# ARGE BIO Standard

Version 5 | November 2021

# Content





ARGE BIO Standard

# I. Preamble



## ARGE BIO

ARGE BIO is a non-profit association whose members are organic farmers, processors, traders and service providers in the organic sector.

ARGE BIO strives for its vision of a peaceful and liveable future for all people. This requires a fundamental change in the social and political framework. 100 % organic agriculture is an elementary and indispensable part of achieving this vision and thus remains the focus of the association's efforts. ARGE BIO wants to fascinate people and organisations for organic and to promote organic competence on all levels.

Inseparably linked to this, ARGE BIO points out developments that contradict the association's values, formulates proposals for improvement and puts this down on paper, among others things in the form of private law standards. In addition, ARGE BIO demands and promotes corresponding changes at the legal level.

To achieve its vision, ARGE BIO seeks allies in and outside the organic movement. In the resulting network, ARGE BIO sees its function as acting as a connecting link between the actors and ensuring that these connections are partnership-oriented, long-term and sustainable.

## The Standard

As the decision-making committee, the board of directors of ARGE BIO is responsible for the objectives and test criteria described on the following pages, as well as for the specified test process including the evaluation system of the ARGE BIO Standard.

As described, the conversion of food production to organic production is an indispensable part of creating a peaceful and liveable future for all people. The promotion of the production of organic products in a comprehensive manner, as well as supporting measures with which this valuable food can be made increasingly available to the people, is a logical consequence of this. At the same time, it was and is necessary to protect the organic movement through the regulations of the ARGE BIO Standard from harm.

The present standard is based on the legally prescribed organic regulation and defines criteria beyond the law, in order to guarantee the safety of organic products on the one hand, and on the other hand, to fulfil further consumer expectations to an appropriate extent, without harming organic production.

For this purpose, ARGE BIO has defined all regulations in module 1, which deals with the safety of organic products, as KO criteria for the use of one of the trademarks of ARGE BIO. In all other modules, the requirements are generally formulated as criteria that allow the assessment of the degree of enhanced credibility, special sustainability impact or regional added value that goes beyond the legal requirements. Individual criteria in Modules 2 to 10 are identified as minimum requirements. This means that they must be met in any case in order to initiate an evaluation procedure.

The standard is a living work that is continuously being developed. In doing so, ARGE BIO is guided by the core values of ecological viability, safety, credibility, truthfulness, transparency, responsibility, consistency and respect.

## The operational implementation

The company LebensmittelFairSicherung GmbH (LMFS) is in charge of the operational implementation of verifying compliance with the ARGE BIO Standard. LMFS is a 100 % subsidiary organisation of ARGE BIO and as such offers services to ensure comprehensive quality specifications for organic food.

On behalf of ARGE BIO, LMFS weaves a comprehensive safety net for the protection of the organic movement on the basis of the present ARGE BIO Standard and thereby evaluates organic products on all levels with regard to their special values and impacts. For this purpose, LMFS does not only use classical instruments of quality assurance, but looks for the most suitable means that are adapted to the situation and can be implemented in a practical way.

In its daily work, a team of employees experienced in organic monitors compliance with the ARGE BIO Standard by checking documents and final packaging as well as through on-site audits, monitoring measures and, above all, intensive communication with the involved actors worldwide. In accordance with the core values of ARGE BIO, the responsibilities remain where they belong: with the individual organic actors along the value chain as well as with the organic control bodies on site. If LMFS intervenes in the production or control process in a regulatory and supportive way, this happens consistently, transparently and with respect for the special value of organic products.

## The benefits

The offer to use the ARGE BIO Standard is directed in particular at those responsible for organic products in retail, but also at quality-conscious organic processing companies and other quality label providers in the organic sector.

With the implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard, whose regulations all go beyond the legal requirements, the following benefits are guaranteed, among others:

- ✓ Organic products that are checked on a case-by-case basis, and not just as a random sample, to ensure that the legal requirements are met, and for which additional rules are in place that eliminate weaknesses in the control system
- ✓ Organic products for which it is known in advance and on an ongoing basis where they come from, by whom they are processed and who is responsible for which steps in the overall process, and which have been subjected to an overall system check that ensures that there are no gaps or breaks in the organic control chain
- ✓ Organic products for which the linkage of the control processes between the individual stages of the value chain has been ensured and for which the information from the various stages has been checked for plausibility
- ✓ Organic products that clearly meet more than the legal requirements
- ✓ Organic products that are evaluated with regard to additional expectations (e.g. on the part of consumers and various opinion-forming organisations) with a comprehensible system, whereby their added value or additional benefits can be proven and communicated to the public and on the packaging
- ✓ Organic products and actors responsible for their production, which can be compared with others in terms of compliance with the requirements of the ARGE BIO Standard





# II. Foundations and scope of application



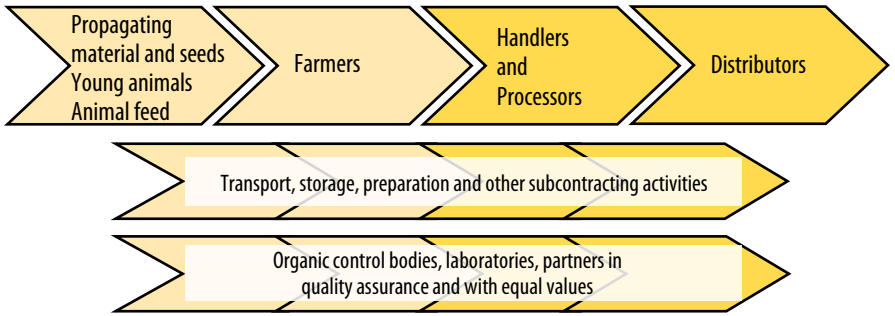
## Foundations


Organic food is produced in the area of tension between a wide variety of requirements:
On the one hand, it is a matter of using this type of land management to treat the elementary foundations of life such as soil, water, air and natural and cultural landscapes with such care that they are preserved for generations to come. On the other hand, the growing world population is also increasing the demand for food. At the same time, consumers of organic products rightly demand honesty, but also transparency and traceability when it comes to the additional benefits that can be expected from organic products.
Organic production is a legally regulated production process - from seeds and young animals to final packaging and sale - which is monitored by a comprehensive, state-accredited control system. Compliance with and overarching control of the legal requirements for organic farming (EU, Swiss or regulations recognised as equivalent by the EU or Switzerland) is unparalleled and a stable foundation on which ARGE BIO can build its additional safeguards as well as the evaluation system for the added values and additional benefits contained in the organic product. On a private law basis, the ARGE BIO Standard enables comprehensive evaluation of the integrity of the organic products at hand by observing the processes in advance or in real time and by linking the test results between the process steps.


## Scope of application

### Cross-stage and holistic approach

The present standard and the corresponding objectives, as well as the test criteria listed in detail, are to be applied at all stages along the value chain of an organic product. The implementation throughout the value chain is to be understood as a process.
Starting with the actors in the processing, handling and trade sectors, all upstream sectors are also gradually involved in testing and evaluation. End-to-end implementation of the testing system is not only important with regard to the safety of organic products, but also concerning evaluation criteria such as animal welfare, biodiversity or humus formation, because the fulfilment of the criteria formulated for this purpose is most effective at the agricultural level. System participants are therefore called upon to proactively ensure that it is possible to contractually involve all their relevant upstream and downstream stages. This responsibility for involvement does not apply if the actors at the upstream and/or downstream levels are already actively involved in the system themselves.
The standard fully applies also to organisations that carry out activities as subcontractors on behalf of the system participants.




### Integration of existing certification measures and recognition of equivalencies

In the sense of economic efficiency and expediency, duplications of effort are avoided and the integration of existing information and control systems into the implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard is reinforced. The same applies to the use of synergies through the binding cooperation of system participants with value partners, i.e. organisations that pursue similar or the same goals as those described in this standard.
For this purpose, Appendix IV describes which test criteria can be considered fulfilled in case of compliance with other standards. System participants are entitled to submit further standards to ARGE BIO for examination with regard to equivalence in the fulfilment of individual test criteria. The decision on this as well as the inclusion of standards or individual test criteria recognised as fulfilled from these in Appendix IV is the sole responsibility of ARGE BIO.

### Consideration of existing responsibilities

The regulations of the ARGE BIO Standard include a monitoring of the functionality of the organic control procedure as well as other safeguarding measures (e.g. by investigation institutes or certification procedures of other private label providers, which are declared on the organic product). If deviations are detected, those that fall within the area of responsibility of the organic control bodies are submitted to them for a decision. With regard to all other external safeguarding measures, the system participants are requested to obtain corresponding decisions from the responsible organisations. For this purpose, corresponding regulations can be found in the mutual declarations of commitment.



# ARGE BIO Standard

# III. Guidelines overview



## Core values of ARGE BIO

Sustainability
Ecological viability
Safety
Respect
Truthfulness
Credibility
Transparency
Responsibility
Consistency
Effectiveness
Economic expediency

Soil (life) Water and Air Environment → Propagating material and seeds Young animals Animal feed → Farmers → Handlers and Processors → Distributors → Consumers

Transport, storage, preparation and other subcontracting activities

Organic control bodies, laboratories, partners in quality assurance and with equal values

**Module 1: Safety for organic products**

1.1. Compliance with legal requirements for the production of organic products
1.2. Completing the control chain
1.3. Product and process safety
1.4. Security of origin and safe provenance
1.5. Procurement and supply security

**Module 2: Enhanced credibility for organic products**

2.1. Consolidation and monitoring of the functionality of the legal organic control system
2.2. Compliance with fundamental organic principles in agricultural production
2.3. Assessment parameters for areas not satisfactorily regulated by law
2.4. Residues and limits
2.5. Other legitimate added value expectations
2.6. Transparency and duty of truthfulness
2.7. Implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard throughout the entire creation process
2.8. Organic engagement of system participants

- Module 3: **Increased organic competence / extended organic know-how**
- Module 4: **Organic with special sustainability**
- Module 5: **Fair Organic**
- Module 6: **Organic with regional added value**
- Module 7: **Organic with a particularly health-beneficial effect**
- Module 8: **Organic with a particularly culture-promoting effect**
- Module 9: **Organic with extended animal welfare standard**
- Module 10: **Rules for non-food organic / organic-compatible products**

## Test criteria

The test criteria of this standard obligate the system participants to fully comply with the specifications in Module 1 and enable an evaluation of the participants and their products according to the parameters named in Modules 2 to 10.

## Evaluation

A status evaluation is carried out:

**Module 1:** Delivery permit yes/no

**Module 2 to 10:**
how much added credibility, organic know-how, sustainability, fairness, regionality, … can be attributed to the organic product?





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: **SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

### 1.1 Compliance with the legal requirements for the production of organic products

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1.1** Compliance with legal requirements **related to system participants**<br>As a basis for fulfilling the ARGE BIO Standard, the system participants comply with the applicable legal regulations on organic production.<br>All test criteria formulated in this chapter serve to evaluate in advance and during the process at the level of the system participants, whether the existing certifications, the installed organisational processes, the personnel competences and the planned monitoring measures are suitable and sufficient to ensure compliance with the requirements of the legally defined regulations. | 1. The person in charge of organic products shall be acquainted with the current EU legislation on organic farming or the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance and copies of the legal texts shall be available the operation (in printed form, electronically or as a link).<br>2. System participants shall hold an organic certificate valid for the EU or for Switzerland that was issued by an organic control body in German, English, French, Italian, Slovenian or Spanish and it shall be available in printed or in electronic form.<br>3. The control reports issued as a result of the organic control shall be made available.<br>4. As of the second organic control, the following shall apply: If the submitted control report does not contain any information on a mass balance by the organic control body, the system participants shall report on when a mass balance was last carried out in the course of the organic audit as well as on the related results.<br>5. All measures contained in the control report of the organic control body concerning documented deviations that are relevant for the organic product under consideration have been fulfilled or shall be fulfilled within a time limit set by *ARGE BIO*.<br>6. The way corrective measures imposed by the organic control body are handled shall be documented or a corresponding documentation shall be provided within a period determined by *ARGE BIO*.<br>7. The person appointed by the system participants to check the organic certificates (including batch-related accompanying certificates) and the import documents shall be qualified.<br>8. There shall be a responsible person in the operation who is informed or can show a document describing in which cases and how the organic control body is informed of doubts about organic conformity or other deviations that endanger organic integrity.<br>9. To meet the formal requirements, outgoing documents accompanying the product (delivery notes and invoices) shall be presented with the appropriate organic labelling.<br>10. Organic control points with regard to the risk of contamination of organic products as well as of mixing or confusion between organic and conventional goods or the risk of fraud and sabotage shall be known, recorded in writing and safeguarded by appropriate measures and/or work instructions.<br>11. Additional measures regarding organic control points specified by *ARGE BIO* for the risks described in the previous point shall be implemented in due time.<br>12. In case of detection of non-permitted active substances or active substances defined as undesirable in Module 2 in the organic product under consideration, *ARGE BIO* shall be informed and a clarification of the cause shall be initiated in cooperation with *ARGE BIO*.<br>13. In the course of audits conducted by *ARGE BIO*, no deviations from the legal requirements for the production of organic products shall be found. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no<br>3. KO: yes/no<br>4. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>5. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>6. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>7. KO: yes/no<br>8. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>9. KO: yes/no<br>10. KO: yes/no<br>11. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>12. KO: yes/no<br>13. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 1.1 Compliance with the legal requirements for the production of organic products

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1.2** Compliance with legal requirements **related to the product as well as upstream stages**<br>The test criteria formulated in this chapter are aimed at the organic product under consideration and at the suppliers of ingredients or raw materials associated with the organic product under consideration. The objective is to evaluate at the level of the system participants both in advance and during the process, whether the existing certifications, the installed organisational processes, the personnel competencies and the planned monitoring measures are suitable and sufficient to ensure compliance with the requirements of the legally defined regulations related to the product under consideration and the actors at the upstream stage. | 1. The planned products and / or relevant recipes shall comply with the legal requirements for the production of organic products. Associated specifications for compound ingredients and the necessary GMO-free declarations of assurance for conventional ingredients shall be available.<br>2. The information on the planned or relevant final packaging shall comply with the legal requirements for the production of organic products. If the organic product under consideration is marketed online, the following shall be visible to the purchaser before conclusion of the contract: The EU organic logo together with the associated mandatory information (code of the organic control body and information on the origin of the agricultural raw materials "where grown in origin") or, for organic products produced according to the Swiss Organic Ordinance, the code of the organic control body of the last processing site.<br>3. For all suppliers of the system participants, organic certificates valid for the EU or for Switzerland that were issued by an organic control body in German, English, French, Italian, Slovenian or Spanish shall be available.<br>4. For all imports from third countries carried out by the system participants, the necessary certificates of inspection (COI) shall be available with the signature of the organic control body of the importer or the corresponding information can be viewed via TRACES.NT.<br>5. For system participants or suppliers of system participants who make use of shortened conversion periods, the following shall apply to the marketing of products that can be sold as organic ahead of schedule due to a shortening of the conversion period: *ARGE BIO* shall be provided with the justification for the shortening of the conversion period as well as with the associated documents.<br>6. If system participants purchase goods from organic farms in group certification for the organic product under consideration, the following shall apply: The information submitted to the organic control body for group certification concerning the organisational structure, training and control system including pesticide monitoring system will be made available to *ARGE BIO* upon request. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no<br>3. KO: yes/no<br>4. KO: yes/no<br>5. KO: yes/no<br>6. KO: yes/no/ deadline |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: **SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

### 1.2 Completing the control chain

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.2.1 Inclusion of stages that are not covered by the control obligation in all cases**<br>Not all organic regulations, which are recognised by the EU as equivalent, guarantee a fully comprehensive inclusion of all actors involved in the invoicing process throughout the process chain. In this context, ARGE BIO formulates regulations in the sense of actual comparability and for reasons of security. | 1. All suppliers and customers of the system participants who invoice for the organic product under consideration shall be integrated into the organic control system through organic certification, even if the organic product is packaged or labelled ready for sale and is not further processed. | 1. KO: yes/no/ deadline |
| **1.2.2 Inclusion of conventional operating units**<br>ARGE BIO supports the full conversion of all organisations involved in the creation of organic products. The underlying basic attitude as well as the limited physical possibilities of deliberate or unintentional mixing and contamination with conventional goods decisively reduce the risk. | 1. During the organic controls and the inspections commissioned or carried out by *ARGE BIO,* facilities that have not yet fully converted all their operations to organic production shall disclose their operations without limitations. All solicited information and data will be provided or transmitted upon request.<br>2. The clear separation between organic and non-organic goods shall also be reflected in the inventory management and all shipping documents. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no |
| **1.2.3 Simultaneous cultivation of the same crops on conversion areas and recognised areas**<br>ARGE BIO does not intend to hinder organic farmers in expanding their organic areas, but explicitly welcomes this.<br>The safeguarding measures to avoid intentional or unintentional mixing and confusion in the case of simultaneous cultivation of visually indistinguishable crops are regulated differently in the national implementations and are in part difficult to understand. Therefore, ARGE BIO sees itself obliged to anchor restrictive requirements in this regard. | 1. The following shall apply to unprocessed or slightly processed organic fruit and vegetables: In the case of simultaneous cultivation of annual plant products of the same species or varieties that cannot be visually distinguished by a layperson on both areas in conversion and fully recognised organic areas, the plant products from the recognised organic area have the same status as products grown on the area in conversion.<br>2. The following shall apply to unprocessed or slightly processed organic fruit and vegetables: In the case of simultaneous cultivation of perennial plant products of the same species both on areas in conversion and fully recognised organic areas, the plant products from the recognised organic area have the same status as products grown on the area in conversion, unless,<br>a) the harvesting and marketing of in-conversion products is demonstrably carried out under the supervision of an organic control body,<br>b) there is a system in place to separate recognised organic produce from in-conversion produce that is recognised as sufficient in the risk assessment of *ARGE BIO*, or<br>c) the information on the accompanying documents throughout the physical supply chain allows a clear traceability of the organic goods back to the field plot. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 1.2 Completing the control chain

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.2.4 Cross-stage identification of safety risks**<br>Unlike individual organic control bodies, which can "only" act as part of a chain of custody, *ARGE BIO*, as an organisation under private law, can identify and counteract corresponding safety risks at an early stage by actively surveying all organisations/persons involved in the production process and by taking a cross-stage view of the processes.<br>This chapter describes the information required for this purpose by the system participants as well as the required measures. | 1. Name, address and organic control body of all suppliers as well as subcontractors of the system participants (related to the organic product under consideration and the physical supply chain) are known and shall be named or made accessible to *ARGE BIO* for the purpose of traceability and completion of the supply chain.<br>2. In addition to the previous point, all suppliers who only invoice for the organic product under consideration (e.g. traders) as well as the customers of the system participants shall also be named and their responsibilities shall be disclosed.<br>3. All system participants shall ensure that their suppliers as well as their subcontractors are bound to comply with the ARGE BIO Standard by contract or via the purchasing specification or that they agree to comply within a period accepted by *ARGE BIO*.<br>4. If the system participants change suppliers (in relation to the organic product under consideration), this shall be announced in the form individually agreed with *ARGE BIO*.<br>5. In the case that system participants have involved subcontractors in their control system in connection with the organic product under consideration, *ARGE BIO* shall be informed about the date of the last control that was carried out there by an organic control body and the corresponding control report shall be submitted.<br>6. If, from the point of view of *ARGE BIO*, the information about the disclosed supply chain as well as the respective actors and / or their responsibilities results in security risks, measures to reduce or eliminate these shall be agreed together with *ARGE BIO*. These measures shall be implemented and respective notifications shall be submitted in the specified form and on time.<br>7. All regulations in Appendix I "Mutual declarations of commitment" for Module 1 "Safety for organic products" that are marked as relevant shall be signed by the system participants and submitted to *ARGE BIO*. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no<br>3. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>4. KO: yes/no<br>5. KO: yes/no<br>6. KO: yes/no<br>7. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 1.3 Product and process safety

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.3.1 Internal early risk detection**<br>When buying organic products, consumers rightly expect to obtain a product that is safe in every respect.<br>Because of the communicated organic control obligation, they do not only expect products with the promised organic quality at all levels of the production process, but also expect the organic products they put in their shopping baskets to be hygienically flawless, processed in a highly refined way and produced without risk to health.<br>In risk management "check-ups" and "early diagnoses" are much more efficient and cost-effective than repairing the damage after it is done. Therefore, with regard to product and process safety, system participants must be able to demonstrate a preventive system suitable for the respective operation.<br>*Note:*<br>Proof of compliance with food safety standards such as IFS, BRC or FSSC 22000 can be credited by ARGE BIO as fulfilment of part of the following test criteria. | 1. A suitable system for ensuring product and process safety, in particular with regard to health hazards, good manufacturing practice (GMP), traceability and hygiene shall be available or will be submitted within a period specified by *ARGE BIO*.<br>2. With the exception of farms, all actors dealing with unpacked food shall have the system required in the previous point in written form fulfilling the following minimum requirements:<br>a) There is an annual evaluation,<br>b) the responsible persons are named,<br>c) it contains a hazard analysis including a plan of action<br>d) as well as specifications for document control, complaint and crisis management.<br>3. In the course of audits conducted by *ARGE BIO*, no substantial deviations from internally defined system for product and process safety shall be found.<br>4. Together with *ARGE BIO*, options for risk reduction or elimination shall be weighed. Agreed corrective actions of defects and/or improvement measures shall be implemented, and the notifications agreed upon for this purpose shall be transmitted in the specified form and in due time for the production of the organic product under consideration. | 1. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>2. KO: yes/no<br>3. KO: yes/no<br>4. KO: yes/no/ deadline |
| **1.3.2 Compliance with agreed-upon specifications**<br>In order to observe assured product and process safety, it is essential that any intentional or forced change to the agreed product specifications is communicated as early as possible to *ARGE BIO*. | 1. There shall be compliance with the specifications of kind, provenance and other quality criteria and adherence to the agreed-upon product composition.<br>2. Planned changes to the specification shall be announced in a timely manner prior to implementation.<br>3. Forced changes to the specification shall be reported to *ARGE BIO* without delay. All documents and information shall be submitted for re-examination. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no<br>3. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 1.4 Security of origin and certified provenance

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.4.1 Cross-stage and cross-product documentation of raw material origins**<br>In addition to product and process safety, consumers can also rely on being as well informed as possible about the origin of the organic product. In many cases, food law regulations, among others, make it difficult to provide exact information about this on the individual packaging.<br>Nevertheless, the documentation of the actual origin of the raw materials through as many stages as possible is a decisive parameter in order to be able to provide more precise answers, at least in supplementary information or in the case of enquiries. At the same time, this documentation is indispensable in order to be able to initiate a rapid localisation of possible causes in the event of defects.<br>*Note:*<br>This objective as well as the following test criteria apply analogously to all conventional ingredients of agricultural origin of organic products. | 1. All system participants shall document the origin of the organic raw materials (in which country grown in origin) on the delivery and/or invoice documents and/or in raw material/product specifications and shall also require their suppliers to do so. If the inclusion of this information in the mentioned documents is not possible, *ARGE BIO* shall be provided with this information in another form.<br>2. If the information on the origin of individual components on the above or other documents contradict each other, this contradiction shall be resolved. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. KO: yes/no/ deadline |
| **1.4.2 Regulations for procurement from risk countries**<br>Among other things, ARGE BIO has made it one of its task to protect the organic movement from harm.<br>Criteria such as the accumulation of forged organic certificates or the involvement in so-called organic scandals in the past are the basis for the inclusion of individual countries in the ARGE BIO list of risk countries, which classifies certain origins of organic raw materials as increased risk and thus requiring special attention.<br>Product-specific and country-specific additional safeguards have to be provided for organic raw materials from these countries. | 1. For the purchase of agricultural raw materials from risk countries specified by ARGE BIO (see Appendix II as amended), the additional requirements specified by *ARGE BIO* for the provision of documents and/or information shall be met in due time. | 1. KO: yes/no/ deadline |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 1: SAFETY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 1.5 Procurement and supply security

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **1.5.1 Procurement and supply security**<br>Experience in implementing a safety net for organic products has led to the realisation that short-term sourcing and intentional or forced purchasing on the spot market poses an increased risk to the integrity of the organic product. Contract farming and long-term partnerships, on the other hand, represent a more stable and less risky form of organic commodity sourcing.<br>As minimum requirements for procurement and supply security for organic products, the following criteria are to be fulfilled. | 1. Based on an examination of possible delivery and procurement difficulties, a concept shall be available that describes how feared or imminent delivery and procurement difficulties are to be dealt with. Notifying *ARGE BIO* for the organic product under consideration shall be part of this concept.<br>2. In order to avoid delivery and procurement risks, in particular with regard to the absence of scandals and long-term producibility, an assessment according to module 2 "Enhanced credibility for organic products" of the ARGE BIO Standard shall be agreed to and the minimum requirements specified therein shall be met. | 1. KO: yes/no/ deadline<br>2. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.1 Consolidation and monitoring of the functionality of the legal organic control system

#### General information and objectives

**2.1.1 Evaluation criteria to consolidate and monitor the functionality of the legal organic control system.**

Due to legal requirements, the organisations involved in the production process of organic products are covered by mandatory organic controls. Cooperation between the individual organic control bodies is also clearly regulated. This form of process control is unique and an essential basis for consumer confidence in organic products.

The regulations of this first chapter on creating enhanced credibility for organic products take a closer look at all those circumstances in relation to the legal organic control system that can weaken the confidence of consumers and/or opinion-forming organisations or to which there are frequent queries or expressions of distrust.

For the issues identified in this way, confidence-enhancing measures are formulated accordingly. As a result, it is ascertained how many of these criteria, which go beyond the law, are implemented by the suppliers and, from this, it is evaluated how much more credibility in relation to the legal organic control system is contained in the organic product under consideration.

#### Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations

1. System participants shall ensure that an organic control is carried out at the operation at least once a year by an organic control body.
2. System participants shall ensure that an annual organic control is also carried out by an organic control body at the subcontractors they commission, with the exception of the cases regulated in 2.1.1.5 (storage and transport).
3. If organic certificates of the system participants or of their suppliers are issued with a validity period of more than 2 years, the issuing organic control body shall be required by the system participants to provide an annual update or, alternatively, to issue transaction certificates for the traded organic goods.
4. The actuality check of the organic certificates of the system participants as well as of their suppliers carried out by *ARGE BIO* shall confirm that these are/were valid at the time of the sale of organic products or the purchase of organic raw materials.
5. System participants shall require all organisations that transport and/or store organic products without transfer of ownership to integrate themselves in the organic control system by means of organic certification or the conclusion of an agreement as a subcontractor, even if the organic products are packaged or labelled ready for sale and are not further manipulated.
6. As proof of organic conformity, incoming and outgoing documents accompanying the product shall contain the code of the organic control body for the responsible company as well as a clear organic indication of the product or individual varieties.
7. The instrument of mass balance shall be used by the system participants, also beyond the organic control situation. In case of detected deviations, an analysis is carried out - in particular with regard to possible labelling errors and/or risks of confusion - from which preventive measures are derived.
8. Mass balance calculations carried out on the basis of an example selected by *ARGE BIO* at the system participants shall confirm the functionality of goods flow documentation and do not show any deviations or system errors.
9. In the case that system participants have a valid control contract with two organic control bodies at the same time, the underlying motives shall be explained and it shall be ensured that the respective organic control bodies have insight into the entire company and that the organic control bodies know about each other.
10. If necessary or upon request of *ARGE BIO*, system participants shall use the possibility to initiate a necessary clarification via their suppliers by its organic control body. The resulting findings (information and documents) shall be made available to *ARGE BIO*.
11. System participants shall demand from their organic control bodies that any exemptions and transition periods used are explicitly recorded in the protocol of the annual organic control.
12. System participants shall demand from their organic control bodies to fulfil their obligations – in particular when it comes to making necessary decisions (among other things, especially in the case of enquiries about cross checks) or to setting and adhering to deadlines.
13. System participants shall demand from their organic control bodies to make detected falsified organic certificates permanently visible in a publicly accessible form.

#### Evaluation

1. B3
2. D100
3. A2, D100
4. A2
5. D100
6. B3
7. B3
8. B3
9. A2
10. B3
11. B3
12. B3
13. B3





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.2 Compliance with fundamental organic principles in agricultural production

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.2.1 Soil fertility**<br>The fundamental principles of organic agriculture are the flagship for communicating the special value of organic products to consumers. Within the legal organic control procedure, individual fundamental principles are not or only indirectly checked. This weakens the confidence in organic agriculture in general, which is why ARGE BIO is striving for an additional assessment regarding the fulfilment of selected fundamental organic principles through various test criteria.<br><br>The preservation/promotion of soil fertility is undoubtedly the fundamental core principle of organic agriculture.<br>Caring for a living soil has been at the centre of all measures from the very beginning of the organic movement, because: a healthy soil is a prerequisite for healthy plants, healthy animals and thus the basis for healthy food.<br>With a supplementary examination of the different parameters at the agricultural level by the responsible organic control bodies, the formulated evaluation criteria allow a statement on the extent to which the fundamental principle of soil fertility has been demonstrably observed in the production of the organic product under consideration. | 1. System participants are aware of the importance of the fundamental organic principle of soil fertility and shall therefore require their suppliers to comply with the following test criteria (2.2.1.2 to 2.2.1.8) at the agricultural level with regard to humus formation, erosion prevention, knowledge of soil properties and fertilisation, as well as to evaluate their implementation by the responsible organic control body. This shall be done, for example, by inclusion in the purchase specifications, by declarations of commitment or in any other suitable form. | 1. B3 |
| | 2. In agricultural production, measures shall be taken for long-term humus formation. At least two of the management measures listed in Appendix III, Section C (as amended) shall be implemented on the operation or across operations. Alternative measures that are more effective regionally or operation-wide may be approved once by the organic control body. The documentation prepared for this purpose by the organic control body shall be made available to *ARGE BIO* upon request. Decisions regarding the inclusion of additional measures in the catalogue are solely made by *ARGE BIO*. | 2. A2 |
| | 3. Loss of soil due to erosion (wind, water) and salinisation shall be prevented by appropriate measures on operations, e.g. by subdividing large plots, planting rows of trees or hedges, crop rotation, humus formation, longest possible land cover, tilling the soil correctly at the right time, etc. | 3. A2 |
| | 4. Once a year, the operation shall carry out a spade test and record the excavation in pictures. The visual material, including the operation's internal evaluation, shall be discussed during the organic control. Alternatively, the spade test can also be carried out in the course of the organic control itself. | 4. A2 |
| | 5. A maximum of 40 % of the nitrogen that is supplied by the operation shall be introduced in an readily soluble, unstructured form (e.g. through hydrolysed amino acids or dissolved nutrients). The remaining nitrogen input shall be applied through green manure or structured fertiliser material in a suitable form (compost or manure). The use of pelleted manure is permitted provided that the origin is traceable and does not come from industrial animal husbandry. | 5. A2 |
| | 6. The source of the fertilisers used on the operation shall be traceable and the respective specifications are available so that this information can be made available to *ARGE BIO* at any time upon request or in the course of an on-site audit for verification. | 6. A2 |
| | 7. Fertilisers from animal slaughterhouse waste shall only be only permitted in agricultural production if the animals originate from organic husbandry. | 7. A2 |
| | 8. Plastics used on the operation (climbing supports, foils, etc.) shall not be disposed of together with biogenic waste. Vegetable waste shall remain on the operation or is properly composted or fermented. Plastic waste of any kind shall never be left on the land or improperly incinerated. | 8. A2 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.2 Compliance with fundamental organic principles in agricultural production

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.2.2 Biodiversity**<br>Another fundamental principle of organic agriculture that is rightly expected by consumers and other opinion leaders in particular is the promotion of biodiversity, understood as the diversity of species, genetic variation (among these species) and ecosystems and - in connection with this - understood as the diversity of existing natural and cultural landscapes. The formulated evaluation criteria allow for a statement on the extent to which the fundamental principle of biodiversity has been demonstrably observed in the production of the organic product under consideration.<br>On the one hand, this is ascertained and evaluated on the agricultural level and, on the other hand, it is also formulated as a requirement for processing companies with regard to their possible contributions at the respective company site. | 1. System participants are aware of the importance of the fundamental organic principle of biodiversity and shall therefore implement measures to promote biodiversity on or off the operation, adapted to the respective location. Based on the catalogue in Appendix III, Section B (as amended) and any existing biodiversity areas (according to Appendix III, Section A), an assessment is made in increments of 10 %. 1 % biodiversity area yields 10 %, each additional measure yields the same. Additional measures may be submitted to *ARGE BIO* for inclusion in the catalogue.<br>2. Furthermore, system participants shall require their suppliers to comply with the following test criterion (2.2.2.3) at the agricultural level as well as to evaluate its implementation by the responsible organic control body. This shall be done, for example, by inclusion in the purchasing specifications, by declarations of commitment or in any other suitable form.<br>3. In agricultural production, measures shall be taken to promote biodiversity on or off the operation, adapted to the respective location. At least 7 % biodiversity areas (according to Appendix III, Section A) shall be designated by the operation on its own or leased land. For operations that cannot comply with this directive due to their location and structure, the following shall apply: at least 3 % biodiversity area; for each missing percentage point, two measures shall be selected from the list in Appendix III, Section B (as amended). Alternative measures to promote biodiversity may be approved by the organic control body. In this case, the measures shall be listed in a comprehensible form in the organic control report which shall be made available to *ARGE BIO* upon request. Decisions regarding the inclusion of additional measures in the catalogue are solely made by *ARGE BIO*. | 1. D100<br>2. B3<br>3. A2 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.2 Compliance with fundamental organic principles in agricultural production

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.2.3 Animal protection and behavioural needs of animals**<br>Consideration of animal welfare and the behavioural needs of animals, as well as feeding organic animals with organically produced feed, is a firmly anchored part of the legal regulations on organic agriculture.<br>Nevertheless, also in this area there are expectations that go beyond this on the part of consumers and other opinion-forming organisations, as well as selective dissatisfaction in the organic movement itself, which were the trigger for a well-founded examination of the topic.<br>In particular, the part of the criticism that refers to an unbalanced performance-oriented feed composition as well as doubts about the reliable verification of the specifications by the organic control system are the basis for the adjoining evaluation criteria with the aim of increasing the credibility of organic products in this area. | 1. System participants are aware of the importance of the fundamental principle laid down by law, according to which organic farming should meet the behavioural needs of animals and ensure a high level of animal protection, and therefore shall require their suppliers to comply with the following test criteria (2.2.3.2 to 2.2.3.6) up to the farm level. This is done, for example, through inclusion in the purchasing specifications, declarations of commitment or other suitable forms.<br>2. The following shall apply to farms with livestock: The organic control body of the system participants shall confirm that for the current year it has been verified if the regulations on minimum surface for indoor and outdoor areas, minimum open air areas and maximum stocking densities as well as the regulations on exercise and indoor area design (including bedding) have been complied with.<br>3. The following shall apply to farms with livestock: The organic control body of the system participants shall confirm that when feeding organic animals living on land, the species-specific needs are particularly taken into account. This means that, in addition to the legal regulations, the following requirements are met for the following animal species:<br>a) Organic herbivores and organic ruminants: the daily ration consists of at least 60 % roughage.<br>b) Organic pigs: The proportion of maize in the final ration is a maximum of 30 % and roughage that does not consist only of pure fibres is a fixed component of the feed ration.<br>4. The following shall apply to farms with organic pond-farming or aquaculture: The organic control body of the system participants confirms that<br>a) fish components of the feed for organic carnivorous animals do not originate from live catch for feed purposes but exclusively from fish processing waste.<br>b) the proportion of supplementary feeding of cereals for organic herbivorous animals is limited to a maximum of 50 % of the total energy intake.<br>5. The following shall apply to farms with livestock: System participants take appropriate measures to ensure that no pregnant animals are slaughtered (except in the case of emergency slaughter).<br>6. When receiving organic animals after transport, the condition in which the organic animals arrive shall be documented in writing. This documentation shall be kept by the system participants at the agricultural level until the next organic control, where the chosen documentation system as well as improvement measures with regard to the fundamental principle mentioned under 2.2.3.1 shall be discussed. System participants outside agricultural production make the documentation available to *ARGE BIO* on request. | 1. B3<br>2. A2<br>3. A2<br>4. A2<br>5. A2<br>6. A2 |





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# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.3 Assessment parameters for areas not satisfactorily regulated by law

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.3.1 Assessment parameters for areas not satisfactorily regulated by law**<br>From ARGE BIO's point of view, the legal regulations on organic agriculture are not always formulated clearly enough and are partly handled differently in the national implementations. In addition, organic regulations in third countries , which deviate from the regulations of the EU or Switzerland despite their legally documented equivalence status, require action to safeguard the credibility of the organic products concerned.<br>The aim of the following evaluation criteria is to address these points that threaten trust and to create clarity and comparability from a private law perspective in order to achieve an increased level of credibility for organic products that have been evaluated according to the ARGE BIO Standard. | 1. The following shall apply to farms: Confirmations shall be available from the seed producers stating that the seed for the organic product under consideration was not produced by interfering with the genome of the plant (e.g. ionising radiation, transfer of isolated DNA, RNA or proteins) or the cell of the plant (e.g. destruction of cell walls or dissolution of cell nuclei). These confirmations shall be kept by the system participants until the next organic control, where the chosen documentation system as well as any improvement measures that can be derived from it shall be discussed.<br>2. System participants shall document on the delivery and/or invoice documents and/or in raw material specifications whether the goods are certified organic from wild plants collection and also require their suppliers to do so. If it is not possible to include this information in the above-mentioned documents, it shall be made available to *ARGE BIO* in another form.<br>3. System participants are aware of possible risks to the organic safety of products from wild plant collection and therefore shall require their suppliers to comply with the following test criterion (2.3.1.4) at the agricultural level. This is done by including it in the purchasing specifications, by declarations of commitment or in any other suitable form.<br>4. At the level of wild plants collection, (potential) emission sources shall be identified and appropriate measures shall be taken to avoid undesired inputs or against the emissions themselves (e.g. collection-free zones at the outer borders of the wild plants collection area, agreements with neighbours or batch-related residue monitoring). These measures and their implementation as well as their suitability shall be checked by the organic control body.<br>5. The following shall apply to organic products originating from organic operations in group certification: in the event of decertification of individual group members, the certified organisation shall undertake to inform its buyers immediately about this and about the reasons for decertification. All organisations involved in the supply process are obliged to pass on this information without delay so that *ARGE BIO* receives this information promptly.<br>6. System participants are aware of the risk of confusion when cultivating indistinguishable crops on areas in conversion and on recognised areas at the same time and shall ensure that the organic control body of the organic farms makes this fact transparent on the organic certificates and/or in any other suitable, publicly accessible form. This is done by including this in the purchase specifications, by means of declarations of commitment or in any other suitable form.<br>7. System participants at the processing or trade level shall not make use of derogations and/or transition periods granted in accordance with legal stipulations or approved by the authorities (e.g. the use of permitted conventional ingredients of agricultural origin). If derogations and/or transition periods have to be used, system participants shall proactively inform *ARGE BIO* and present a plan for the gradual phase-out of the derogations and/or transition periods including the date of transition to the "regular state", supplemented by a reporting system on the progress of implementation. | 1. A2<br>2. A2<br>3. A2<br>4. A2<br>5. A2<br>6. C5<br>7. B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.3 Assessment parameters for areas not satisfactorily regulated by law

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| | 8. The following shall apply to system participants at the agricultural level: The organic control body of the system participants confirms that they do not make use of any derogations granted in accordance with legal stipulations or approved by the authorities. In the animal sector, this applies in particular to the use of conventional ingredients of agricultural origin in feeding and the purchase of conventional young animals. In the plant sector, this applies in particular to the use of conventional seeds. If these or other derogations and/or transition periods have to be used, a plan for the gradual phase-out of the derogations and/or transition periods, including the date of transition to the "regular state" and supplemented by a reporting system on the progress of implementation, shall be submitted to the organic control body. These documents will be made available to *ARGE BIO* upon request.<br>9. In order to protect organic integrity, system participants shall refrain from replacing flavourings taken from organic products with conventional flavourings at a later time.<br>10. For organic fruit and vegetables, system participants shall refrain from using chemical peel treatment agents (e.g. hypochlorite, hydrogen peroxide, soaps, lyes, ...) on their own operation or by giving instructions to their suppliers or commissioned organisations, even if their use is approved by the local organic control body.<br>11. In order to protect organic integrity, system participants shall refrain from purchasing organic products or using organic ingredients from third countries if these in turn contain ingredients or have been produced using manufacturing processes that are not permitted under the EU Organic Regulation. This applies, for example, to organic products from the USA that are enriched with vitamins. | 8. A2<br>9. A2<br>10. A2<br>11. A2 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.4 Residues and limits

#### General information and objectives

**2.4.1 Limits**

Organic food is produced without the use of synthetic chemical plant and storage protection agents. The only exceptions to this ban are those agents used to combat harmful organisms that are expressly permitted under the EU Organic Regulation, the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance or other equivalent organic farming regulations.

For many consumers, purchasing organic products is linked to the expectation that they are free from residues. This expectation is also communicated to the public by other opinion leaders and organisations and is reinforced by undifferentiated advertising. This expectation is unrealistic and does not do justice either to the efforts of the producers or to the framework conditions under which production is carried out in accordance with the respective organic regulation, even when all precautionary measures are carefully observed.

Nevertheless, from ARGE BIO's point of view, it is acceptable and appropriate for reasons of credibility to limit the amount of tolerable residues and to formulate corresponding regulations (also as minimum requirements) for this purpose.

In addition, the following regulations also mention active substances that are not banned or permitted under the current legal basis, but for which ARGE BIO considers restrictive regulations to be necessary.

#### Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations

1. Minimum requirement: Contamination with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall be tolerated as accidental and unavoidable up to a maximum of 0.1 %, referring to raw materials (excluding animal products) and to all final products.
2. For meat, milk and dairy products as well as for eggs the following shall apply: For assessing the GMO contamination risk, the system participants shall submit information showing the following for their agricultural producers:
   a) Proportion of feed produced for their own use
   b) Proportion of purchased feed from sources that produce exclusively organic feed or organic feed at the same location as GMO-free feed.
   c) Proportion of purchased feed from sources that also produce conventional feed, including a plan of action to reduce this proportion.
3. Minimum requirement: For organic products, a limit value of 0.01 mg/kg shall apply (related to each individual organic raw material) for plant protection products which are defined as not authorized in the EU Organic Regulation and/or in the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance. Taking into account the stated measurement uncertainty (if no such uncertainty exists, with an assumed measurement uncertainty of 50 %), findings up to a level of 0.01 mg/kg shall be deemed as accidental and unavoidable, if at the same time it is ensured that a self-monitoring system (with corresponding avoidance measures) as well as the possibility of traceability are in place and no own fault (e.g. from an active use) can be proven. If the limit value of 0.01 mg foreign substance per kg product cannot be measured analytically, the lowest measurable value shall apply. If the limit stipulated by law is lower than 0.01 mg/kg, it shall apply. In case of contamination of a raw material with several active substances, the measurement uncertainty shall not be taken into account. The consideration of a processing factor shall be decided on a case-by-case basis, particularly reviewing whether it is possible that the contamination with the respective active substance has occurred before processing.
4. Minimum requirement: The limit values specified in the previous points (2.4.1.1. to 2.4.1.3) shall also be complied with for any conventional ingredients of agricultural origin used in accordance with the applicable valid organic regulation.
5. Minimum requirement: The relevant suppliers of the system participants shall be obliged by contract or via the purchasing specification to comply with the minimum requirements formulated in this chapter. Proof of the obligation of the relevant suppliers can be submitted in individual cases within a period accepted by *ARGE BIO*.
6. The use of the synergist PBO (piperonyl butoxide) is not desired and shall therefore be subject to the regulations described in 2.4.2. If PBO is used, a phase-out action plan shall be submitted to the *ARGE BIO*.
7. The use of quats (quaternary ammonium compounds) such as DDAC (didecyldimethylammonium chloride) or BAC (benzalkonium chloride) shall be omitted. Also the cleaning agents and disinfectants used shall not contain quats.
8. For reasons of beneficial organisms protection, the use of spinosad shall be omitted. The detection of spinosad in organic products is tolerated up to a limit of 0.01 mg/kg (in justified cases taking into account a drying or concentration factor) if it is proven that the responsible organic control body has previously a) deemed the use to be necessary and b) confirmed compliance with the use provisions according to the EU Organic Regulation.

#### Evaluation

1. KO: yes/no
2. D100
3. KO: yes/no
4. KO: yes/no
5. KO: yes/no/ deadline
6. A2
7. A2
8. B3





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.4 Residues and limits

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.4.2 Sample taking, analyses and monitoring of residues**<br>Analytical methods are not suitable for proving the organic status, because the latter is rather defined by the comprehensive regulation on the production process of an organic product. However, analytical methods are very useful tools to clarify that findings (according to 2.4.1) do not originate from active use. At the same time, they are a well-suited tool for precautionary measures.<br>Against the background that consumers and other opinion-forming organisations expect organic foods that are as free of pollutants as possible, the following evaluation criteria describe which measures (triggered by sampling, analyses and residue monitoring) can be taken to proactively increase the credibility of products from this point of view. In particular, in the event of findings, the aim is to carry out a thorough investigation of the causes as quickly as possible in order to prevent or limit future contamination as much as possible. | 1. System participants shall ensure with a well thought-out self-monitoring system that organic goods are placed on the market as far as possible without residues of prohibited or undesirable active substances.<br>2. In case of findings, system participants shall search for their cause and implement agreed measures to avoid future findings in an efficient and timely manner.<br>3. In the case of repeated findings, system participants shall proactively initiate an investigation into the cause and provide a corresponding explanation to *ARGE BIO* unsolicitedly.<br>4. In the course of the last organic control, samples were taken and analysed. The organic control report shall contain the relevant documentation. If the submitted organic control report does not contain any information on the taking of samples, it shall be reported when samples were last taken by the organic control body including the respective results.<br>5. If conventional ingredients of agricultural origin are used that are permitted under the applicable organic regulation and residues are detected in them, system participants shall disclose the physical supply chain for the ingredients concerned and thus open up the possibility of clarifying the cause.<br>6. Samples intended for analysis shall be labelled in such a way that a clear assignment to the article as well as to the batch or lot number is possible.<br>7. System participants shall have a concept that describes how retain samples are to be formed and how and for how long they are to be stored. This concept shall be reviewed, evaluated and, if necessary, improved annually and submitted or made available to *ARGE BIO* upon request. | 1. C5<br>2. C5<br>3. B3<br>4. B3<br>5. B3<br>6. A2<br>7. B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.5.1 Materiality analysis**<br>Organic products are increasingly expected to deliver further added value, based on a broad understanding of sustainability. The materiality analysis prescribed in this chapter is intended to lead to a differentiated examination of the expectations and to an identification of particularly relevant areas in order to create added value in a targeted and effective manner. | 1. Materiality analyses on sustainability issues shall be carried out at regular intervals at the operation, especially with regard to the following topics (2.5.2 to 2.5.5), in order to identify material (particularly relevant) issues with a high sustainability impact based on an analysis of the operation and its environment as well as stakeholder expectations for the operation. | 1. A2, B3 |
| **2.5.2 Climate protection**<br>Food production is associated with significant climate impacts, particularly at the agricultural level and especially when it comes to land-use change for agricultural production. Through its environmentally sound practices, organic farming makes an important contribution to climate protection. Thus, organic farming should serve as a role model and promote the minimisation and binding of greenhouse gas emissions through adapted and efficient agriculture. However, the expectation of climate-friendly production of organic products is not only limited to agriculture. Climate action should also be taken during the other steps of the value chain, including transportation of the organic product. In order to meet these expectations, all system participants are required to implement targeted and credible measures, based on comprehensive analyses and in the sense of a continuous improvement process. In this way, sustainable and systematic contributions to climate protection can be made along the entire value chain. | 1. The following activities shall be carried out at the operations of the system participants with regard to greenhouse gas emissions:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside the operation (directly caused by the operation = Scope 1) and outside the operation (in energy procurement = Scope 2, as well as indirectly caused by external actors along the value chain = Scope 3) release greenhouse gas emissions and to what extent.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the areas of Scope 1, 2 and 3. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The reduction targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the reduction targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated reduction targets.<br>2. System participants are aware of the climate-damaging effect of clearing primary land and draining moors for the purpose of food and feed production and refrain from these forms of land reclamation. They also request this from their suppliers, for example, through inclusion of this requirement in purchasing specifications, through declarations of commitment or in other suitable forms.<br>3. With regard to the transportation of organic goods and the organic raw materials required for them, system participants shall …<br>… comply with the priority rule of rail over sea over road over air when selecting the means of transport, unless a deviation from this can be proven reasonable by an overall ecological assessment.<br>… directly or indirectly promote the use of alternative drive systems that are powered by renewable energy sources. | 1. A2, B3<br>2. A2<br>3. A2, B3 |





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## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.5.3 Environmental protection and resource conservation**<br>Being conscious with the environment is a central component of the value base in organic agriculture. In concrete terms, this means using the resources provided by the environment responsibly and obtaining them from renewable sources. In food production, this applies particularly to the consumption of water, energy and materials. In addition, avoiding food waste is essential, as food waste also carries all the environmental impacts that occur during production.<br>In terms of materials, packaging materials in particular play an important role in food production. The packaging should optimally protect the food and have as little negative impact on the environment as possible. Any packaging that can be dispensed with shall therefore be avoided and any packaging that can be reused or recycled is to be rated better than packaging that is only used once. In connection with packaging, ARGE BIO also places a special focus on renewable raw materials and the minimisation of damage if packaging unintentionally ends up in nature.<br><br>Finally, minimising the use of fossil fuels and promoting energy production from renewable resources are among the central socio-political concerns that especially affect future generations.<br><br>To be able to assess the extent to which the resulting expectations regarding environmental protection and resource conservation are fulfilled in the production of the organic product under consideration, the system participants are called upon to implement targeted and credible measures based on comprehensive analyses in the sense of a continuous improvement process. | 1. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to waste generation with a focus on avoiding food waste:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the operation generate waste (especially food waste) and to what extent.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for waste reduction and particularly regarding food waste. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The reduction targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the reduction targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to reduce the waste caused by the operation's products (especially with regard to food waste), the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated reduction targets.<br>2. System participants shall ensure that their employees are informed about the importance of careful waste separation and that the specific regulations of the operation's waste management system are implemented.<br>3. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to material consumption and use, with special consideration of packaging materials:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the operation consume materials and to what extent, where non-renewable materials can be replaced by renewable ones and where materials could potentially be recycled or reused.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for the reduction of material consumption and the increase of the share of renewable materials (taking into account the potential recyclability) as well as the increase in the reuse and recycling rate. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to reduce material consumption and to increase the share of renewable materials as well as the reuse and recycling rate, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect spheres of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets. | 1. A2, B3<br><br>2. C5<br><br>3. A2, B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| | 4. If, despite the efforts of system participants, organic goods cannot be delivered to end consumers without packaging, materials used for the final packaging of organic foodstuffs shall be preferably made entirely from renewable raw materials. Furthermore, they shall be certified biodegradable or shall decompose in the environment into their organic raw material without leaving residues. Documents shall be available showing that the raw materials originate from sustainable raw material cultivation (e.g. not from monocultures in competition with food crops) and that the materials are neither produced by nor with genetically modified organisms. | 4. A2 |
| | 5. If - in consideration of the overall ecological benefit, taking into account product protection and longer shelf life - petro-based materials are nevertheless used for the final packaging of organic foods, the following shall apply:<br>a) Preference shall be given to materials made from recycled materials.<br>b) Materials that are particularly harmful to the environment, such as PVC and other halogenated hydrocarbons, shall not be not used.<br>c) The packaging materials also shall not contain bisphenol A. | 5. A2 |
| | 6. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to energy consumption and choice of energy sources:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the operation consume energy and to what extent, and where fossil energy sources could be replaced by renewable ones.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for reducing energy consumption and increasing the share of renewable energy sources. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to reduce energy demand and to increase the share of renewable energy sources, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets. | 6. A2, B3 |
| | 7. System participants are aware of the negative environmental impact of using fossil fuels for heating glasshouses and foil tunnels. Therefore, they shall require their suppliers of organic products to comply with the following test criterion (2.5.3.8) at the agricultural level and as well as to evaluate its implementation by the competent organic control body. This shall be done, for example, by inclusion in the purchasing specifications, by declarations of commitment or in any other suitable form. | 7. A2 |
| | 8. At the agricultural level, renewable energy sources shall be used for any necessary heating in the case of organic production in protected cultivation. Corresponding evidence of this shall be kept available for organic inspection. | 8. A2 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| | 9. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to water consumption and water pollution:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the operation consume and pollute water and to what extent.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for the reduction of water consumption and water pollution. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The reduction targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the reduction targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to reduce water consumption and water pollution, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated reduction targets. | 9. A2, B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.5.4 Social justice and fairness**<br>When people talk about the careful use of resources in connection with organic products and describe that healthy soil, healthy plants and treating animals appropriate to their species are fundamental principles of organic farming, one thing remains unmentioned: the careful treatment of people and their needs, especially of those responsible for production.<br>The aim of the following evaluation criteria is to determine the extent to which expectations of social justice and fairness can be considered fulfilled in two selected focus areas, both at the internal operational level and in relation to the value chain. Firstly, the expectation of fair, appreciative and long-term cooperation in the procurement of organic food and other supplies is described.<br>The second evaluation criterion looks at the issue of fairness and social justice with regard to the treatment of employees. | 1. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to fairness in the procurement of organic food and other materials:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the operation have potential for improvement with regard to long-term and appreciative supply relationships, the preservation of livelihoods and fair product prices.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for the improvement of long-term and appreciative supply relationships, the preservation of livelihoods and fair product prices. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to improve long-term and appreciative supply relationships, preservation of livelihoods and fair product prices, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect spheres of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets.<br>2. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants with regard to social justice and fairness when it comes to employee treatment:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine which processes inside and outside the company have potential for improvement with regard to labour law, measures to promote health and to create meaning for employees and whether the ILO Core Conventions are complied with.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for improvement with regard to labour law, measures to promote health and and to create meaning for employees as well as compliance with the ILO Core Conventions. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to improve the working situation of the employees (as described in point a), the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets. | 1. A2, B3<br>2. A2, B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.5 Other legitimate added value expectations

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.5.5 Regionality and circular thinking**<br>The added value expectation that is most often associated with organic products is that of regional origin.<br>It is important for ARGE BIO to note that the conversion of farms to organic farming is a global movement and must be so from an overall ecological perspective. Also, consumers worldwide should have access to products produced and certified according to organic standards.<br>In connection with the fundamental principle of organic farming, to think and work consistently in cycles, the topic of regionality has its justification. This closing of cycles at company and inter-company level - be it for nutrients, water, energy or other raw materials - is not only intended to preserve the basis of production, but also to help ensure that the local organisational capability of agricultural systems can be maintained. Both are essential for the continued existence of organic agriculture.<br>Based on these considerations, the following evaluation criteria for regionality and circular thinking are formulated. | 1. The following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants to promote the circularity concept:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to determine in which processes inside and outside the operation cycles could be closed, especially with regard to nutrients, water, waste, (packaging) materials and energy.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for the management of individual processes in closed loops. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) In order to close loops, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets.<br>2. In order to support the principle of maintaining locally organised agricultural systems, as laid down in the EU Organic Regulation, the following activities shall be carried out at the operation of the system participants:<br>a) Regular reviews shall be carried out to find out which of the required organic raw materials are produced in the vicinity of the operation of the system participants and could be sourced from there.<br>b) The operation shall set clearly defined targets for increasing regional sourcing of organic food and feed. The implementation of these targets shall be defined in terms of time, measures and internal responsibilities.<br>c) The targets as well as their implementation shall be communicated both internally and externally.<br>d) In the sense of a continuous improvement process, the targets shall be advanced by means of an externally validated operational management system.<br>e) Regarding the procurement of regionally available organic food and feed, the operation shall cooperate with upstream and downstream value chain stages within its direct and indirect sphere of influence.<br>f) In the last 12 months, the operation has already implemented concrete steps to achieve the formulated targets. | 1. A2, B3<br>2. A2, B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.6 Transparency and duty of truthfulness

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.6.1 Information on final packaging of organic products**<br>Consumers of organic products usually are aware of the special quality and the associated inner values and impacts of organic products. As a logical consequence, they may also demand special care with regard to the external quality. This includes in particular the information on the packaging. As a measure to enhance confidence, ARGE BIO attaches particular importance to the information printed on the packaging being true, as transparent and error-free as possible as well as comprehensible to the reader. At the same time, it is important to ARGE BIO that this instrument is used to convey essential information about organic farming and about any added values of the product.<br>The following criteria deal comprehensively with various components of the declaration, so that it can be ascertained and evaluated to what extent consumers can trust the information printed on the packaging and how comprehensively they are informed. | 1. Minimum requirement: System participants are aware that consumers expect higher quality standards when buying organic products. This also applies to the information on the final packaging. Therefore, the system participants shall ensure that the information printed there is true and as transparent and error-free as possible.<br>2. For reasons of credibility, organisations or persons named on final packaging of the system participants as the responsible food operation with name and full address shall always also have an organic certification. This shall also apply to those cases where they are involved neither in the physical supply chain nor the invoicing process of the organic product under consideration. If no organic certification is available, a plan for achieving organic certification shall be submitted to *ARGE BIO*.<br>3. System participants shall use the instrument of final packaging to inform about the fundamental principles of organic farming. At least once, the organic reference shall be placed on the final packaging in the unabbreviated form to emphasise that the basis for each type of organic production is the associated form of farming.<br>4. Any reference to GMO-free production or to other generally applicable stipulations of the valid organic regulation shall be designed as general information about the requirements for production of all organic products in order to avoid any inferable advantage over other organic products.<br>5. The information where organic raw materials of agricultural origin come from, shall be given in relation to the actual country where grown in origin.<br>6. System participants shall ensure that an emphasis on regional origin (e.g. quality from Austria) is only used for organic products if this indication is also true with reference to the stipulations of the valid organic regulation regarding the provenance of raw materials of agricultural origin (for example, in the case of "quality from Austria", if 98 % of the ingredients come from Austria).<br>7. If possible, the final packaging shall provide information on its proper disposal.<br>8. Final packaging for organic products that have been tested according to one of the modules of the ARGE BIO Standard shall bear a corresponding reference to compliance with this standard (e.g. by printing a logo of ARGE BIO) including a reference to the tested module.<br>9. Minimum requirement: If the final packaging contains a reference to the ARGE BIO Standard, the packaging designs shall be submitted to *ARGE BIO* for review and approval in good time before printing. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. A2<br>3. A2, C5<br>4. A2<br>5. A2<br>6. A2<br>7. A2<br>8. A2<br>9. KO: yes/no |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.6 Transparency and duty of truthfulness

#### General information and objectives

**2.6.2 Information on organic products in online marketing**

The share of organic products marketed online is steadily increasing. The spectrum of suppliers includes organic operations that expand their direct marketing as well as very small, partly regional initiatives or innovative marketing channels of retail and also global suppliers with organic specialities or a full range.

Just as with sales in stationary stores, organic consumers must be able to trust that the special quality of organic products is also reflected in the way of communication prior to sale.
As a measure to enhance confidence, ARGE BIO attaches particular importance to the information communicated prior to sale being true, as transparent and error-free as possible as well as comprehensible to the reader. At the same time, it is important to ARGE BIO that this instrument is used to convey essential information about organic farming and about any added values of the product.
The following criteria deal comprehensively with various components of the communication related to the organic product, so that it can be ascertained and evaluated to what extent consumers can trust the provided information and how comprehensively they are informed.

#### Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations

1. Minimum requirement: System participants are aware that consumers expect higher quality standards when buying organic products. This also applies to the information on online platforms. Therefore, the system participants shall ensure that the information provided there is true and as transparent and error-free as possible.
2. For reasons of credibility, organisations or persons that market organic products online and are named as the responsible food operation with name and full address shall always also have an organic certification. This shall also apply even if there is no participation in either the physical supply chain nor the invoicing process for the organic product under consideration. If no organic certification is available, a plan for achieving organic certification shall be submitted to *ARGE BIO*.
3. The information where organic raw materials of agricultural origin come from, shall be given in relation to the actual country where grown in origin.
4. System participants shall use the instrument of online marketing to inform about the fundamental principles of organic farming. At least once, the organic reference shall be mentioned in the unabbreviated form in connection with the organic product offered in order to emphasise that the basis for each type of organic production is the associated form of farming.
5. Any reference to GMO-free production or to other generally applicable stipulations of the valid organic regulation shall be designed as general information about the requirements for production of all organic products in order to avoid any inferable advantage over other organic products.
6. System participants shall ensure that an emphasis on regional origin (e.g. quality from Austria) is only used for organic products if this indication is also true with reference to the stipulations of the valid organic regulation regarding the provenance of raw materials of agricultural origin (for example, in the case of "quality from Austria", if 98 % of the ingredients come from Austria).
7. Organic products that have been tested according to one of the modules of the ARGE BIO Standard shall bear a corresponding reference to compliance with this standard (e.g. by including a logo of ARGE BIO) including a reference to the tested module. This information shall be made visible on the product image in the web shop or as additional information concerning the product.
8. Minimum requirement: If the online shop contains a reference to the ARGE BIO Standard, the relevant websites shall be submitted to *ARGE BIO* for review and approval prior to launch.

#### Evaluation

1. KO: yes/no
2. A2
3. A2
4. C5, A2
5. A2
6. A2
7. A2
8. KO: yes/no





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.7 Implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard throughout the entire creation process

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.7.1 Implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard throughout the entire creation process**<br>The effect of all the evaluation criteria defined so far in module 2 increases with the degree of realisation throughout the various stages of the production process. Therefore, in the sense of a comprehensive evaluation of enhanced credibility for organic products, it is essential to assess the degree of realisation using the following evaluation criteria. | 1. System participants shall disclose the physical supply chain for the organic ingredients of the product under consideration as far as possible, in the best case up to the agricultural production.<br>2. System participants shall disclose all actors involved in the invoicing process for the organic ingredients of the product under consideration as far as possible, in the best case up to the agricultural production.<br>3. As many actors as possible that are involved in the supply chain and invoicing process shall be informed about the requirements of the ARGE BIO Standard.<br>4. As many ,actors as possible that are involved in the supply chain and invoicing process shall be integrated into ARGE BIO's control and evaluation system. | 1. C5<br>2. C5<br>3. B3<br>4. B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.8 Organic commitment of system participants

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.8.1 Readiness to provide information without request as well as immediate, continuous and transparent flow of information**<br>Even if operations are not always converted to organic farming out of pure idealism, this form of land management and animal husbandry as well as the processing of organic product is always associated with a special degree of attention, caution, responsibility and ultimately organic commitment.<br>In order to be able to conclusively evaluate the degree of enhanced credibility of organic products, it is therefore necessary to also assess various parameters of the commitment of the system participants and their subcontractors.<br>As first indicators for the evaluation of organic commitment, the readiness to cooperate and collaborate with *ARGE BIO* as well as the way in which the necessary information is provided proactively and thus also in a resource-saving manner are surveyed by means of the following test criteria. | 1. Minimum requirement: All regulations in Appendix I "Mutual declarations of commitment" for module 2 "Enhanced credibility for organic products" that are marked as relevant shall be signed by the system participants and submitted to *ARGE BIO*.<br>2. In case of a change of the person(s) responsible for the cooperation with *ARGE BIO*, this information shall be provided proactively.<br>3. The organic certificates of the system participants and of the suppliers relevant for the organic product under consideration are sent to *ARGE BIO* without delay upon receipt.<br>4. *ARGE BIO* shall be notified without delay of any change in the name, address and organic control body of the suppliers of the system participants or their subcontractors relevant to the organic product under consideration.<br>5. Documents shall be transmitted to *ARGE BIO* promptly and continuously. The information contained therein shall provide comprehensive answers to the questions posed. | 1. KO: yes/no<br>2. A2<br>3. B3<br>4. B3<br>5. C5 |
| **2.8.2 Result of the organic control and handling of recorded deviations**<br>The result of the organic control is another important indicator of proven organic commitment, as is the cooperation of the system participants and any subcontractors commissioned by them with the persons involved in the legally prescribed organic control system. | 1. The performance in the organic control shall be assessed on the basis of the organic control report and the notes, comments or deviations that it contains.<br>2. System participants shall show commitment to improve any deviations and sanctions noted in the organic control report as quickly as possible and provide *ARGE BIO* with information on respective corrective measures. | 1. C5<br>2. B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.8 Organic commitment of system participants

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.8.3 Comprehensive activities for employee and consumer awareness and information**<br>Competent instruction of employees regarding the safe production of organic products must be taken for granted according to module 1. The following evaluation criteria focus on all additional measures that serve to inform employees or consumers in detail, e.g. about the legal stipulations for organic production, the work of various actors in the organic sector or about the fundamental principles of organic farming, and thus to raise their awareness. | 1. All persons involved in the creation process of organic products within the area of responsibility of the system participants (including subcontractors) shall be demonstrably trained in the basic requirements for the production of organic products as laid down in the applicable organic regulation.<br>2. All persons involved in the creation process of organic products within the area of responsibility of the system participants shall be demonstrably informed about ARGE BIO or trained on the ARGE BIO Standard.<br>3. System participants shall carry out activities to raise awareness among consumers and the public about organic farming and the special features of processing organic products.<br>4. System participants shall carry out activities in coordination with *ARGE BIO* to inform consumers and the public about ARGE BIO and the ARGE BIO Standard. | 1. B3<br>2. B3<br>3. B3<br>4. B3 |
| **2.8.4 Competence and commitment in dealing with organic control points**<br>The test criteria formulated for this topic are intended to ascertain and assess the extent to which the work at the production site is distinguished in terms of scope, proactivity, discipline and specificity when it comes to the overview and control of those points that could endanger the organic status of the product under consideration. | 1. The commitment in the identification, documentation and safeguarding of control points viewed as critical for organic production and the provision of related information and documents to upstream and downstream value chain stages shall be assessed with regard to its benefit for a safe marketability of organic products.<br>2. System participants shall document the path of the organic raw materials over as many stages as possible (up to the raw material suppliers, the field plot, the seed, etc.) by means of suitable internal measures.<br>3. System participants shall ensure that transport containers bear an organic indication (as proof of organic conformity).<br>4. All changes to facilities or organisational processes shall be made in a way that organic food safety improves. These changes shall already be reported to *ARGE BIO* in the planning phase. | 1. C5<br>2. C5<br>3. B3<br>4. C5 |
| **2.8.5 Organic share of the entire operation**<br>If organic activities are implemented on an operation-wide basis, i.e. if there is full conversion to organic on the operation and on those operations from which organic products are purchased, it can be assumed that they will be attributed greater credibility in the public perception. | 1. The share of organic products in the total number of marketed products as well as in the sales volume shall be assessed.<br>2. Operations that do not produce, process or trade 100 % organic products shall aim to increase the organic share.<br>3. When selecting suppliers for organic products, the system participants shall take into account whether they produce or process 100 % organic goods. | 1. D100<br>2. A2<br>3. B3 |





# IV. Guidelines in detail



## Module 2: ENHANCED CREDIBILITY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### 2.8 Organic commitment of system participants

| General information and objectives | Test criteria, rules of procedure and obligations | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **2.8.6 Special achievements in documentation and transparency**<br>According to this standard, documentation and recording measures that enable a clear distinction to be made between organic products and conventional goods in a comprehensible manner are seen as indications of increased organic commitment and are positively assessed. | 1. The clear separation between organic and conventional goods shall also be reflected in the accounting (use of goods and revenues).<br>2. Appropriate documents shall be available for complaints and crisis management, which describe for organic products how and within which time frame cases are recorded and handled, and in which cases the organic control body and *ARGE BIO* are informed. | 1. A2<br>2. B3 |
| **2.8.7 Special achievement in addressing credibility issues**<br>The following evaluation criteria make it possible to round off the overall picture of the system participants' organic commitment by including their special achievements in dealing with credibility issues.<br>It is evaluated positively if the system participants deal with further credibility issues or realise additional measures through individual commitment that lead to an increase in the credibility of organic products and which have not yet been mentioned in the previous evaluation criteria. | 1. System participants deal in a well-founded way with possibilities of consolidating and monitoring the functionality of the legal organic control system. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.1 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>2. System participants deal in a well-founded way with the fundamental organic principles in agricultural production. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.2 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>3. System participants deal in a well-founded way with areas not satisfactorily regulated by law. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.3 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>4. System participants deal in a well-founded way with expectations regarding residues and limits. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.4 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>5. System participants deal in a well-founded way with other justified added value expectations. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.5 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>6. System participants deal in a well-founded way with transparency and duty of truthfulness related to organic products. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.6 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products.<br>7. System participants deal in a well-founded way with possibilities to implement the ARGE BIO Standard throughout the entire creation process. Additional achievements or measures not addressed in chapter 2.7 of this standard are evaluated with regard to their contribution to enhancing the credibility of organic products. | 1. B3<br>2. B3<br>3. B3<br>4. B3<br>5. B3<br>6. B3<br>7. B3 |







# Appendix I: **Mutual declarations of commitment**

## (concerning test criteria 1.2.4.7 in module 1 and 2.8.1.1 in module 2)

### Section A
### Authorisation to test the ARGE BIO Standard

| | Applicability Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. System participants shall commit to comply with the regulations of module 1 of the ARGE BIO Standard as amended. | X | |
| 2. System participants shall commit to comply with the minimum requirements set out in module 2 of the ARGE BIO Standard and to undergo an evaluation by the *ARGE BIO* with regard to all other criteria listed with regard to enhanced credibility of the organic product in question. | | X |
| 3. The verification of this standard shall be carried out by ARGE BIO or by an organisation commissioned or recognised by ARGE BIO (in the following and in the test criteria referred to as *ARGE BIO*. Currently, the company LebensmittelFairSicherung GmbH with its registered office in 4550 Kremsmünster, Austria shall be commissioned. | X | X |
| 4. System participants shall authorise *ARGE BIO* to inspect their operating facilities and administrative buildings unannounced if necessary. In the case of *partially converted operations (see definitions)* this shall also include the conventional parts of the operation. In this context, this extension of the inspection authorisation is defined with regard to a possible risk of contamination and mixing to all conventional operational parts located at the site and with regard to the plausibility check of mass balance to all relevant organisational parts in the group of operations. | X | X |
| 5. All system participants shall commit to support *ARGE BIO* in these inspections and in no way to obstruct them. | X | X |

### Section B
### Third Party Involvement

| | Applicability Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. System participants shall ensure that their suppliers and all organisations or persons subcontracting for them comply with the regulations of module 1 of the ARGE BIO Standard as amended. | X | |
| 2. System participants shall ensure that their suppliers as well as all organisations or persons subcontracting for them comply with the minimum requirements set out in module 2 of the ARGE BIO Standard and undergo an evaluation of compliance by ARGE BIO with regard to all other criteria set out. | | X |
| 3. System participants shall authorise their (current and, if required, former) organic control bodies to provide information to *ARGE BIO* upon request. For this purpose, they shall release the organic control bodies from their obligation to treat data confidentially. | X | |
| 4. System participants shall authorise *ARGE BIO* to contact their **organic control bodies** directly with regard to the test criteria in module 1 as well as concerning the minimum requirements in module 2 in order to clarify inconsistencies or information deficits (e.g. on the organic status of the operation or of individual products …) and to exchange information or data. | X | X |
| 5. System participants shall authorise their **testing laboratories** to provide *ARGE BIO* with the results of the commissioned test regarding the substantial quality and declaration and to be available for information and exchange of ideas regarding the test results. For this purpose, the laboratories shall be released from their obligation to treat data confidentially. | X | |
| 6. For the determination of equivalences (see Appendix IV), system participants shall authorise and commission **other private-law standard providers** (e.g. IFS, AMA, Fairtrade, etc.), to provide *ARGE BIO* with relevant information and data. | X | X |
| 7. In concrete terms, *ARGE BIO* shall commit to limit its communication regarding points 3 to 6 with the above-mentioned organisations to topics that are related to the organic product under consideration and to questions that cannot be clarified in direct contact with the system participants or that are to be obtained from third parties at the request of the system participants. Normally, *ARGE BIO* shall keep the system participants informed about the communication, unless there is imminent danger. | X | X |

### Section C
### Provision of information and disclosure of processes

| | Applicability Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. System participants shall commit to provide *ARGE BIO* with all information and documents necessary for the verification of module 1 in the required form and time. Enquiries from *ARGE BIO* shall be answered in a timely manner and the documents requested for verification shall be sent as soon as possible. | X | |
| 2. In the event that *ARGE BIO* assigns one of the measures with "DEADLINE", the requested corrective measures shall be implemented within the specified deadline. | X | |
| 3. The requirements described in point 1 and 2 of this section apply analogously to all test criteria marked as minimum requirements in module 2. | | X |







# Appendix I: **Mutual declarations of commitment**

## (concerning test criteria 1.2.4.8 in module 1 and 2.8.1.1 in module 2)

| | Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 4. *ARGE BIO* shall reserve the right to expand the scope of the documents and information to be provided or to increase the intensity and speed of the provision of information and documents as a result of an identified increased risk. | X | X |
| 5. In the course of the audits and inspections carried out by *ARGE BIO*, the production process of the organic product under consideration shall be disclosed in all details and the required reports and evidence shall be provided. All relevant records (including the financial and accounting system for the purpose of checking mass balance) shall be made available as well as access to production sites, warehouses and transport facilities shall be permitted in order to enable verification of compliance with the inspection criteria in module 1 with the minimum requirements in module 2. These requirements shall apply analogously to facilities of subcontracted organisations and/or persons involved in the production of the organic product under consideration and, in the case of partially converted operations, also to the conventional parts of the operation with regard to the risk of contamination and mixing as well as for the verification of mass flows (see Section A, point 4 of this Appendix). | X | X |
| 6. *ARGE BIO* shall be entitled to take product samples free of charge for control purposes. | X | X |
| 7. System participants shall commit to submit information and documents to *ARGE BIO* in a timely manner, which are suitable for assessing the extent of enhanced credibility of the organic product under consideration on the basis of the test criteria described in module 2, as well as to grant full access (e.g. in the form of visits at the operation) to the production process for the purpose of verifying this information. | | X |

### Section D

### Processing of provided information and exchange with third parties

| | Applicability Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. System participants shall agree that the information submitted regarding the test criteria of module 1 as well as the minimum requirements in module 2 will be checked by *ARGE BIO* and compared with the information provided by the upstream and downstream value chain stages, with the recipes submitted as well as with agreed specifications. | X | X |
| 2. System participants shall agree that *ARGE BIO* may forward available information to the responsible organic control bodies in order to clarify inconsistencies and to mitigate identified risks, and that this information thus becomes part of the legal organic control procedure. | X | X |
| 3. System participants shall accept that they are subject to an evaluation procedure by *ARGE BIO* with regard to the special credibility of the organic product under consideration and acknowledge that the evaluations of the suppliers of the system participants as well as all organisations and/or persons subcontracting for them who are involved in the production of the organic product under consideration are included in the overall evaluation of the individual operation. | X | |

### Section E

### Duty of confidentiality

| | Applicability Module 1 | Module 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. *ARGE BIO* and the system participants shall mutually commit to treat all data provided as well as resulting evaluations confidentially and not to use them for any other purpose. A confidentiality agreement shall be agreed separately between the two parties for more precise concretisation. | X | |
| 2. The disclosure of information to the responsible organic control body (see points B3 and B4 in connection with B7) shall be explicitly excluded from this duty of confidentiality. | X | |
| 3. Also explicitly excluded from the duty of confidentiality shall be disclosing the assessment of the delivery permit (= evaluation of compliance with the criteria of module 1 as well as the minimum requirements in module 2 - also at different stages of the testing) as well as the assessment result on the special credibility of the organic product under consideration to those third parties who may have commissioned *ARGE BIO* with this assessment. The permission to pass on information to commissioning third parties shall be limited to information that is contractually regulated in the internal relationship between the system participants and the commissioning third parties. The system participants shall acknowledge that the transfer of data between *ARGE BIO* and the respective commissioning third party is therefore necessary for the fulfilment of the contract according to Article 6 (1) lit b) GDPR. | X | X |
| 4. Information about sources of supply, price agreements and the like shall be subject to confidentiality without exception. | X | X |
| 5. Finally, *ARGE BIO* reserves the right and the system participants agree that information and data are made available to *ARGE BIO* in an anonymous form for the continuous development of this standard. | X | X |







# Appendix II: **Risk countries**

**(concerning test criterion 1.4.2.1 in module 1)**

**Raw materials originating from the following countries** are classified as raw materials requiring special attention by ARGE BIO:
**Status**: 30/03/2022

- China
- India
- Kazakhstan
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Romania
- Russia
- South Africa
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Ukraine

Sources:

- DG Sante (European Commission) … Guidelines on additional official controls on products originating from China
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- EasyCert … https://www.easy-cert.com/htm/gefaelschtezertifikate.htm?sprache=de
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- US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program … Fraudulent Organic Certificates - as of 12/29/2021
- Findings from the activities of ARGE BIO and associated organisations






# Appendix III: **Biodiversity areas and measures to promote humus formation and biodiversity**

**(concerning chapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 in module 2)**

Section A

**Biodiversity areas**

1. Orchards
2. Wildflower strips and flower pastures
3. Wet meadows, low-yield meadows and pastures mowed once or twice
4. Hedges and thickets
5. Agroforestry systems

Section B

**Measures to promote biodiversity**

1. Participation in research projects on the subject of biodiversity (e.g. integration into biodiversity monitoring programs, ...)
2. The operation shall own areas that are not or only very extensively farmed and thus promote biodiversity.
3. Wetlands and (stagnant) ponds shall be present or being created at the operation.
4. The operation promotes eco-compound systems: Since nature does not adhere to property lines, it often happens that important biotopes extend across borders. This measure shall be considered as fulfilled if operations promote such biotopes (e.g. cooperation of several operations to preserve a biotope, creation of corridors to connect ecosystems, etc.).
5. Maintenance or establishment of close-to-nature vegetation (e.g. ligneous shore vegetation, creek banks, forest edges, embankments, ...)
6. Preservation and/or planting of rare but locally native tree or shrub species
7. Preservation of forest biotopes (e.g. boulder forests, ravine forests, dry sites, moors, spring areas, riparian forests, ...)
8. Measures to increase the proportion of biotope wood (= marked trees and old-growth forests that are excluded from use and left to age and decay naturally)
9. Participation in sustainable forest management certification programmes: FSC, PEFC
10. Participation in nature conservation projects
11. Installation of nesting aids for birds, bats, reptiles or insects
12. Creating or leaving deadwood piles, dry stone walls, cairns
13. Green roofs
14. Cultivation of old/rare plant species or varieties in agriculture or horticulture
15. Breeding of locally adapted plant varieties
16. Ploughless cultivation
17. Permaculture systems
18. Mixed cropping systems in arable farming
19. Cultivated, diverse home gardens
20. Maintenance of steep slopes
21. Alpine pasture management
22. Keeping and/or breeding of old/rare livestock breed
23. Training for/carrying out educational activities to raise awareness of biodiversity (e.g. nature and landscape educators or herb educators)
24. Membership as a WWOOF farm: As part of the worldwide association "Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms", the operation gives young people an insight into organic farming.

Section C

**Measures to promote humus formation**

1. Cultivation of legumes as part of crop rotation
2. Incorporation or recirculation of crop residues
3. Cultivation of catch crops
4. Crop rotation that promotes humus
5. Use of compost
6. Minimisation of the use of industrially produced nitrogenous organic fertilisers in liquid or pellet form
7. Permanent coverage of the soil
8. Soil tillage that preserves soil structure and soil life
9. Use of rock flour, microorganisms or similar agents approved in organic agriculture to promote soil health
10. Use of biodynamic preparations that promote humus







# Appendix IV: **Equivalency assessment**

## (in implementation of the general permission in chapter II. Foundations and scope of application)

In the sense of economic efficiency and expediency, the integration of the certification, information and control systems listed below into the implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard shall be promoted. Which test criteria of the ARGE BIO Standard are considered fulfilled by submitting which documents for the certification, information and control systems listed below shall be recorded after publication of the ARGE BIO Standard in the course of a so-called pilot phase and kept up to date in a supplement to Appendix IV (Equivalency assessment) of the ARGE BIO Standard, which is available at *ARGE BIO* and can be viewed by the system participants.
In addition to the standards mentioned below, system participants shall be entitled to submit further regulations to *ARGE BIO* for examination with regard to equivalence in the fulfilment of individual test criteria of the ARGE BIO Standard. The decision on the inclusion of standards or individual test criteria recognised as fulfilled is solely made by *ARGE BIO*.

### Section A
**Food quality assurance standards**

1. International Featured Standard (IFS) Food as well as British Retail Consortium (BRC) Food
2. Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000
3. GlobalG.A.P. (for fruit and vegetables)

### Section B
**Standards of organic associations**

1. BIO AUSTRIA
2. BIO SUISSE
3. Bioland
4. Demeter
5. Naturland
6. Naturland Fair

### Section C
**Organic quality programs based on private law**

1. Zurück zum Ursprung
2. Ja! Natürlich

### Section D
**Standards to safeguard justified added value expectations**

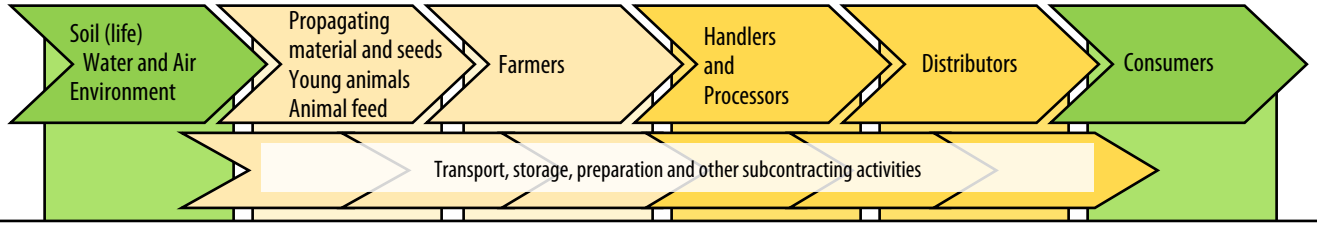
1. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001
2. Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)
3. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 50001
4. Fairtrade
5. Fair for Life



ARGE BIO Standard

# VI. Process description






**Prevention and risk management instead of repair measures ... Ongoing observation instead of snapshots ... Thinking in context instead of individual consideration and isolated solutions**

In organic farming, thinking in contexts and acting with foresight are fundamental, because the possibilities to compensate for management mistakes afterwards are drastically limited. Also the process that ARGE BIO has defined for the implementation of the ARGE BIO Standard follows this fundamental principle. Damage to the credibility or image of the organic movement caused by misconduct of individual actors in the production of organic products, which might also be caused by mere errors or misunderstandings, cannot be repaired - or only with disproportionately high additional costs for all other actors in the organic sector. Implementing the principles laid down in the heading is also required for tangible economic considerations, because also from an economic point of view it makes sense to locate and eliminate risks as early as possible.

The process for implementing the ARGE BIO Standard therefore consists of the following four consecutive process steps:

## 1. Preparatory process

### Before tendering

- Survey of product-specific risk factors
- Formulation of complementary product-specific requirements to exclude and reduce risks or make them manageable

### Before purchasing

- Rough preliminary assessment of suitability as an organic product to be marketed with a trademark of ARGE BIO

## 2. Survey process

### Test criteria module 1 & minimum criteria modules 2 - 10

- Obtaining and reviewing certificates, product and ingredient specifications and other information and documents required by the above criteria
- Countersigning of mutual declarations of commitment
- Obtaining the organic control result and the results of audits carried out by other inspection bodies
- Verification of compliance in the course of the audit during the first production

### Evaluation criteria from modules 2 - 10

- Provision of comprehensive information and documents by the system participants, which enable *ARGE BIO* to make an assessment in the different topics
- Validation and verification of the provided information through suitable testing instruments and, if necessary, during the audit

## 3. Evaluation process

### Assessment of delivery permit

- Documented compliance with all test criteria in module 1 as well as with the minimum requirements in modules 2 to 10
- Timely transmission of documents to be submitted at a later date or fulfilment of any measures stipulated by *ARGE BIO*
- Confirmation by *ARGE BIO* of the permission to supply or, if applicable, rejection of marketing with a logo of ARGE BIO

### Product-related supplier evaluation

- Transfer of the collected information into the evaluation according to the ARGE BIO Standard using defined evaluation schemes and procedures
- Graphical presentation of the results to illustrate achieved goals as well as areas with potential for improvement

## 4. Monitoring process

### Test criteria module 1 & minimum criteria modules 2 - 10

Ongoing monitoring with regard to

- the validity of certificates (including up- & downstream stages)
- the composition of the product and the origin of raw materials
- sample plans and analysis results as well as other agreed documents on critical control points for organic production
- the completeness of the control chain and the implementation of specified deadlines

Clarification of residue findings and other deviations

### Evaluation criteria from modules 2 - 10

- Monitoring e.g. with regard to plausibility in mass balance and the documents for traceability
- Updating the assessment of other test criteria with new information from the system participants and/or findings of *ARGE BIO* from the monitoring process

All system participants are obliged to undergo the testing and evaluation process described in process steps 2, 3 and 4. Process step 1 (preparation) is understood as an aid and thus as optional. Process step 4 (monitoring) applies to organic products that are produced and placed on the market over a longer period of time. Process steps 1 and 3 each result in a report to the parties concerned and, where appropriate, to authorised third parties. The results from process steps 2 (survey) and 4 (monitoring) form the basis for assessment as described in process step 3. To ensure objective and comparable results, compliance with the present standard is verified exclusively by system-recognised organisations. The decision on system recognition is solely made by ARGE BIO. The status assessment as described on the next page is deemed to be agreed.



ARGE BIO Standard

# VII. Status evaluation



## Assessment of delivery permit (for all criteria in module 1 as well as the criteria marked as minimum requirements in the other modules)

All test criteria in module 1 as well as all criteria of modules 2 to 10 marked as minimum requirements are defined as KO criteria. When these criteria are checked, it is ascertained whether, from *ARGE BIO's* point of view, permission to deliver or sell the organic goods can be confirmed as ARGE BIO-compliant. If this is not the case, deadlines are approved (if permitted), or the delivery or sale of the organic goods concerned with reference to the ARGE BIO Standard (e.g. by using one of the ARGE BIO brands) is prohibited. As the strictest measure, ARGE BIO reserves the right to exclude individual system members - for a limited period of time or permanently - from the possibility of marketing organic products with reference to the ARGE BIO Standard.

| | |
|---|---|
| Delivery status **YES** | ✓ Confirmation of delivery and/or sale |
| Corrective action **DEADLINE** | ✓ Chargeable provision of documents/information that have not been provided<br>✓ Chargeable support for timely correction of deviations<br>✓ Chargeable follow-up inspection |
| Delivery status **NO** | ✓ Exclusion of the lot from being marketed under ARGE BIO brand names and logotypes<br>✓ Exclusion of system participants from marketing products under ARGE BIO brand names and logotypes |

### Reporting

on the fulfilment of requirements
- to the users of the ARGE BIO Standard (clients and system participants)

on identified non-conformities
- to the users of the ARGE BIO Standard (clients and system participants)
- to the organic control body (if affected by the non-conformity)

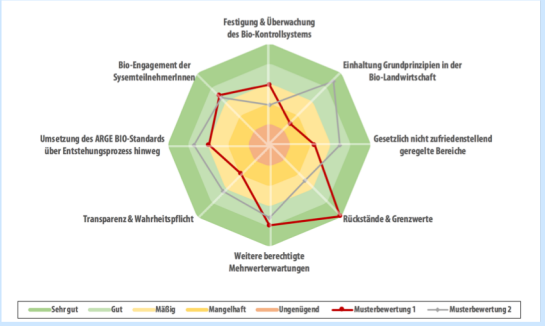
## Description of evaluation procedures (for all evaluation criteria of the modules 2 to 10)

For the evaluation according to the modules 2 to 10 of the ARGE BIO Standard, *ARGE BIO* collects provided or requested information from the system participants. The documented results of those criteria of modules 2 to 10 of the ARGE BIO Standard that are not marked as minimum requirements are transferred into an evaluation according to defined procedures. The evaluation procedure specifies for each test criterion which instrument(s), which auxiliary tool(s) and which calculation method(s) are used for the assessment. For one criterion, several schemes (see description below) may be used in combination. In the evaluation, fixed weighting factors are taken into account, if necessary, in order to do justice to a special significance of individual criteria, sub-chapters and chapters in relation to the formulation of objectives.

| | |
|---|---|
| Evaluation scheme **A2** | When evaluating according to this scheme, the questions formulated in the test criteria are answered with **yes** or **no**, whereby an answer with yes leads to an evaluation with 100 % and no means 0 %. This scheme is used in particular for those criteria which are reviewed by means of checklists during the audit by *ARGE BIO* or for individual criteria checked by the responsible organic control body on the agricultural operation. |
| Evaluation scheme **B3** | In addition to the values of scheme A2, this evaluation scheme also provides for the option **partly** (evaluated with 50 %) in order to reflect a possible partial implementation of the criterion. |
| Evaluation scheme **C5** | Evaluation scheme C5 consists of five values to choose from: **yes/very good** (100 %), **rather yes/good** (75 %), **partly/moderately** (50 %), **rather no/deficient** (25 %) **and no/insufficient** (0 %). This scheme is used when a more detailed classification of the implementation progress is indicated, especially due to the complexity of the requirements. |
| Evaluation scheme **D100** | This evaluation scheme provides for a continuously variable evaluation between 0 and 100 % and is used in particular for criteria that allow a quantitative statement about the results demonstrated by the system participants (for example, turnover share of organic products or share of the system participants' suppliers that comply with the requirements of the criterion). |

### Reporting

- to the users of the ARGE BIO Standard (clients and system participants)





# ARGE BIO Standard
# VIII. Definitions



| | |
|---|---|
| **ARGE BIO** | The non-profit association ARGE BIO. In italics, *ARGE BIO* stands for the persons authorised to represent the association and also for the organisations or persons commissioned or recognised by ARGE BIO to verify the ARGE BIO Standard. |
| **Creation process** | Production process of an organic product along the entire supply chain - including all activities in which the product is not changed (e.g. trade) |
| **Control report** | Report on the conducted organic control issued by the organic control body and countersigned by the system participants |
| **Cross check** | The legally prescribed form of exchange across control bodies when it comes to information exchange between the organic control bodies of companies that have a supply relationship with each other. This information exchange is particularly important when clarifying suspected cases. |
| **Document control** | Procedures for the preparation, review, approval, labelling, distribution and updating of documents |
| **Downstream stages** | Value chain stages that do not relate to or follow agriculture |
| **e.g.** | Abbreviation of "for example" |
| **Entire operation** | The entire operation with all its organisational units and production units |
| **Final packaging** | Packaging in which a product is sold to the final consumer |
| **ILO Core Conventions** | Basic social standards to safeguard labour and human rights in accordance with the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) |
| **Invoicing process** | The invoicing process includes all stages along the value chain where a transfer of ownership takes place. This term is particularly important in distinguishing it from the term "physical supply chain". |
| **Materiality analysis** | Analysis tool commonly used in sustainability management and reporting to determine which topics and fields of work are most relevant for the organisation itself and for its stakeholders. The classification of relevance is based on an organisational and environmental analysis, which on the one hand determines which and how intensively social, ecological and economic impacts (positive and negative) are caused or arise through the organisation's activities. On the other hand, stakeholder expectations regarding the organisation are determined. In this way, material (particularly important) topics - with a high degree of urgency and at the same time great potential for change - can be identified. |
| **Materials** | All resources used by an organisation to produce or package goods and to perform services. This includes auxiliary materials and finished goods that are part of the final product and all supplies that are needed for the manufacturing process but are not part of the final product (e.g. fertiliser, litter for bedding, lubricants, disposable gloves or office supplies, but not fuel). |
| **Minimum requirements** | Those criteria of modules 2-10 of the ARGE BIO Standard which are defined as KO criteria and which are used to check whether the delivery or sale of organic goods with one of the ARGE BIO trademarks can be permitted from the point of view of *ARGE BIO*. |
| **Organic control body** | A body appointed in accordance with the relevant organic regulation, which is authorised by accreditation to inspect organic operations with regard to compliance with the corresponding legal regulations. The term is used as a synonym for the term "organic certification body" commonly used in Switzerland. |
| **Origin of the agricultural raw material** | Indication of the place of production of the agricultural raw materials (where grown in origin) of which the product is composed |
| **Partially converted operation** | Operation or operating unit in which both organic and non-organic products are produced, processed and/or traded. ARGE BIO specifies that with regard to the risk of contamination and mixing, "partial conversion" is to be considered on a site-specific basis and that with regard to the plausibility check of mass balance, all relevant organisational parts within the group of operations are to be included. |
| **Physical supply chain** | The supply chain includes all stages along the value chain through which the product passes physically. This term is particularly important in distinguishing it from the term "invoicing process". |
| **Responsible company/ operation** | The company responsible for the accuracy of the information on packaging; from an organic point of view: The company obliged to implement the organic regulations |
| **Risk country** | Countries listed by ARGE BIO in Appendix II, which are assessed by ARGE BIO as particularly risky on the basis of various indicators relating to the origin of organic products |
| **Slightly processed** | Slightly processed refers the following manufacturing steps applied to fresh organic fruit and vegetables: Harvesting, washing, cutting, ripening, steaming or similar heating processes for mono-products, storage, calibration, laser branding, stickering, packaging |
| **Subcontractors** | Persons/organisations that are entrusted with a value-adding step on behalf of the system participants or carry out activities for them (e.g. storage, transport, contract processing), without transfer of ownership. |
| **System participants** | All actors audited for compliance with the present standard |
| **Unabbreviated form** | The organic reference in its full form, e.g. "from controlled organic farming" or "from controlled organic aquaculture", by the use of which it is made clear that organic products are always made from ingredients of agricultural origin and that the production is subject to a legally prescribed control system. |