



**International Organic
Inspectors Association**

Strategic Plan

**Accepted on
January 20, 2022**



IOIA Mission: to address issues and concerns relevant to organic inspectors, to provide quality inspector training, and to promote consistency and integrity in the organic certification process.



A MESSAGE FROM IOIA LEADERSHIP

IOIA stands at a pivotal time for organic inspectors and a pivotal time for our membership and training organization. Strong global demand for organic products and increasingly complex supply chains pose unprecedented challenges for the certification sector. New legislation around the world continually re-defines the term “organic” as inspectors work to protect organic integrity. Experience is exiting the profession faster than new inspectors can be onboarded. Emerging trends that are impacting IOIA include developing competition in inspector training, and some inspectors less likely to join membership organizations.

In spite of these challenges and a global pandemic, IOIA delivered 60 training events in 2020 in four languages, working within a network of international cosponsors and partners. In much of the world, IOIA is the industry default trainer of new inspectors. We launched 2020 with “Conversation for a New Decade” in San Antonio, Texas with our annual meeting. Inspector members from a dozen countries connect through IOIA via annual meeting, town halls, the inspector Forum. In 2020, IOIA held 17 Town Halls and developed remote inspection training resources to support inspectors. In 2021, we hosted our first online annual meeting with record attendance by one-fourth of our inspectors. IOIA has been the consistent, respected voice for organic inspectors for 30 years. IOIA hosts certifier-inspector dialogue calls, the board meets regularly with the Accredited Certifiers Association, and the Policy Comment Committee prepares robust comments when policy issues affect inspectors. IOIA owns its office building and maintains a strong financial position.

This strategic plan focuses on three priorities: Training, Membership, and Operations. It takes bold steps to continue to diversify the training program, expand inspector member services, increase organizational resilience, and intentionally implement the principle of continuous improvement throughout.

- IOIA training products will evolve with the sector, expand capacity, and grow skills for organic inspectors and other stakeholders.
- Advocate for the inspector profession to the organic sector, while engaging stakeholders, to increase membership benefits and grow the community.
- Implement a clear and structured operations protocol that, holds IOIA accountable for continuous improvement within the organization, and advances the IOIA mission.

These critical priorities were identified prior to a two-day planning retreat with the board meeting in-person in Colorado. All of these priorities are steeped with intention to have a global impact and to position IOIA to act proactively rather than reactively.

The board has developed a one-year work plan and a strategy to move the plan forward the next two years by annually developing a work plan in tandem with the budget. Guiding principles for the work plan are accountability and continuous improvement. When fully implemented, this plan promises to keep IOIA in the forefront of organic training, provide compelling membership benefits and incentives for members to join IOIA as their professional association, amplify the voice of inspectors, and create a more resilient organizational structure.


Margaret Scoles, Executive Director


Rachel Cherry Myers, Chair of the Board

IOIA's Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats

IOIA exists in a very different environment than five or ten years ago. The organic industry continues to grow by double digits year over year. As the industry grows in size and complexity, the importance of organic integrity has never been greater. Rigorous inspection is one of the key set-apart measures for the organic sector. However, the qualified organic inspector pool is not keeping pace with growth of the industry creating a vulnerability that cannot be ignored. The Board of Directors recognizes the important role IOIA can play in facing this growing challenge head on in collaboration with sector partners. IOIA has always aimed to represent organic inspectors with a unified voice.

The following key areas of IOIA's work were evaluated as part of the strategic planning: IOIA membership services and member's user experience, IOIA training, internal organization administration, industry-wide inspector credentialing, strategic partners, international activities, and the National Organic Program's 2021 Human Capital request for applications and corresponding awards.



STRENGTHS

- IOIA has many loyal and dedicated members who are committed to the organization and value the organization's contributions to the organic industry. Member retention is high
- IOIA has a diversity of members both geographically and across different areas of the organic sector
- IOIA represents the organic inspector profession with a unified voice
- IOIA's trainings are recognized for their quality amongst inspectors, certifiers, and governments
- IOIA is regarded as a premier training institution for organic inspectors with a knowledge base and expert pool recognized as the best in the world
- IOIA sets industry standards for training in developing organic markets
- IOIA was awarded one cooperative agreement from the NOP request for applications regarding human capital released in Spring 2021, and is listed as a partner on three out of the eight other projects awarded
- IOIA has remained financially stable despite the pandemic

WEAKNESSES

- The value of the IOIA membership is perceived differently across member types
- There have been fewer early career inspectors joining IOIA
- Membership recruitment efforts are low
- IOIA's online trainings are being compared to other online trainings that at times are considered higher quality, more engaging, and hosted on more user friendly platforms
- IOIA's training structure has not evolved as rapidly as the industry; and are cost prohibitive for some
- The current IOIA staff is under resourced and taking on duties outside of their original job descriptions
- IOIA's international membership activities are limited
- The industry is more complicated, but the inspector pay structure has stayed fairly flat

OPPORTUNITIES



- IOIA can continue to be an influential representative voice for the inspector profession and has a role to play in improving the inspector profession
- IOIA's loyal membership includes some of the most influential organizations in the organic industry
- IOIA's training model can evolve to better serve the changing industry
- IOIA can offer more advanced trainings the take in to consideration new inspection techniques
- IOIA can create new revenue streams with new types of training models
- IOIA can restructure staff to meet the needs of the organization
- Organic integrity could greatly improve when qualified inspectors are hired for appropriate inspections
- IOIA can create robust partnerships with new counterparts globally, especially in emerging markets
- IOIA can set a path for apprenticeship models to be adopted globally through the IOIA/NOP Cooperative Agreement on Human Capital

THREATS

- IOIA members may have competing priorities making it challenging to advocate for one priority versus another at times
- If the independent inspector pool increases, but IOIA membership does not, IOIA might lose relevance and reputation in the industry as being a representative voice for the independent inspector profession
- IOIA may face a reduction in revenue due to diminishing income from membership and training
- There are more trainings available now than before from a variety of training hosts, including free trainings
- Certifiers are hiring staff inspectors and developing their own trainings that align with their certification style; further, in-house staff inspectors are less likely to join IOIA
- International stakeholders may branch off if activities and perspectives are too North American centric
- New volunteers are not stepping up at the same rate as existing volunteers are stepping back
- Organic integrity is jeopardized when unqualified inspectors are assigned to complex inspections
- New stakeholders are attempting activities that were once the exclusive work of IOIA
- IOIA has a limited trainer pool

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



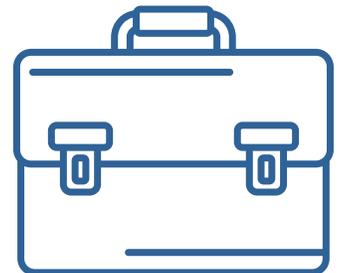
OBJECTIVE 1

Design IOIA training products to evolve with the sector, expand capacity, and grow skills for organic inspectors and other stakeholders



OBJECTIVE 2

Advocate for the inspector profession to the organic sector, while engaging stakeholders, to increase membership benefits and grow the community



OBJECTIVE 3

Implement a clear and structured operations protocol that holds IOIA accountable for continuous improvement within the organization, and advances the IOIA mission



OBJECTIVE 1

Design IOIA training products to evolve with the sector, expand capacity, and grow skills for organic inspectors and other stakeholder



STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE 1

- Develop and implement a mechanism for gathering training participant feedback electronically
- Create a plan for establishing a Training Advisory Council
- Develop protocol for sharing out progress of the project
- Generate a replicable model for apprenticeship
- Update and initiate new policies for enrollment and fees
- Develop and launch press strategy to increase enrollment
- Host training for livestock and processing in Canada
- Ensure the new Training Advisory Council includes a focus on basic training
- Develop virtual training calendar for monthly professional development
- Create Residue Sampling webinar
- Host a one-day advanced training in Saskatchewan, Canada in conjunction with the Organic Connections conference

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. 50% of IOIA basic training participants report a 75% or higher satisfaction rating no later than 6 months after training; 25% of IOIA basic training participants report a 75% or higher continued satisfaction rating no later than 12 months after training.
2. Successful development of an apprenticeship program model funded by the \$250,000 cooperative agreement with USDA NOP
3. Increase basic training revenue by 15% by 2023
4. Grow number of training registrations by at least 150 participants for trainings other than Basic Training also referred to as the “beyond basic” training set in 2022

OBJECTIVE 2

Advocate for the inspector profession to the organic sector, while engaging stakeholders, to increase membership benefits and grow the community



STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE 2

- Create and lead a human capital working group in collaboration with key industry partners
- Establish regular policy committee meetings to gather membership feedback on IOIA public comments
- Fund inspectors to write and deliver comments in person at National Organic Standards Board Meetings
- Actively participate in 98% of meetings for funded NOP human capital agreements, highlighting IOIA positions and programs
- Develop virtual training calendar for monthly membership engagement based on membership feedback
- Eliminate barriers to forum participation
- Partner with an NOP Human Capital project partner to host a cultivation event for prospective members
- Create a 1-pager for the value of inspector qualifications
- Evaluate the implications of new NOP Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule once released and implement targeted outreach from the BOD for conversations

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. One newly formed and active working group focused pressing issues for the inspector profession
2. Respond to 100% of requests for written and/or verbal public comments that meet the criteria of the IOIA comment policy
3. Increase inspector member engagement by at least three interactions per member with unique IOIA content
4. Establish 3 new strategic partners to evolve industry conversation on credentialing

OBJECTIVE 3

Implement a clear and structured operations protocol that, holds IOIA accountable for continuous improvement within the organization, and advances the IOIA mission



STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE 3

- Create, edit and publish one new Board of Directors onboarding packet
- Evaluate the Executive Director and staff annually
- Write a procedure for implementing reviews, analyzing results, and providing feedback
- Document reviews, feedback delivered, and expectations for next review
- Evaluate current IOIA capacity and identify needs
- Contract/Hire necessary positions
- Track & report progress on strategic plan objectives quarterly
- Identify a subject matter expert for IOIA's information management system who is chiefly responsible for the system and its utilization, not the Executive Director
- Determine how IOIA's new information management system is being used and evaluate opportunities to expand efficiencies with the available technology
- Create a structure so that 2023 workplan decisions are made prior to 2023

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. Enable new board members to effectively participate in BOD meetings and make strategic decisions within 45 days of BOD appointment
2. Evaluate 100% of IOIA staff annually
3. Increase IOIA capacity to successfully implement the strategic plan
4. 100% of 2022 strategic plan strategies are implemented
5. Conduct bi-annual reviews of IOIA information management system
6. One consolidated workplan and budget approved for 2023 strategic initiatives

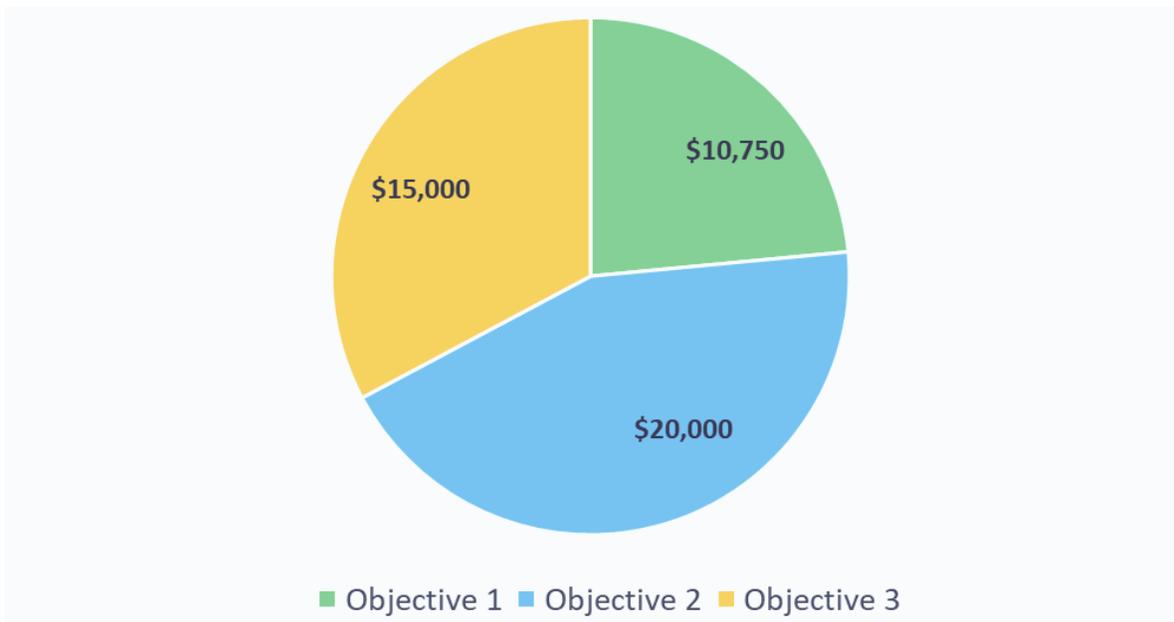
2022 IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET



**Total Budget
Requested**



\$47,750 USD



IOIA MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITIES



Please contact respective chairs or board liaisons to join that committee using their contact info below.

Accreditation: Chair: Pam Sullivan, 831.277.3557. Board Liaison: Rachel Cherry Myers, 716.472.4331.

Purpose: To oversee the inspector accreditation program including to review, adjudicate and propose policy and criteria used to accredit inspectors. To formulate accreditation standards and procedures.

Asia Pacific Committee: Chair: Mutsumi Sakuyoshi, Email: +81.545.32.8585. Board Liaison: Chuck Mitchell, 519.378.3885. Purpose: Give voice to Asia members concerns.

Bylaws: Chair: Al Johnson, 609.730.0939. Board Liaison: Pending. Purpose: Ongoing response to bylaws issues.

Canadian: Chair: Bill Barkley, 613.543.0491. Board Liaison: Janine Gibson, 204.434.6018
Purpose: Give voice to Canadian members concerns.

Editorial Review: Chair: Pending. Open Board Liaison: Pending. Purpose: Ongoing as needed to review all IOIA publications and materials considered for sale.

Ethics: Chair: Joyce Ford, 507.454.8310. Board Liaison: Janine Gibson, 204.434.6018.
Criteria for membership is past board or alternate service. Created to deal with complaints received by the IOIA office based on the Codes of Ethics and Conduct.

Finance: Chair/Board Liaison: Allan Benjamin, Home: 573.355.4490. Purpose: Advise board on fiscal matters, combined with fundraising committee.

Fundraising: Chair: Janine Gibson, 204.434.6018. Board Liaison: Heather Donald, 814.404.1504.

Latin American: Chair: Philippe Descamps, +506-8823-4563. Board Liaison: Chuck Mitchell, 519.378.3885. Purpose: Give voice to Latin American members concerns.

Membership: Chair: Eric Feutz, 660.202.7383. Board Liaison: Janine Gibson, 204.434.6018.
Purpose: Develop membership services and numbers.

Nominations: Chair: Eric Feutz, 660.202.7383. Board Liaison: Janine Gibson, 204.434.6018.
Purpose: Prepare annual ballot for Board of Directors.

Policy Comment Committee: Chair: Rachel Cherry Myers, 716.472.4331. Board Liaison: T Layhew, 262.812.9732. Purpose: Use IOIA Comment Policy and Decision Tree to determine whether IOIA will submit comments on local, state, national or international issues in the organic industry that would impact inspectors and/or the inspection process; or issues outside of the organic industry which impact independent contractors. Draft and/or review comments as needed.

Scholarship: Co-Chairs: Arthur Bassett and JJ Mack. Board Liaison: Pending. Purpose: Ongoing review and selection of scholarship applications.



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For more information about this strategic plan, to see detailed workplans, to join IOIA, or to volunteer on one of IOIA's member committees please email ioia@ioia.net.