



Biodynamic Advisors Network

Peer Review Quality System – Guidelines

<https://www.biodynamic-advisors.org/>

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1 History and Vision

The purpose of the Peer Review Quality System for International Biodynamic Advisors is to establish a common basis for qualitative advisory work in biodynamic Agriculture. In this way, we aim to form a network of national and international advisers to strengthen and further develop the biodynamic movement.

The impulse for such a structure originally came from the Biodynamic Advisors Group, which, in 2015, developed a charter for biodynamic advisors, which still forms the basis of the quality system today. It presents the jointly agreed principles of the biodynamic advisory method, deals with ethical matters, as well as professional and personal dedication to the biodynamic movement. The current version can be downloaded from the website. Developed through a participatory process, the quality system was implemented with the help of the Section for Agriculture and the Biodynamic Federation-Demeter International (BFDI) and has been launched in 2020. Since then, it has undergone several developments and has been renewed again in 2026.

The Peer Review Quality System offers future advisors an overview of the specific requirements and provides a mechanism for greater transparency. While there are some minimum criteria that have to be met in order to participate in the quality system, it also takes account of the different individual profiles. This kind of inclusive quality assurance and development demonstrate an appreciation of diversity as well as the demand for qualitative, self-responsible advice in biodynamics, as promoted by the Section for Agriculture and Biodynamic Federation-Demeter International (BFDI).

Participation in the Peer Review Quality System is open to all biodynamic advisors. Requirements are the agreement with the principles of biodynamic advisory work (charter), the fulfilment of the minimum criteria and the willingness to develop further.

2 Charter of the International Advisory Group

The charter of the International Advisory Group presents the jointly agreed principles of the biodynamic advisory method. It is the basis of the quality system. The charter deals with ethical matters such as transparency, respect, freedom of choice and confidentiality, as well as professional and personal dedication to the biodynamic movement. The charter was drawn up in 2015. The current version can be downloaded from the website www.biodynamic-advisors.org.

Note: If the charter is modified or rewritten, the advisor will automatically be requested to review and re-sign the charter at the login.

3 Your Participation

Entry to the quality system requires minimum criteria to ensure an adequate level of practical experience and professionalism:

3.1 Minimum criteria

Solid background in Biodynamic farming/agronomy:

- Minimum of 3 years of on-farm practical experience in biodynamics

- **AND** a vocational training in agriculture or in a biodynamic farm/Demeter farm or alternatively a university degree in agronomy or comparable training or experience.

Applied knowledge and understanding of the Agriculture Course:

- Possess clarity and understanding of biodynamic principles and the foundations of the farm organism and individuality.

Holistic farming:

- Understand holistically the processes involved in the development of living soils, the growth of healthy crops, the importance of biodiversity and the ecology of the landscape as well as the role and importance of animals on farm.
- Understand the importance and seeks to guide and support the social and human development of the farm, both within and around it.
- The advisors are capable of suggesting integrated management practices appropriate to the local situation that best enhance the health and sustainability of the farm organism.

Individual Professional Skills

- Training, expertise or proven work experience in the listed fields of working/areas of expertise and in the listed countries/languages (portfolio and online profile)

Biodynamic Preparations

- Convey a clear picture of how the importance of the Biodynamic preparations work in the development of the entire agricultural organism, raising awareness of the forces contained beyond the substance.
- Ability to advise in specific situations on the use of biodynamic preparations. The advisor has hands on experience with the making of, the storage and the application of all Biodynamic preparations.

Biodynamic Principles & Demeter Standards

- Knowledge of International and relevant national Demeter Standards and understand the Biodynamic principles underlying the regulations.
- Assess the rigor of regulations according to the local reality of each farm and know how and when to apply for exceptions if necessary
- Familiarize his or her with the broader organic certification standards relevant to the trading markets.

Conversion or Development Plan

- Ability to elaborate participatory and context-adapted Conversion or Development plans
- Have accompanied and/or guided at least one successful conversion process from beginning to end, either in collaboration with an experienced recognized advisors or on its own and it can present proof of it.

Social & education skills.

- Is aware of his/her responsibility and strives to further develop his/her skills in the following areas: Listening and communication skills, facilitation and moderations skills, adult education methodologies.

3.2 The personal portfolio

The continuous process of learning, both formal and informal is kept and recorded in the personal Portfolio. Throughout the years, the Portfolio stays the primary documentation instrument in the Quality System.

By periodically evaluating and critically examining our own activity and working methods it is possible to identify gaps in knowledge and to promote our individual development through suitable further training courses. The portfolio is a working tool to document diploma's, further training, self-reflection, and additional professional development. On one hand the personal portfolio serves as a tool to support this individual process on the other hand it forms both the base for the Peer Reviewers to verify the entry qualification as well as that it serves as groundwork for the next Peer Review.

1.

The personal portfolio does not need to be emailed or uploaded but it can be shared with the Peer reviewers in preparation for the Peer Review which takes place every three years. It should therefore be updated regularly and at least every three years for the next Peer Review. The portfolio contains two basic elements: **The Profile** and the **Advisory Concept**.

Advisory profile

The advisory profile is based on the Curriculum Vitae with accompanying certificates and references, where the fulfilled minimum criteria must be documented. It also shows the experience, competences, and expertise in relation to biodynamic advisory work (professional skills, methodological skills, personal and social skills). Parts of this will be online visible as the Advisor's official Online Profile after successful entry.

Important: The Advisor's profile – especially the one which is online visible on the website, should be updated regularly! Reviewing it is part of the Peer Review every three years.

Advisory Concept

The advisory concept – as a further element of the portfolio – covers the important points of the adviser's own advisory practice. It can contain the advisor's basic attitude and advisory practice, reference to theory, aims, methodology, communication method, contract process, client feedback, evaluation, etc. The advisory concept should be updated regularly and at least every three years.

3.3 The Process for participation

There are a series of steps and condition involved in the process for participation in the Quality System. Note that the steps listed below are summarized. Some components of this process are explained in more detail in this document.

1. The applicant should **read these guidelines** on the peer review quality system for international biodynamic advisors **in their entirety**.
2. The applicant must **complete the online registration** (<https://www.biodynamic-advisors.org/en/>).
3. To make further steps the applicant must **confirm** that he/she meets the required the **minimum conditions** (see [section 3.1](#)) **in the contract area**.
4. The applicant is required to **organise a Peer Review** with two colleagues (peer-reviewers) from the quality system (see [section 4](#)). For the Peer Review the applicant must **create** an individual

portfolio with advisory concept and competence profile (see [section 3.2](#)) and share it with his/her peer reviewers. *Note: there are some requirements when selecting your peer reviewers (see [section 4.1](#))*

5. Once the Peer Review has been carried out, an **Admission of Decision** for entry to the Quality System is made by the peer reviewers. The peer reviewers will receive notice of **confirmation of or rejection link** for inclusion into the Quality System by mail. (see [section 4.2](#))
6. If participation has been confirmed, the applicant can **create a public profile** online. The profile will be published online as soon as both peer reviewers have confirmed acceptance via the received email link.
7. In case the applicant is informed of a **Rejection** of his/her application, the applicant may appeal the decision or re-apply (see [section 4.4](#)).
8. Applicants, once confirmed in the quality system, are expected to **self-reflect** continuously on quality assurance and personal and professional development, supported by additional training.
9. The advisor's portfolio should be updated regularly; public profiles in particular **should be updated at least once a year** (see [section 3.2](#)).
10. After three years, the advisor must undergo a **Renewal of Recognition** process (see [section 4.3](#)). Without a timely renewal of recognition, the public profile will be taken offline.

3.4 Financial Contribution

Possible financial contributions of participants of the Peer Review Quality System are not yet requested (May 2026) but may be part of the system in the future.

4 Peer Reviews as tool for further development of high-quality advisory work

High quality biodynamic advisory work can be provided through continuous self-reflection and periodic professional development. The peer reviews with two peers (colleagues) are the key tool to guarantee and further develop the quality of the Biodynamic advisory service and ensure the creation of transparency and trust. Another purpose is to foster peer exchange, peer learning and through this further development. The peer review fulfils partially or completely the task of a higher authority. Each participant, each peer reviewer thus assumes full responsibility for their decisions and reports. The peer review is being held, if possible, at a physical meeting, otherwise remotely.

A Peer Review with two colleagues takes place **upon entry to the quality system**. One aim is to verify if the applicant fulfils the minimum criteria, another aim is to get to know each other, to promote peer empowerment and collaboration.

Every three years advisors must undergo a process of **Renewal of Recognition** in the Quality System. **The purpose** of the Renewal of Recognition review is not to verify qualifications as this was done with the Entry Peer-review process. Rather, the Renewal Process is a personal development conversation that should focus on the processes the advisor has gone through during the last period. It is a **constructive process** that invites to reflect and to share common challenges and experiences among colleagues. The meeting should be considered as an **opportunity for learning and development** not only for advisors, but also for peers and colleagues. The applicant is responsible for selecting and contacting the peer colleagues to organize the peer review meeting.

4.1 Selection of the Peer Reviewers

The advisor actively and consciously selects peer reviewers to ensure a constructive and positive learning experience. The names of peer review colleagues will be listed in the advisor's online profile.

There are some necessary criteria to consider when selecting peer reviewers:

- The Peer Review must always be conducted by two peer colleagues who are already recognized participants of the system and who have had their second peer review (after 3 years). **This necessary criterion is already considered in the automatic selection.**
- The competence of the peer reviewers should **meet the speciality of the to-be-reviewed applicant.** The profiles can be viewed and studied in the directory.
- Additionally, the applicant should ensure that the peer reviewers meet the following recommended criteria:
 - Peer reviewers with whom he or she is relatively unfamiliar, to ensure peer reviewer neutrality
 - Peer reviewers with a strong anthroposophical knowledge base.
 - Peer reviewers with training qualification on reviewing techniques and methodologies.
 - Peer-reviewers cannot be advisors and inspector at the same time.
- **RENEWAL PEER REVIEW:** One of the peer reviewers should be from the Entry Peer Review process. One peer reviewer should be new to the process.

4.2 Entry Peer Review Process

1. At the first entry peer review the colleagues will verify if the applicant fulfils the compulsory **minimum criteria** to apply to the quality systems (see [section 3.1](#)). Relevant information will be verified based on **the personal portfolio** (see [section 3.2](#)), on the basis of the documents submitted conversion or development plans and through the conversation.
2. The advisor and the peer reviewers will define the key learning tasks for the next period. Peer reviewers may define further conditions for the next approval in 3 years. These will form the basis for the exchange in the next peer review.
3. The most important information from the review is captured in a common report or two individual written reports written by the peer reviewers. You can use the template for the peer-review process for guidance (within the internal advisor's website). The reports must be accepted by all three parties. They will serve as a basis for the next Peer Review for Renewal of Recognition in 3 years.
4. After the Peer Review the applicant confirms that the peer review has been conducted in the system by creating a new peer review. He/she chooses the peer reviewers who conducted the peer review and enters the date of the peer review in the contract area (www.biodynamic-advisors.org). This generates an automatic email to the peer reviewers in which they can click on a link to confirm or can click on a link to reject the applicant.
Important: PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE REVIEWERS CHECK THEIR SPAM
5. Confirmation of or rejection from inclusion in the Quality System will be officially communicated to the applicant by the colleagues via the confirmation/rejection link, received beforehand from the online system.

- In case entry to the Quality System is **CONFIRMED by both peer reviewers** the Advisor will join the network of national and international advisor and will officially be able to publish his/her public profile in the Quality System website (<https://www.biodynamic-advisors.org>). From this moment it is the advisor's own responsibility to fill in the public profile truthfully and to update it annually. The names of the peer reviewers are automatically listed in the advisor's public online profile.
- In case entry to the Quality System is **REJECTED** by one or both peer reviewer, the applicant can appeal the decision or re-apply (see [section 4.5](#))

4.3 Renewal of Recognition – Peer Review Process

1. The Online System will invite every advisor with an automatic email at respectively **half a year** and **at 3 months** before the 3-year period finishes. This date is based on the date of the last peer review (registered Peer Review Date). **Important:** *Please be aware that these reminders could also land in the spam, folder. It is your own responsibility to renew your recognition in time – please not your renewal date for yourself too.*
2. When **selecting suitable peer reviewers** for the conduction of the Renewal of Recognition Peer Reviews, the following aspect should be considered: One of the peer reviewers should be from the Entry Peer Review process, one peer reviewer should be new to the process! Check out all the necessary criteria to consider when selecting peer reviewers in [section 4.1](#).
3. The **personal Portfolio** (see [section 3.2](#)) and the public profile online need to be **updated**. Relevant further professional training should be documented in the updated Portfolio. Also, case descriptions, achievements and challenges can be described in the Portfolio to support the in-depth conversation with background information. The portfolio and the written report from the last peer review can be shared with the peer reviewers as basis for the review.
4. The recognized advisor is required to organize the Peer Review. Following **Key Aspects characterize the Renewal of Recognition Process:**
 - Use the Peer Review as a personal development conversation that focus on the processes the advisor has gone through during the last period. It is a **constructive process** that invites to reflect and to share common challenges and experiences among colleagues
 - Relevant further professional training should be documented in the updated **Portfolio** and can be shared with the reviewers. Also, case descriptions, achievements and challenges can be described in the Portfolio to support the in-depth conversation with background information.
 - The **online advisor's profile** should be reviewed together, is it up to date? Does it reflect the current practice of the advisor? Is it understandable and complete?
 - If **conditions or suggestions for improvements** were proposed during the entry peer-review process, these should be identified and reviewed during the conversation. In the case of Demeter recognition, the received letter upon entry should be shared and discussed during the review.
 - The advisor and the peer reviewers define the main learning tasks for the next period. The peer reviewers can set further conditions for the next approval in 3 years
5. The most important information from the review is captured in a common report or two individual written reports written by the peer reviewers. You can use the corresponding template for the peer-review process for guidance (within the internal advisor's website). The

reports must be accepted by all three parties. They will serve as a basis for the next Peer Review for Renewal of Recognition in 3 years.

6. The technical procedure for approval remains the same as for the peer review (see section 4.2, No 4 +5)

4.4 Non-Response/Rejection

Non-response to Renewal of Recognition

The Quality System will automatically send two reminders to organize the peer reviews for the Renewal of Recognition, 6 months and 3 months before the entered date of the last peer review is passed. At precisely 3 years after the entered date is passed the online profile is taken offline and an information mail will be sent by the system automatically.

In the case the profile is taken offline: the profile will further exist at the backend of the system; an activation can be received by organizing and implementing a peer review for the Renewal of Recognition. As soon as the peer reviewers confirmed the implementation and the Renewal, your profile will be seen on the list of biodynamic advisors again. **Please note:** If you are offline, you cannot be chosen as a peer reviewer by other advisors. Please do not conduct any peer reviews while being offline!

Rejection/Exclusion

Applicants or advisors who do not meet the requirements or do not provide the required quality certificates and therefore do not pass the Peer Review will know this during the Peer-Review with colleagues and/or will receive this in written in the report. When nevertheless the date and the Peer reviewers are entered in the system, peer reviewers can use the rejection link in the email.

A rejection notification to be (temporarily) excluded may apply if, for example:

- Fulfilment of the minimum criteria could not be proved at the Peer Review.
- Common principles of the Charter for Biodynamic Advisers have not been respected.
- The public profile has not been filled in truthfully.

Appeal Process

If entry to the Quality System has been rejected for **appeals** must be made in writing within **two** weeks of receipt of the decision and must state, the reasons on which they are based.

- Complex or disputed cases referred to an ad-hoc Assessment Panel/Ombud's team (not a permanent organ).
- The Ombuds Team should be elected or proposed by the Advisors and should run completely independent from BFDI or the Section for agriculture.

4.5 Re-Application

If entry to the Quality System has been rejected in cases where the minimum requirements are not fulfilled, the applicant can do the following to re-apply for Standard and/or Demeter recognition:

- The applicant must first **fulfil the requirements** and update his/her portfolio accordingly.
- The applicant must coordinate a new **peer-review process**, inviting this time one of the **previous** peer reviewers and one **new** peer reviewer.