National and Regional Initiatives

ISCC 11-01-14
V 1.16   11-01-14

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Document title: ISCC 102

                    National and Regional Initiatives

Approved by: **Date:**

Issue date:

Application date:

Content

1   Introduction

ISCC initially is a centrally organised and internationally oriented certification system. The standard documents are meant to be seen as international standards, valid in all countries and regions where parts of the value chain would like to participate in the ISCC system.

In reasonable cases, it might make sense that ISCC is represented by an organisational base in different countries or regions. Reasons for this could be market access and administrative support for the headquarter, as well as the need for national or regional specifications of international standards. This concerns only a specification with effective reference to the international standards. An autonomous development of national or regional standards is not possible. All national or regional specifications are subject to recognition by the Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung (German Authority for Agriculture and Food (BLE)), the relevant German authority for the recognition of certification schemes. ISCC cannot recognize national or regional specifications itself.

2   Scope

The implementation of ISCC initiatives on a national or regional level.

The respective initiatives are bound to the full and superior ISCC rules and standards.

3   Normative references

As a basic principal, all relevant ISCC documents are valid for the scope of application. The normative references display the documents whose contents are directly linked and have to be considered as conjoint points.

Relevant references:

ISCC   101   ISCC Statutes

ISCC   201   System Basics

4 National and Regional Initiatives

4.1 Basics

Based on the statutes, ISCC differs in three versions of National and Regional Initiatives:

(1) ISCC Contact point: A contact point might be a natural person or the representative of a legal person, who is member of ISCC. The contact point supports the objectives of ISCC on the national or regional level. A contact point is typically implemented in countries or regions where ISCC is hardly represented.

(2) National or Regional Technical Working Group: A National or Regional Technical Working Group is implemented where adjustments of the ISCC certification criteria to the particular national and regional conditions have to be made.

(3) ISCC Office: With rising demands in organisation and administration and if a National or Regional Technical Working Group already exists, a National or Regional ISCC Office can be implemented.

All three versions can be applied with national or regional references. In case of national initiatives, the countries' activities only apply to the particular country the Initiative is located in. Regional initiatives can be implemented, if natural, geographic or organisational circumstances demand a cross-national initiative, which is binding upon all joint countries of the region.

The initiatives differ in procuration and recognition procedures.

4.2 ISCC Contact point

4.2.1 Objectives and tasks

The ISCC Contact point mainly provides information about the ISCC system in countries where the system is hardly represented. The main tasks of a Contact point are:

- Information of interested stakeholders

- Acquisition of new participants and members

- Provision of ISCC with national and regional information

- Support for founding a National or Regional Technical Working Group, in case this seems to be reasonable and necessary in the according region

- Reports for the management board in written form at least once a year about the activities of the Contact

The Contact only acts as an „Information platform". Documents and other material are not created.

The implementation of a Contact Office can be initiated by board.

4.2.2 Organisational requirements

The Contact can be implemented by an ISCC member in the respective country. The following elements must be given:

- Name and contact address of the responsible person at the Contact point

- Contact address (address, telephone number, fax, mail address) for the Contact point

- Details about the minimum infrastructure (usable rooms, storage facilities for forms, documents, brochures, etc.).

4.2.3 Recognition

The Recognition of the Contact has to be applied for at the ISCC Board and is possible with little formal effort.

The responsible person shall offer a minimum qualification in knowledge about the ISCC system. Membership of ISCC or the participation in the certification system can act as an evidence of knowledge.

The application for the recognition of a Contact shall be supported by two ISCC members.

The decision about the recognition is made by the board during the regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or by postal ballots.

The recognition is granted for two years. The Contact normally determines its activities with the implementation of a National or Regional Technical Working Group in the according area.

4.3 National or Regional Technical Working Groups

4.3.1 Objectives ands tasks

National or Regional Technical Working Groups are an advanced stage of on-site-initiatives. They can be initiated to attend substantial ISCC processes in different countries and regions, to ensure the stakeholder involvement and to carry out adjustments to the ISCC standards, if necessary. Such an adjustment or specification is subject to recognition by BLE, the relevant German authority for the recognition of certification schemes. ISCC cannot recognize national or regional adjustments and specifications itself. The implementation of such groups is particularly reasonable when the capabilities of the Contact are no longer efficient to attend the requirements of the ISCC Process on site.

The main tasks of National or Regional Technical Working Groups are:

- Organisation of stakeholder involvement in the respective country or region

- National or regional specification of international ISCC standards

- Support of certification bodies with information about local conditions

- Support of ISCC in the procedure of risk assessment in the according country or region

- Special consideration of the local regulatory framework

- Acquisition of participants

- Diffusion of the ISCC brand and label

- Mediation of local conflicts

4.3.2 Organisational requirements

National or Regional Technical Working Groups shall be organised along the lines of the formal principles of the ISCC Statutes. The following provisions are binding:

(1) The Working Group shall be specified by location, responsible representation and register of members.

(2) A clearly bordered geographic area for the Working Group shall be defined.

(3) The Working Group shall be lead and represented by three persons, representing the three stakeholder groups in the ISCC board.

(4) Statutes, respectively by-laws to document responsibilities as well as transparent regulations concerning working methods and decision processes shall be drafted by the working group.

(5) In public, the Working Group regards the ISCC regulations for the use of the logo and the brand. Beyond that, the given ISCC CI shall be used. Where local aspects require adjustments of the CI, an authorisation by ISCC is needed.

(6) Complying with the conditions stated in (6), the Working Group may independently develop and distribute information material, guidelines, brochures and other marketing material.

(7) Adjustments of international standards with respect to national or regional conditions are subject to recognition by BLE, the relevant German authority for the recognition of certification systems. See chapter 4.3.4 of this document.

4.3.3 Recognition

The recognition of a National or Regional Technical Working Group has to be applied for at the ISCC board.

Documents recording the compliance with the organisational conditions shall be included in the application.

The decision for a preliminary recognition is made by the board during regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or by postal ballots.

The decision for a definite recognition is made by the general assembly during regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or by postal ballots. The recognition is granted for five years. After this period, the extension for recognition has to be applied for.

The National or Regional Technical Working Group shall not start their activities before the temporary recognition took place. If ISCC relevant activities are carried out before this date, a Contact, if not already existing, shall be initiated.

4.3.4. Rules for the adaption of standards

One of the main duties of National or Regional Technical Working Groups is the local specification of the international ISCC Standards. As this duty implies the core of the worldwide ISCC activities, there are particular regulations.

The local initiatives are not allowed to develop specifications autonomously and without relation to the existing international ISCC standards. The final national or regional specification is subject to recognition by the BLE.

4.3.4.1 Adaption of standards in national or regional specifications

When National or Regional Technical Working Groups come to the conclusion that the superior international ISCC Standards are inapplicable to the local circumstances, a specification of the international Standards can be developed. The specification shall imply the following requirements:

(1) A direct relation to the existing sustainability criteria, respectively other standards

(2) Substantial changes may result in including the international standard in the specification to avoid the imperative of considering several similar documents.

(3) Changes, especially the innovation or deletion of standards (criteria/indicators) shall be justified.

4.3.4.2 Recognition of national or regional specifications

National or regional specifications are assessed and accepted in a recognition procedure. The recognition procedures proceed as follows:

(1) The National or Regional Technical Working Group submits the specification to the board. Besides the specification, a document showing the deviations from the superior international standard shall be added to the informal application for recognition. The deviations shall be justified.

(2) Based on the application, the management board decides whether the adjustment to an international ISCC Standard is essential. In this case, the board hands over the specification to an independent technical expert to assess the compliance with the ISCC rules. In case adjustments are insignificant, the assessment can be carried out by the board.

(3) In case of essential adjustments, the Technical Working Group shall perform a field test before submitting for recognition. A certification body notified by ISCC shall assess and confirm the practicability of the adjusted standard in the context of the field test.

(4) Objects of assessment are the rules concerning the development of standards and the adequacy of the adjustments of the international standards. In case of field tests, the results shall be assessed as well.

(5) Based on the assessment, the board, respectively the independent technical expert gives a recommendation to the general assembly whether the specification shall be implemented.

(6) During regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or postal ballots, the General Assembly decides on the acceptance of the recommendation. If the recommendation is accepted it must be turned in to the BLE for official recognition.

4.4 ISCC Office

4.4.1 Objectives and tasks

With increasing participation of ISCC in a country or region, an ISCC Office can be implemented to manage the Regional or National Technical Working Groups and to support the ISCC Management. A Technical Working Group is condition for the implementation of an ISCC Office.

A national or regional office particularly undertakes the following tasks:

- taking over management activities to disburden the Technical Working Group

- taking over ISCC management activities for the respective area

- extended national or regional marketing.

4.4.2 Organisational requirements

The following rules are precondition for the implementation of an ISCC Office:

- A Technical Working Group shall exist or shall be founded in an expanding region at the same time as the ISCC Office is implemented.

- The ISCC Office implements a quality management system according to the one of ISCC.

- The financing is provided by local contributions and proportional royalties for the respective country or area by ISCC. Details have to be arranged in specific contractual agreements between ISCC and the Office. These contracts have to be transparent for all ISCC initiatives. The Board negotiates these contracts and the general assembly has to confirm them.

4.4.3 Recognition

The recognition of an ISCC Office shall be applied for at the ISCC Board.

Documents recording the compliance with the organisational requirements shall be included in the application.

The decision for a preliminary recognition is made by the Board during regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or by postal ballots.

The decision for a final recognition is made by the General Assembly during regular meetings, extraordinary meetings or by postal ballots.

The recognition is granted for five years. After this period, the extension for recognition has to be applied for.

The Office shall not start activities before the preliminary recognition has taken place. If ISCC relevant activities have to be carried out before this date, they shall be carried out by the Technical Working Group.