decisions remain in the hands of the World Board and the membership. Our recommendations are compiled from six elements listed below.

### **1. Federated structure with regional representation**

Where recognised and active Regional Bodies exist, they shall have a clearly defined role. They exercise leadership at regional level, while IFOAM Organics International retains its role as the global organisation with global governance, advocacy and coordination functions. Regions without recognised Regional Bodies shall not be left unsupported. Their development needs shall be addressed through coordinated support from IFOAM Organics International and, where appropriate, supported by recognised and active Regional Bodies.

#### **How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

1. General Assembly adopts Motion 1 (see point #3 for more details) mandating the World Board to establish subsidiarity working procedures.
2. World Board adopts formal Working Procedures defining:
  - scope of regional leadership
  - coordination obligations
  - notification mechanisms
3. Update existing RB recognition agreements/contracts to reflect:
  - leadership in representation
  - coordination clauses
  - dispute resolution pathway
4. Update internal brand and advocacy guidelines to align with subsidiarity principle.
5. Insert reference in Rules of Procedure of the World Board.

**Risk to manage:**

Avoid ambiguity between “coordination” and “authorisation”. Define timelines and escalation mechanisms.

**2. Global coherence of membership and one-membership approach**

IFOAM Organics International defines global membership eligibility criteria to ensure a clear, transparent and coherent understanding of IFOAM membership worldwide. The one-membership approach was mentioned in both suggestions of the GAB report as desirable, even though an earlier attempt at it failed. We propose to relaunch this process by preparing an analytical report for the next extraordinary General Assembly outlining the difficulties previously encountered in implementing the one-membership system, together with a work plan and next steps.

IFOAM Organics International defines global membership eligibility criteria to ensure a clear, transparent, and coherent understanding of membership worldwide.

The following requests should be addressed:

1. An analytical report prepared for the next extraordinary General Assembly outline:
  - Challenges previously encountered in implementing the one-membership system.
  - Financial implications.
  - Membership category considerations.
  - A proposed work plan.
2. Based on this report, a formal proposal shall be presented to the subsequent regular General Assembly for consideration.

Flexibility and constructive engagement shall guide this process.

If the current World Board confirms that the principle of one-membership has already been endorsed by the General Assembly, no additional motion shall be required at this stage. The objective of this process is to openly and constructively develop a proposal that acknowledges underlying financial shifts and membership category considerations. Flexibility shall be a guiding principle of this process.

**How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

No immediate statutory amendment would be required unless membership categories are altered.

**Steps:**

1. GA formally mandates the World Board to prepare the analytical report.
2. World Board defines scope, timeline and consultation framework.
3. Office prepares:
  - legal mapping of current membership categories
  - financial impact analysis
  - impact on voting rights
4. Extraordinary GA reviews report.

5. If structural changes required → Statutory amendment motion prepared for next regular GA.

**Trigger for Statutes change, if:**

- voting rights change,
- membership categories are merged/eliminated,
- fee structure affects governance rights.

**Risk to manage:**

Avoid creating de facto new membership system without formal GA approval.

### **3. Subsidiarity: choosing the most effective way to work on regional level**

In regions with a recognised and active Regional Body, that Regional Body is usually best placed to represent IFOAM at regional level. They possess knowledge of local political contexts, cultural realities and regional membership dynamics. In such regions, the Regional Body shall take the lead in external representation, political advocacy, institutional relations and coordination of the IFOAM brand at regional level. IFOAM Organics International may conduct regional advocacy or representation activities in regions where no recognised and active Regional Body exists. In regions with an active Regional Body, such activities shall be conducted only in coordination and after confirmation with that Regional Body. Recognised Regional Bodies that are still in development may request support from IFOAM Organics International in carrying out such activities.

Global contexts – such as multilateral and intergovernmental fora, global policy processes, initiatives and international partnerships – remain the responsibility of IFOAM Organics International. Regional Bodies will only take activities in that field in coordination with IFOAM Organics International.

For this suggestion, even though it sounds operational. We think that a motion is needed.

#### ***MOTION 1: Subsidiarity in Regional Representation***

*Motion moves for the World Board to establish working procedures, that in detail describe the following:*

1. *In regions with a well-established and active Regional Body, the Regional Body shall lead in:*
  - *External representation,*
  - *Political advocacy,*
  - *Institutional relations,*
  - *Coordination of the IFOAM brand at regional level.*
2. *IFOAM Organics International may conduct regional advocacy or representation activities in other regions and, in all cases, shall coordinate with members or recognised Regional Bodies in the relevant region.*

#### **How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

Working procedures development + contractual alignment.

**Steps:**

1. GA adopts Motion 1.
2. World Board approves formal “Regional Representation Protocol”.
3. Insert protocol reference in:
  - RB recognition agreements
  - WB Rules of Procedure
4. Establish notification mechanism for:
  - advocacy initiatives
  - public positioning
  - participation in regional fora
5. Define conflict resolution ladder:
  - consultation
  - mediation via Council (once established)
  - final WB determination (if needed)

**Risk to manage:**

Minimize the risk of informal, uncoordinated initiatives between global and regional actors.

**4. Professional project management and membership satisfaction**

As a multi-bodied entity, IFOAM must ensure clear communication with project funders, who may not distinguish between IFOAM Organics International and Regional Bodies.

Clear rules and good internal communication are important. In regions with a recognised and active Regional Body, project opportunities shall be discussed and confirmed with the Regional Body. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the Regional Body may decide to lead, co-lead or decline involvement. In case of multi-regional project that should encompass region with an active Regional Body and region with no Regional Body, the active Regional Body should be approached as for above. Regional Bodies may formally object to projects proposed in their region where such projects clearly conflict with regional strategies, priorities or capacities.

In regions that do not have a Regional Body, it may be very welcomed that IFOAM Organics International takes an active role. IFOAM Organics International and Regional Bodies support capacity building and organisational development of Regional Bodies and in regions that are not yet sufficiently developed, with the objective of progressively strengthening regional leadership.

These arrangements shall be incorporated into the working methods and, where appropriate, reflected in contractual arrangements between IFOAM Organics International and recognised Regional Bodies.

Furthermore, the well-established Regional Bodies could adopt their working methods to support other regions.

As a multi-bodied entity, IFOAM must ensure clear communication with project funders, who often do not distinguish between IFOAM-Organics International and Regional Bodies. It is equally important to ensure that members are not overlooked when projects are being

developed in a specific region or country. Clear rules and strong internal communication are therefore essential.

In summary: In regions with a recognised and active Regional Body:

- Project opportunities shall be discussed with the Regional Body.
- In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the Regional Body may decide to lead, co-lead, or decline involvement.
- Regional Bodies may object to projects proposed in their region where such projects clearly conflict with regional strategies, priorities, or capacities.
- In regions without a recognised Regional Body, IFOAM-Organics International may take an active role and shall support capacity-building and organisational development with the objective of strengthening regional leadership over time.

If the World Board approves these arrangements as working methods to be stipulated in the contracts with the Regional Bodies, a motion may not be required.

### **How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

Policy instrument + contractual annex (not statutes).

#### **Steps:**

1. World Board adopts “Project Coordination and Regional Objection Framework”.
2. Define:
  - mandatory consultation stage
  - response timeline (e.g. 30 days)
  - formal objection criteria
3. Insert clause in RB agreements:
  - project consultation obligation
  - documentation standard
4. Define escalation:
  - mediation phase
  - WB and/or Council review
5. Clarify donor communication rule to avoid reputational damage.

#### **Risk to manage:**

Avoid conflicts between the parties

## **5. Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organised Structures**

To strengthen communication and alignment across the federation, a Council of recognised Regional Bodies and other Self-Organised Structures shall be established.

The role of the Council would be limited to strategic orientation, political alignment and oversight, in complementarity with the World Board. The Council would not substitute the World Board, or exercise executive or management functions, and it would not be involved in day-to-day operational decision-making. Its purpose would be to provide structured input and feedback to the World Board, not to create a parallel decision-making centre.

In summary - the nature of the Council

- Does not substitute the World Board,
- Does not exercise executive or management functions,

- Is not involved in day-to-day operational decision-making,
- Its role is limited to strategic orientation, political alignment, and oversight, in complementarity with the World Board.

Clear procedures are developed on how IFOAM OI positions & policy lines are:

- developed, discussed and decided,
- articulated between the World Board, the Council and the GA.

Depending on the nature of the matter:

- the Council may be consulted,
- the Council may be involved in co-decision on defined governance, strategy or major political matters, according to agreed rules.

This ensures predictable, transparent decision-making and reduces ad-hoc practices.

To establish such a new structure, a motion from the General Assembly would be required.

***MOTION 2: Establishment of Regional Bodies and Self-Organised Structures Council***

*Motion moves for the World Board to establish a Council of recognised Regional Bodies and recognised Self-Organised Structures. These adjustments aim to support the World Board in its global role by ensuring that structured regional and sector perspectives are available in a predictable way, not to limit its executive responsibilities. With the help of the Council, the World Board can rely on a more systematic flow of regional and sector perspectives while retaining its executive responsibility and accountability to the General Assembly.*

***Composition and functioning:***

- *One member per recognised and active Regional Body and per recognised Sector Platform, designated by the respective region or structure according to its internal procedures.*
- *The Council is chaired by one of its members, nominated by the Council members.*
- *The management and secretariat support of the Council shall be ensured by IFOAM Organics International. Where appropriate and subject to agreement, specific coordination tasks may be delegated to the organisation of the Chair.*
- *The Chair of the Council is invited as observer to World Board meetings, to ensure communication flow, transparency and alignment between governance bodies.*

***Role of the Council:***

- *contributes to strategic orientation and governance matters.*
- *participates in major political decisions, as defined in agreed procedures developed in the IFOAM Organics International working methods.*
- *approves criteria for recognising Regional Bodies as active and operational.*
- *monitors progress on capacity-building and organisational development of Regional Bodies, supporting accountability and gradual rebalancing of responsibilities within the federation.*

***Transparency***

- *Minutes of World Board meetings shall be made accessible to Council members, under clearly defined confidentiality rules where required, to ensure transparency, trust and informed coordination between governance bodies.*

### **How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

**Legal nature:** Requires Statutory Amendment.

#### **Steps:**

1. Draft new Statutory Article establishing:
  - name
  - composition
  - mandate
  - limits (non-executive, non-management)
2. Amend Article listing governing bodies.
3. Define relationship clause between:
  - World Board
  - Council
  - General Assembly
4. GA adopts Motion 2 and statutory changes defining:
  - which matters are consultation only
  - which matters require Council involvement
5. Adopt Council Rules of Procedure:
  - meeting frequency
  - quorum
  - voting rules (if any)
  - consultation timelines
6. World Board Rules of Procedure updated accordingly.
7. Define confidentiality regime for access to WB minutes.
8. Establish formal documentation flow:
  - draft positions shared
  - comment period matters
  - recording of Council input

#### **Voting requirement:**

2/3 majority at GA (statutory amendment).

#### **Risk to manage:**

Avoid creating dual executive authority or unclear hierarchy.

## **6. World Board composition and transparency**

Guaranteed seats for Regional Body and sector platform representatives on the World Board of IFOAM-Organics International help ensure fair and balanced global representation. IFOAM is a worldwide federation with members from very different regions, each facing unique agricultural, political, and market realities. Without formal seats, decision-making becomes concentrated in larger, wealthier, or more organized constituencies. Guaranteed representation ensures that every recognized region and sector platform has a voice at the highest level, strengthening legitimacy, fairness, and trust across the federation. All strategic deliberations will be based on structured regional/thematic consultation rather than based on purely individual mandates. The World Board members, including those occupying reserved seats, would not represent the interests of their region as a constituency delegate.

This kind of structured representation on the World Board improves contextual policy intelligence, continuity across election cycles, and better communication between global and regional levels. In a federated governance model, this kind of representation is not a privilege but a constitutional mechanism that protects inclusivity, prevents centralization of influence, and ensures that global strategy reflects the realities of organic movements across all regions.

To guarantee such diversity on the World Board we propose the following motion:

**MOTION 3: World Board Composition Diversity Criteria**

*Motion moves to amend the Statutes and working procedures of IFOAM Organics International to change the composition of the World Board, so that its composition reflects the federated nature of the organisation and ensures balanced regional representation. In particular:*

- *recognised and active Regional Bodies are entitled to one (1) reserved seat per RB, ensuring predictable and structural representation of regional perspectives.*
- *INOFO is entitled to one (1) reserved seat, reflecting its specific constituency role.*
- *in each major geographical area where there is no recognised Regional Body, rules shall be established to ensure geographical representation in the World Board. The rules shall define the election of at least one (1) representative from each major geographical area not covered by a Regional Body.*
- *the nomination of representatives to the reserved seats shall be the responsibility of the respective Regional Bodies or constituencies, in accordance with their own internal procedures.*
- *the General Assembly of IFOAM Organics International shall ratify the individuals nominated to occupy the seats allocated to Regional Bodies, INOFO and regions, ensuring overall accountability and consistency with the organisation's Statutes and values.*

**How to achieve it? (legal & procedural steps)**

**Legal nature:** Hybrid: statutes + procedural rules.

**Steps:**

1. Draft new Statutory Article defining new World Board composition criteria
2. GA adopts Motion 3
3. RBs and INOFO update its internal rules to have transparent and democratic endorsement process for their own candidates.
4. Next World Board elected accordingly to the new composition criteria.

**Critical legal design point:**

Working methods and/or Statutory changes

**Risk to manage:**

Assure each criterion is represented, assuring *strong Board composition*.



# Annex 5: WB Modifications after forum feedback

## 7.3.1. MOTION 1a | World Board Composition

### ■ 2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE – *Mutually exclusive with Motion 1b*

#### Motion text

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to take forward the following changes to the current World Board Composition

#### 1 - Amend § 7 of the Statutes to read as follows:

#### 7. Elections

Every regular General Assembly elects ~~ten~~ World Board members as follows:

**(a) Continental seats ~~(6)~~:** One seat is reserved for each of the six major geographical regions of continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America (Including Mexico and Central America,) North America (all English-speaking countries), and Oceania. Candidates for continental seats shall be pre-selected by the IFOAM members affiliated with that continent through a process established in the Rules of Procedure. The continental pre-selection shall elect two to three candidates per seat, from whom the General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International elects one.

**(b) Constituency seats ~~(currently 1)~~:** One seat is reserved for ~~the each~~ constituency as defined by the World Board of organic farmers' organisations (currently represented by INFO). The constituency group shall nominate two to three candidates through its own democratic procedures, from whom the General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International elects one. The General Assembly may, by ordinary resolution, recognise additional constituencies and assign them a reserved seat, provided the total number of seats does not exceed ten (10) without a further statutes amendment.

**~~(c) Council Chair seat (1):~~** ~~The elected Chair of the Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organized Structures (§ [new Council article]) shall serve as a member of the World Board for the duration of their term as Council Chair. This seat is ex officio. If no Council exists, this seat shall be filled as a free seat under (d).~~ **(cd) Free/open seats ~~(currently 2)~~:** The remaining seats ~~(currently two)~~ shall be filled by open election from an unrestricted pool of eligible candidates. Any individual meeting general candidacy requirements may stand.

*Candidacies for all seats must be received at least three months before the regular General Assembly and must be endorsed by five members. A presentation of the candidates must be sent to the members at least 60 days before the General Assembly. The World Board chooses an Executive Board (see § 8) from amongst the elected members before the end of the General Assembly. The World Board may co-opt up to three further World Board members to address gaps in competencies, and to correct systemic imbalances, prioritizing candidates from underrepresented voices in our movement e.g. regions, youth or farmer interests less well financed and capacitated today.*

~~diversity or social inclusion.~~ *Co-opted members have full World Board voting rights.*

[The elected Chair of the Council of Regional Bodies and other Self- Organized Structures \(§ 11b\) shall sit in the World Board as an observer for the duration of their term as Council Chair. This position is ex officio. Observers hold the same rights and duties of a World Board member, except voting rights.](#)

*The World Board may elect additional Executive Board members and replace them as appropriate during the term.*

#### **Rationale 1**

The current statutes (§ 7) provide only for election of ten members by the General Assembly with no structural requirements on representational balance. This amendment introduces a federated composition that guarantees representation of all continents, INOFO [as \(farmer constituency\) and the IFOAM Council](#) while preserving direct democratic accountability to the full membership through the GA election. [In regard to the definition of \*constituency\* reference is made to motion 3 and 4 presented by the WB to this eGA.](#)

[The IFOAM Council chair will be granted observer status in the World Board, with all rights and duties of a World Board member, except voting rights. This will assure a direct and timely communication and coordination between WB and IFOAM council.](#)

-By requiring continental pre-selection to elect 2–3 candidates, the mechanism combines regional participation, vetting and legitimacy with genuine GA choice.

[The role of the Nominations Committee is to support identification of appropriate skills and experience, diverse representation, address systemic imbalances and identify candidates from underrepresented voices in our movement.](#)

Existing co-option powers are retained.

**Statutes sections affected:** § 7 (Elections).

Cross-reference: new Council article for sub-section (c).

## 7.3.2. MOTION 1b | World Board Composition Diversity Criteria

■ **\_2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE - *Mutually exclusive with Motion 1a***

### Motion text

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to take forward the following changes to the current World Board Composition

#### 1 - Amend § 7 of the Statutes to read as follows:

##### 7. Elections

Every regular General Assembly elects ~~ten~~ World Board members as follows:

(a) Recognised and active **Regional Bodies** are entitled to one (1) reserved seat per RB, ensuring predictable and structural representation of regional perspectives. 'Recognised and active' Regional Bodies must meet mandatory, live-activity indicators.

(b) **INOFO** is entitled to one (1) reserved seat, reflecting its specific constituency role.

(c) In each major geographical area where there is no recognised Regional Body, rules shall be established to ensure geographical representation in the World Board. The rules shall define the election of at least **one (1) representative from each major geographical area not covered by a Regional Body.**

The nomination of representatives to the reserved seats shall be the responsibility of the respective Regional Bodies or constituencies, in accordance with their own internal procedures.

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International shall ratify both the individuals nominated to occupy the seats allocated to Regional Bodies, INOFO and other regions, and the rules and procedures used to select them, ensuring overall accountability and consistency with the organisation's Statutes and values.

*Candidacies must be received at least three months before the regular General Assembly and must be endorsed by five members including an endorsement by the member organization with which the candidate is affiliated. A presentation of the candidates must be sent to the members at least 60 days before the General Assembly. The World Board chooses an Executive Board (see § 8) from amongst the elected members before the end of the General Assembly. The World Board may co-opt up to three further World Board members. The World Board may elect additional Executive Board members and replace them as appropriate during the term.*

### Rationale

Guaranteed seats for Regional Body and sector platform representatives on the World Board of IFOAM – Organics International help ensure fair and balanced global representation.

IFOAM – Organics International is a worldwide federation with members from very different regions, each facing unique agricultural, political, and market realities. Without formal seats, decision-making becomes concentrated in larger, wealthier, or more organised constituencies. Guaranteed representation ensures that every recognised region and sector platform has a voice at the highest level, strengthening legitimacy, fairness, and trust across the federation. All strategic deliberations will be based on structured regional/thematic consultation rather than based on purely individual mandates. The World Board members, including those occupying reserved seats, would not represent the interests of their region as a constituency delegate.

This kind of structured representation on the World Board improves contextual policy intelligence, continuity across election cycles, and better communication between global and regional levels. In a federated governance model, this kind of representation is not a privilege but a constitutional mechanism that protects inclusivity, prevents centralisation of influence, and ensures that global strategy reflects the realities of organic movements across all regions.

#### **World Board Recommendation Note:**

~~The World Board finds that the lack of a ceiling for the number of regions represented on the WB and the need for continual assessment of new, often overlapping regions, would create an unmanageable and costly governance for IFOAM – Organics International. The infeasibility of unlimited seats is not just about costs but also about functioning of the World Board and related processes.~~

Considering Motions 1a and 1b World Board believes that Motion 1a. provides a more robust and clearer basis for inclusive World Board elections with less risk for the organisation and its governance.

#### **Why the World Board does not support Motion 1b**

- Motion 1b proposes guaranteed WB seats for each recognised and active Regional Body. The World Board identifies the following fundamental problems with this approach.
  - **It duplicates the Council.** Motion 2 creates a Council of Regional Bodies and Self-Organised Structures to give RBs a formal governance voice. Replicating that function in the World Board itself creates structural overlap without the clarity of a properly designed bicameral system.
  - **The board would grow without limit.** Every newly recognised Regional Body automatically generates a seat. There is no ceiling. A continuously expanding board cannot function effectively as a strategic decision-making body.
  - **Regional boundaries cannot be cleanly defined.** Which body holds a seat, and who qualifies to nominate, depends entirely on regional definitions that are in many parts of the world contested, historically sensitive or unresolved. The motion cannot function without resolving these definitions first, and resolving them is not straightforward.
  - **Overlapping bodies produce double representation.** Some members belong to two Regional Bodies simultaneously. Under 1b they would nominate candidates for two separate seats, creating unequal voting influence with no mechanism to address it.

- **Large parts of the world have no Regional Body.** Gap seat provisions require prior agreement on which areas are unrepresented, — which returns to the boundary problem above.
- **'Active' cannot be easily defined or enforced.** Regional Bodies differ enormously in capacity, legal form and level of activity. Setting and applying an activity threshold consistently, and revoking seats when it is not met, is politically and operationally very difficult in practice.
- **Uneven capacity entrenches existing imbalances.** Each Regional Body must run its own nomination process. Well-resourced bodies will engage far more effectively than others, reinforcing rather than correcting current inequalities.
- **No fallback if the GA refuses to ratify a nominee.** The motion requires GA ratification of nominees but provides no procedure for the case where ratification is refused, leaving a potential vacancy with no resolution.

## 7.4.1. MOTION 2 | Council of Regional Bodies and [other Self-Organized Structures](#)

### ■ 2/3 MAJORITY — STATUTES CHANGE

#### Motion text

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to:

#### **1. Establish a Council of Regional Bodies and [other Self-Organized Structures](#) by:**

1. Amending § 4 of the Statutes (Organs) to add the Council of Regional Bodies and [other Self-Organized Structures](#) as a fourth organ of the Federation, reading:

#### **4. Organs**

The Federation's organs are the General Assembly, the World Board, the Executive Board, **and the Council of Regional Bodies and [other Self-Organized Structures](#)**. The Executive Director carries out their decisions.

2. Inserting a new § [11a] into the Statutes establishing the Council, as follows:

#### **§ 11a — Council of Regional Bodies and [other Self-Organized Structures](#)**

**Composition:** The Council comprises one representative per recognised and active Regional Body, one representative per recognised Constituency, and one representative per recognised Thematic / Subsector Group. Representatives are designated by their respective body in accordance with its own internal governance procedures.

**Chair:** The Council elects its Chair by simple majority of its members. The Chair shall serve for a term aligned with the World Board term. The Chair of the Council ~~will sit as an observer in the World Board shall serve as a member of the World Board in accordance with §7(c).~~ The Chair may not simultaneously hold another elected position on the World Board or Executive Board.

#### **Mandate:**

The Council shall:

- Exercise co-decision rights on major content positions as defined in new § 11b of the statutes.
- Contribute to strategic orientation and governance matters;
- Conduct assessments of regional and global initiatives that affect the organic movement and provide its findings to the World Board;
- Identify issues impacting the organic movement globally and at regional level, and bring them to the attention of the World Board;
- Develop and propose positions and recommended actions to the World Board on matters within its mandate;

**Limits:** The Council does not substitute the World Board. It does not exercise executive or management functions and is not involved in day-to-day operational decision-making. Its role is complementary to, and not in competition with, the World Board.

**Functioning:** The World Board establishes Rules of Procedure for the Council, including meeting frequency, quorum, [definition of active & operational Regional Body](#) and consultation timelines. [The next regular GA will formally ratify the RoP.](#) Minutes of World Board meetings shall be made accessible to Council members under applicable confidentiality rules. Vice versa minutes of the Council are made available to the WB. Where the World Board proposes decisions that significantly and directly affects the mandate or resources of Regional Bodies, Constituency Groups, and Thematic Groups, it shall consult the Council in advance. The World Board is not bound by the outcome of such consultation but shall document its response to the Council's views.

**Support:** IFOAM – Organics International provides institutional and logistical support to the Council presenting issues and generating dialogue in timely and professional way conducive to effective participation and co-creation.

### **Rationale**

The existing 'Network Council' has operated informally and without formal governance status. Formalising it as an organ of the Federation gives it predictable standing, clear mandate, and genuine leverage to contribute to strategic and political decisions — without creating dual executive authority. The council provides a new entry point for regional, thematic and constituency groups into IFOAM's work, including the work of the World Board, increasing their influence in IFOAM and improving the work of the World Board, while also increasing exchange and co-creation across our network. The Council Chair's [seat observer position](#) on the WB creates a structural bridge between the regional/sectoral dimension and global governance. Clarity on mandates and roles provides clear accountability for coordination and consultation.

**Statutes sections affected:** § 4 (Organs); new § 11a. Cross-reference: § 7 for Council Chair's WB [seatobserver status](#).

## **2. Define Council's Co-Decision Rights on Major Content Positions**

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International resolves to insert a new § 11b into the Statutes establishing co-decision rights of the Council, as follows:

### **§ 11b — Council Co-Decision**

**Scope:** 'Major content positions' for the purpose of this article are defined as formal IFOAM policy positions on organic agriculture standards, food systems, global declarations and alliances or environmental policy intended for public advocacy;

**WB-initiated positions:** Where the World Board has adopted a major content position, it shall transmit the adopted text to the Council without delay. The following two-stage review process applies:

**First stage — Council vote within 14 days:** The Council shall vote on the position within fourteen (14) days of transmission. A quorum of at least half of the Council members must participate for the vote to be valid. If the Council approves by simple majority, the position is confirmed. If the Council fails to reach a quorum or to submit a vote within the 21-day deadline, the position is deemed approved.

**Second stage — Return and final Council vote:** If the Council rejects the position by simple majority in the first stage, the position is returned to the World Board. The World Board may adopt the position unchanged or modify it in light of the Council's objections. The (modified or unchanged) position is then resubmitted to the Council for a final vote within **14 days**. In this second stage, the Council may only reject the position by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of its members (subject to quorum as above). If the Council fails to reach this threshold or to submit a vote within the deadline, the position is deemed approved.

**Quorum:** At least half of the recognised and active Council members must participate in any vote for it to be valid. The World Board shall establish quorum rules in the Council's Rules of Procedure, including provisions for abstentions and no-response.

**Council-initiated positions:** The Council may, by 2/3 of its members, adopt its own positions on matters within its mandate. Council positions on major content matters shall be transmitted to the World Board and shall be considered as IFOAM positions only upon approval by the World Board. Where the World Board declines to approve, it shall record its reasons and transmit them to the Council within thirty (30) days.

**Urgency:** In cases of genuine urgency, the World Board may adopt a provisional position without prior Council review, provided it notifies the Council immediately and the Council is given the opportunity to review the position within seven (7) days of adoption.

**Dispute:** Where persistent disagreement exists between the Council and the World Board on a major content position, either body may refer the matter to the next General Assembly.

# 7.5. Part III - Subsidiarity

## 7.5.1. MOTION 3 | Subsidiarity in Regional Representation

### ■ \_SIMPLE MAJORITY

#### Motion Text

#### 1. Subsidiarity in Regional Representation

The General Assembly asks the World Board to establish working procedures, that in detail describe the following:

1. While IFOAM – Organics International leads in global affairs, including multilateral and intergovernmental fora, global policy processes and international partnerships and events, in regions with a well-established and active Regional Body, the Regional Body shall lead in regional affairs, including:
  - o External representation,
  - o Political advocacy,
  - o Institutional relations

[Regional Bodies are responsible for inclusive, transparent member consultations in the region.](#)

2. These working procedures will also describe roles in promotion of the brand in regional activities.
3. Where IFOAM – Organics International conducts regional advocacy or representation activities IFOAM – Organics International shall liaise with members or recognised Regional Bodies in the relevant region.
4. Where IFOAM – Organics International develops projects and initiatives or engages in global campaigns involving direct intervention in one or more regions, IFOAM – Organics International will liaise with recognised Regional Bodies, INOFO and relevant members in the regions regarding development, implementation and dedicated leadership for projects, avoiding competition and maximising synergies.
5. Regional Bodies recognise the leading role of IFOAM – Organics International in global affairs. Regional Bodies will liaise and align with IFOAM – Organics International on any initiative, events and campaign that will have a global impact.

#### Rationale

The principle of subsidiarity requires placing decision-making as close as possible to those impacted by decision making. Empowerment and value creation close to members is also important in building our movement.

In regions with a recognised and active Regional Body, that Regional Body is usually best placed to represent IFOAM at regional level. They possess knowledge of local political contexts, cultural realities and regional membership dynamics. IFOAM – Organics International may conduct regional advocacy or representation activities worldwide but in close coordination with, respect for and by agreement with recognised Regional Bodies. Recognised Regional Bodies that are still in development may request support from IFOAM – Organics International in carrying out such activities. Global contexts – such as multilateral and intergovernmental fora, global policy processes, initiatives and international partnerships – remain the responsibility of IFOAM – Organics International.

Regional Bodies will only take activities in that field in coordination with IFOAM – Organics International.

## **2. Engagement and alignment with Thematic Groups**

IFOAM – Organics International seeks alignment and active involvement of recognised thematic groups in the development of global positions, campaigns and initiatives relevant to their scope.

### **Rationale**

Equally, recognised thematic groups will liaise and align with IFOAM – Organics International on any initiative, event or campaign that connects to their area of scope.

## 7.5.2. Motion 4 | Structural Distinction: Sector **Groups Platforms** / Constituencies vs. Thematic Groups

■ **\_SIMPLE MAJORITY** — Statutes amendment required only if § 11 reference to “Sector Platforms” is updated

### **Motion text.**

The General Assembly instructs the World Board to adopt a formal typology of **Self-Organized StructuresSector Platforms** distinguishing between (A) Constituency Groups and (B) Thematic Groups, as defined above, and to establish clear criteria and requirements for recognising and approving the functioning status of each type. The World Board shall develop and publish these criteria within six months of this resolution and shall report on the reclassification of all existing structures to the next regular General Assembly.

### **Type A — Constituency Groups**

Constituency Groups represent a major, distinct constituency directly within the organic value chain — for example organic farmers (INOFO), processors and traders, retailers, or consumers. Their defining characteristic is that they represent a broad, cross-regional membership constituency rather than a single thematic or technical focus. Constituency Groups are eligible for a reserved constituency seat on the World Board under § WB-1(b). They are full members of the Council and participate in co-decisions. This would require approval of the GA through an amendment to Policy #23.

### **Type B — Thematic / Subsector Groups**

Thematic Groups focus on a specific technical, sectoral, or issue-based domain — for example seeds, apiculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, or technological innovation (current examples include IAHA, Seeds Platform, TIPI). They function primarily as knowledge and coordination networks within the IFOAM **familynetwork**. Thematic Groups are members of the Council and participate in its advisory and co-decision functions. They are not eligible for a constituency seat on the World Board.

## Motion 8 – Organic Scientific Expert Panel

■ **SIMPLE MAJORITY** — no statutes change required at this stage, as the World Board may establish advisory committees under § 8 of the current statutes

### Motion text.

The General Assembly of IFOAM – Organics International directs the World Board to [explore the](#) ~~establishment~~ an Organic Scientific Expert Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to advise and support the World Board, the Council, and the organisation as a whole with independent scientific knowledge and expertise relevant to organic agriculture, food systems, and related natural, formal, social, and applied sciences. The Panel shall provide scientific grounding for IFOAM's advocacy positions and content work. [The World Board shall report its findings to the next regular General Assembly in 2027.](#)

~~The World Board shall define the Panel's composition, mandate, and working procedures within six months of adoption of this motion and shall report to the next regular General Assembly. The Panel will be appointed by the World Board. This motion should be implemented within the term of the next World Board.~~

### Rationale:

IFOAM plays a leading global role in advocating for science-based recognition of organic agriculture. A dedicated Expert Panel, independent of any specific Thematic Group or Regional Body, strengthens the credibility of IFOAM's policy positions by ensuring they are grounded in current scientific evidence. The Panel complements rather than replaces the Thematic Groups by providing a dedicated, independent scientific interface to the World Board and Council.

# General Assembly Report 2026

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