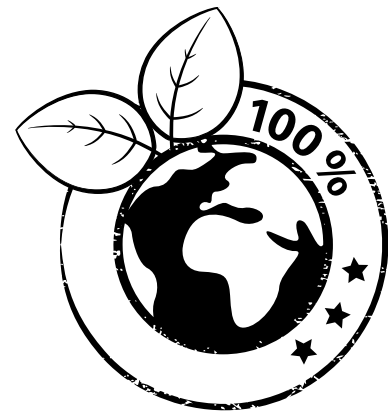


# FACTSHEET: ORGANIC FRAMEWORKS AND STRUCTURES



## Overview of frameworks

There is no single set of standards that is universally accepted by all countries for organic agricultural principles and their application through production, processing, labelling and marketing practices. There are international and regional frameworks that provide guidelines, but these are not prescriptive. Often countries do not legislate production methods and so certification is needed to verify production claims. Some countries and regions have set their own national organic standards, which are used by third-party certification agencies. International and regional standards play a critical role in ensuring the quality of organically produced goods, and enable entry into external markets. Demand for organic products is growing rapidly and Africa is well poised to take advantage of this market.

## International guidelines and regional organic standards

There are several bodies that provide guidelines for organic production, processing, marketing and labelling. These guidelines are voluntary and include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development–United Nations Environment Programme with its Best Practices for Organic Policy and Organic Equivalence Tools<sup>1</sup> and the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which sets food safety standards.<sup>2</sup> The International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) Organics International, with members in more than 100 countries, has influenced guidelines, codified standards and helped to enforce rules related to organic production. Its standard is the base for many national-level organic standards. Main regional standards are the European Union Organic Standards, the Pacific Organic Standards, the Asia Regional Organic Standards and the East African Organic Product Standards.

Some national standards with significant organic market share are the United States Department of Agriculture Organic Certification (NOP), Bio Suisse and the Japanese

## MAJOR CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Standards for organic certification are typically drawn from the following organisations:

- **FOAM Standard:** IFOAM works in about 100 countries through more than 800 affiliate organisations. Its standards can be used for third-party certification, participatory guarantee systems and community supported agriculture. They consider the need for differentiated criteria in distinct locations.<sup>1</sup>
- **Naturland:** Established in 1982, Naturland's comprehensive standards require a full farm conversion, include requirements on social responsibility and have stringent regulations for stocking density and treatment of animals.<sup>1</sup>
- **Demeter Biodynamic® Farm Standard:** This beyond organic standards to emphasise that the farm must "meet its own needs from the living dynamic of the farm itself".<sup>1</sup>

Agricultural Standard (JAS). Private certification agencies align their standards of certification for organic production to the national or regional standards applicable for domestic, import and export trade. Significant certification organisations are Demeter International, Kiwa BCS Öko-Garantie GmbH, Control Union and Ecocert. >>

<sup>1</sup> Tung, O.J.L. 2018 *African Organic Product Standards for the African Continent? Prospects and limitations*. [Online] Available: <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/peij/v21n1/38.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### Organic standards and certification in Africa

There is no pan-African standard for organic agriculture and many countries do not even have national standards, which tends to marginalise this as a policy and investment choice on the continent. East Africa established the world's second regional set of standards for organic agriculture in 2007 covering Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.<sup>3</sup> This was developed through a public-private partnership with support from various United Nations bodies and IFOAM Organics International. Efforts were made to align standards to those of major export markets.

The most common standards applied in Africa are those of the European Union, the United States and Japan.

### National-level policies and structures in African countries

In Africa, only Tunisia, Morocco and Uganda had adopted organic policies by end-2019 with Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sudan, Tanzania and Togo in the process of adopting national organic policies.<sup>4</sup> All of these do, however, have some sort of product standard for organic production and have active national organic agriculture movements.<sup>5</sup> There is an ongoing refinement of proposed regional policies, which are currently under review.

In Africa, AfrONET represents organic stakeholders and aims to support the expansion of the organic movement, strengthen the networks between different countries and lobby for enabling policy. In Southern Africa, IFOAM Organics International works through the IFOAM Southern African Network (ISAN) to promote the uptake of organic agriculture in the region. ISAN represents countries within the Southern African Development Community. The Southern African countries of South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and have National Organic Agriculture Movements (NOAMs) that advocate for organic policies, support networking among their members, and provide standards for organic certification for the national market. These standards are adapted from IFOAM Organics International standards.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2007. *New standard for East African Organic Products to be launched at Tanzanian conference*. [Online] Available: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PressReleaseArchive.aspx?ReferenceDocId=8421>.

<sup>4</sup> Auerbach, R., Oelofse, M., Mentz-LaGrange, S., Ross, A. & de Grassi, A. 2019. Assessment for the African Union Commission of North, West, Central and Southern Africa, with a view to mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture. Available by email: [Raymond.auerbach@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Raymond.auerbach@mandela.ac.za).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**The Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Southern Africa (KHSAs)** is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA), a collaborative country-led partnership funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and non-governmental organisations across Africa. The KCOA aims to scale up adoption of organic farming practices through five knowledge hubs in Africa over a four-year period.

The South African-based **Sustainability Institute** supports project implementation in southern Africa. Activities are focused in Zambia, led by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Zambia; in Namibia led by the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) in collaboration with the Namibian Organic Association (NOA); and in South Africa led by the South African Organic Sector Organisation (SAOSO). The project will extend to Malawi in 2021. The other hubs are implemented by GIZ in North, West and Eastern and Central Africa. For more information about KHSAs, contact the Project Director Angela Coetsee on [angela@sustainabilityinstitute.net](mailto:angela@sustainabilityinstitute.net).

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