



Facilitating Group Certification with modern ICT

Nuremberg, 12th February 2020. Organic Services, the international consultancy for the organic food industry, is looking forward to meeting BIOFACH visitors from around the globe at stand 653 in hall 1. Featuring their software tool Group Integrity – an online solution for the management of internal control systems (ICS) for small-scale farmer groups – a supporting event will be held on Thursday, 13th February at 5 pm in NCC Ost, room Prag: “Professionalising group certification with Group Integrity”.

In our highly industrialised and digitalised world of today, it is difficult to comprehend that one third of the world's population still makes their living from farming. More than 70 percent of all farms worldwide comprise less than one hectare and are operated by individuals or families. Nevertheless, it remains difficult for most of them to participate in organic, fair-trade and other standard-regulated export markets where administrative requirements and certification costs can be quite overwhelming. How can they be supported? “We are convinced that the organic sector cannot only supply healthy, nutritious food for everyone, but enable all parties including smallholders to make an honest living on which they can build a sustainable future”, says Gerald A. Herrmann, director of Organic Services. For him, group certification is crucial to grant fair market chances to small-scale farmers.

Group certification is the key for market access of small-scale farmers

Group certification allows a group of farmers to share costs and efforts for certifications so that external certifiers only have to inspect a small percentage of the farms as spot checks on a yearly basis. The most important prerequisite for the concept to work is a well-functioning, reliable Internal Control System (ICS) among all group members. Contributing to their mission of strengthening the resilience, voice and livelihood of smallholders, Organic Services has developed Group Integrity as an ICS management tool.

Managing internal control systems with modern ICT

Group Integrity is an affordable, easy-to-use tool that facilitates and stabilises the management of a group's ICS. Seven years after its launch at BIOFACH2013, it helps grower groups worldwide to transform into well-structured, transparent and reliable market entities. Businesses sourcing from contract farmers can also use the software to improve their internal audit and certification procedures. With Group Integrity, group compliance with quality standards such as organic or fair-trade can easily be administered, checked and proven to third-party certification bodies. The online-based system requires no installation and thus prevents data loss. It can be adjusted according to its users' needs and is updated on a regular basis. Apart from increasing the overall likeliness of successful certification, Group Integrity streamlines organisations and helps them save expenses and improve economics.



Group Certification may soon become applicable for farmers in the North

In the past, group certification was restricted to small scale farmers in the South, which stems from the concept being a development aid measure. However, it may soon be expanded to small scale farmers in the North as well, which is why operators from around the globe should get to know Group Integrity. The new EU organic regulation 2018/848 intends to implement a system for 'Groups of Operators' in general. This would benefit eco-minded small farmers worldwide for whom, so far, organic certification simply does not pay off yet. In our modern age where biodiversity and natural resources are at risk everywhere, each measure to support small farms to generate a good income with sustainable farming methods should be promoted – independent where the farms are.

About Organic Services

Organic Services is an international consultancy firm based in Germany. Its services enhance sustainability, integrity and business success throughout the organic food industry. Since its foundation in 2004, the company has specialised in providing software-based integrity solutions like Group Integrity, which enable producers, processors, traders, certifiers and authorities to manage traceability, quality, auditing and certification processes along the supply chain. Following an interdisciplinary approach, the consultancy also offers strategic and organisational business development, market expertise, project development, policy advice and organises conferences. As a competent partner, Organic Services helped to set up the BIOFACH fairs in China, Brazil and India and has been organising the BIOFACH Congress in Nuremberg since 2006.

BIOFACH-Events by Organic Services

Fraud, gaps and loopholes: private and public counteractions and enforcement to complement regulations	13.02.2020 / 1 - 2:45 pm / Room St. Petersburg / NCC Ost
Professionalising group certification with Group Integrity	13.02.2020 / 5 - 5:45 pm / Room Prag / NCC Ost
Professionalising small and local certifiers with Ecert Basic	14.02.2020 / 11 - 11:45 am / Room Prag / NCC Ost
Promoting excellence and fighting fraud with Check Organic	14.02.2020 / 12 - 12:45 pm / Room Prag / NCC Ost

Contact Organic Services

Gerald A. Herrmann / mobile: +49 177 5521 460 / g.herrmann@organic-services.com

www.organic-services.com / www.check-organic.com / www.group-integrity.com / www.ecert-basic.com

Our software solutions for the organic sector

