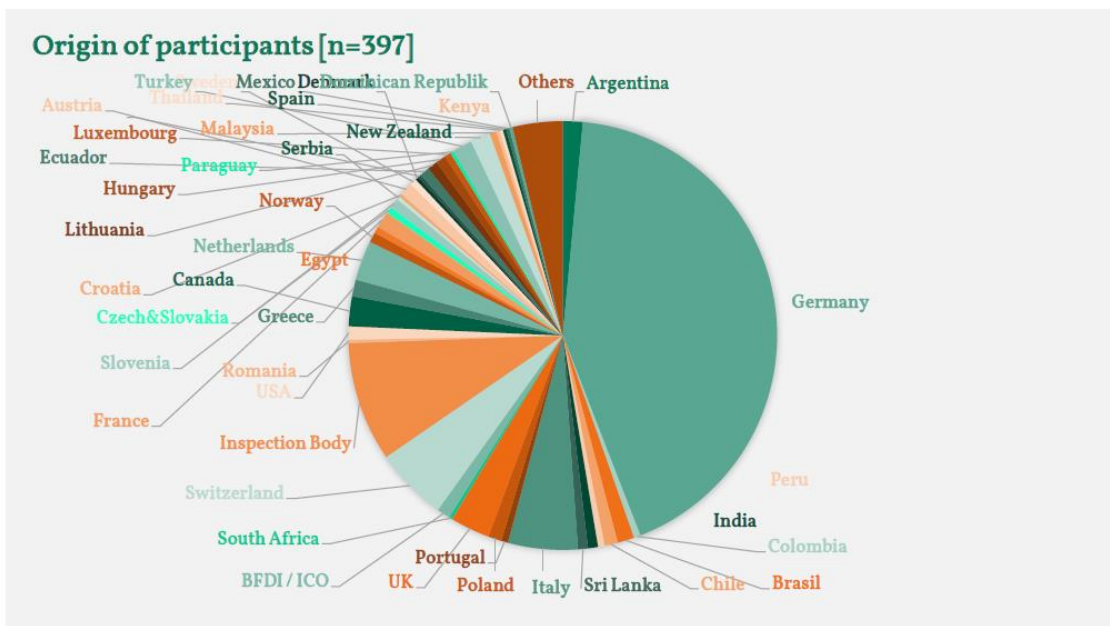


# Standard - Survey

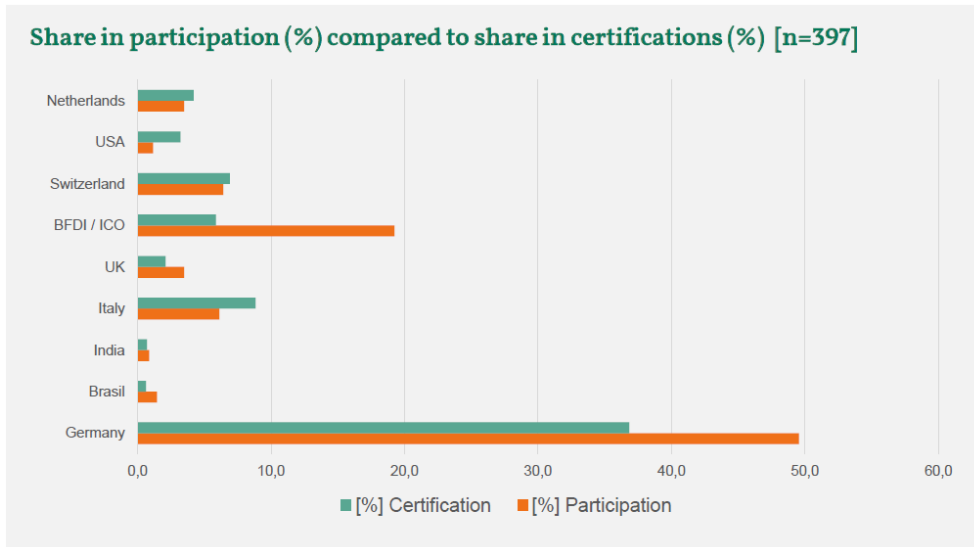
## *Biodynamic Federation – Demeter International (BFDI) – SC*

### General data

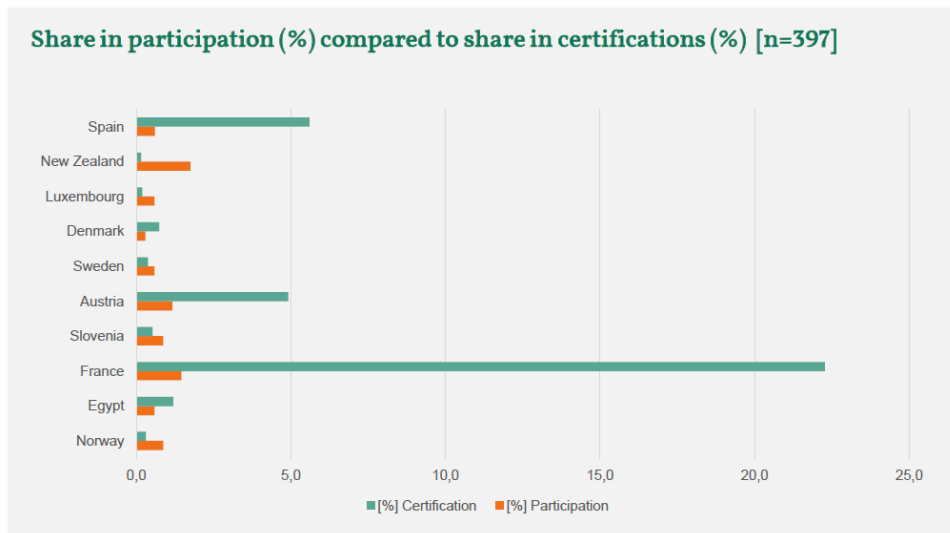
The number of participants was surprisingly high, which was very positive overall. We had 397 entries within 3 weeks, with a worldwide representation. Since we were of the opinion the origin of participating inspectors (mainly ICO) is of limited value, we sub-summarized them under “Inspection Bodies” instead under the respective country of origin.



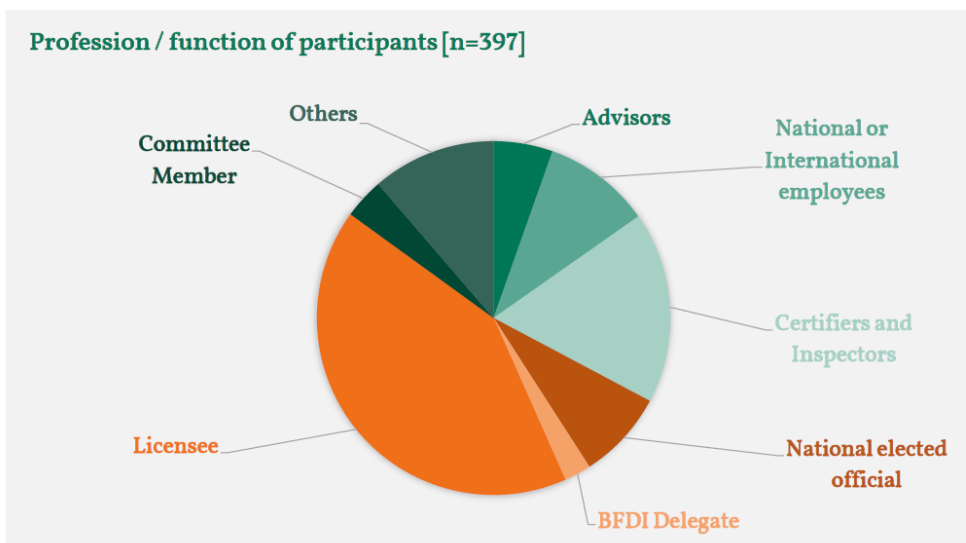
It was the aim to have the feedback as balanced as possible, therefore we also translated the survey also to Spanish, French, German and Dutch, unfortunately that was not completely successful. A few certifiers like Germany and the International Certification Office motivated their stakeholders over average, a few like France or Italy significantly under average.

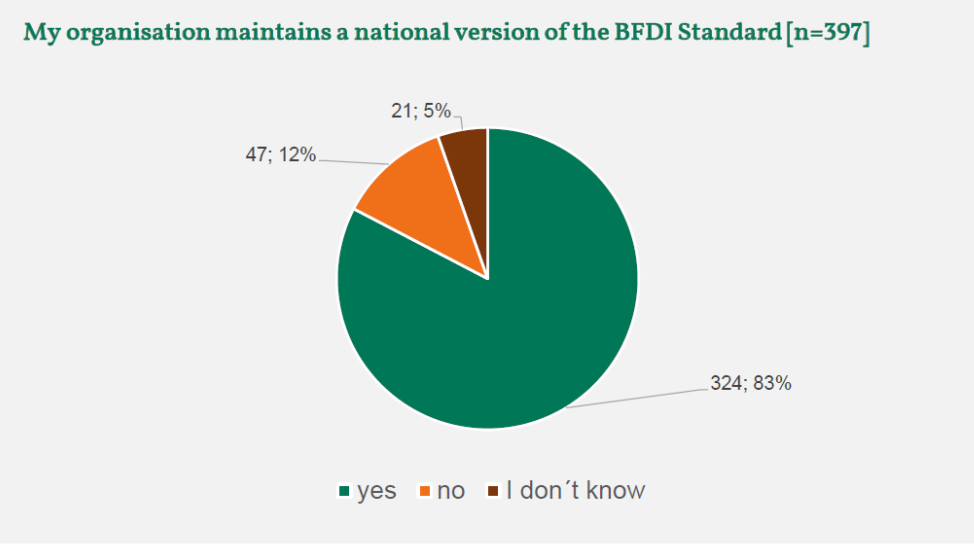


The green bar shows the share of certifications worldwide, the orange one the respective share of participants in the survey in comparison.

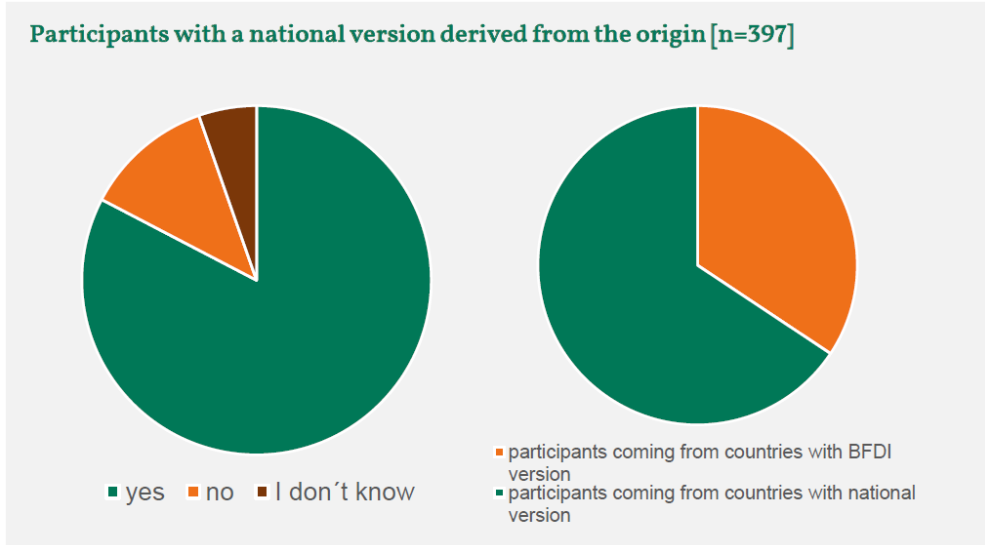


It was the aim to have feedback from all types of stakeholders, therefore we are very happy, that all relevant groups were represented accordingly.

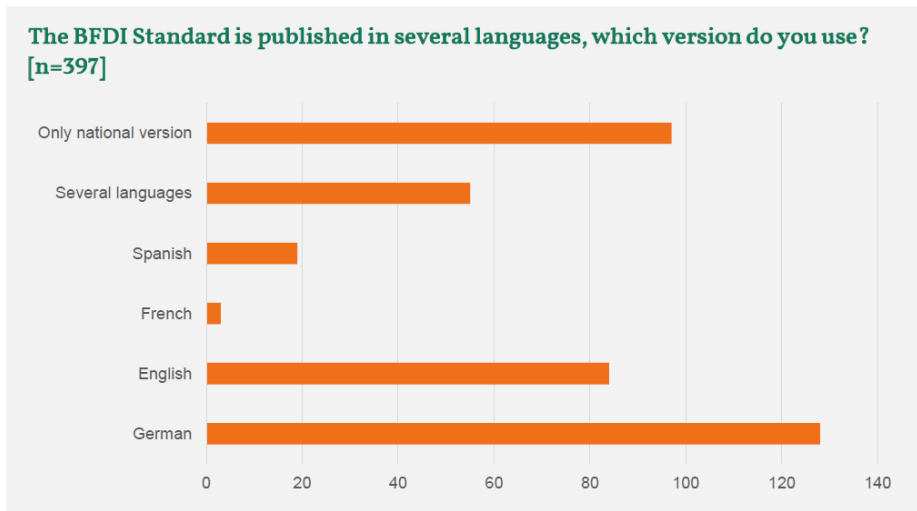




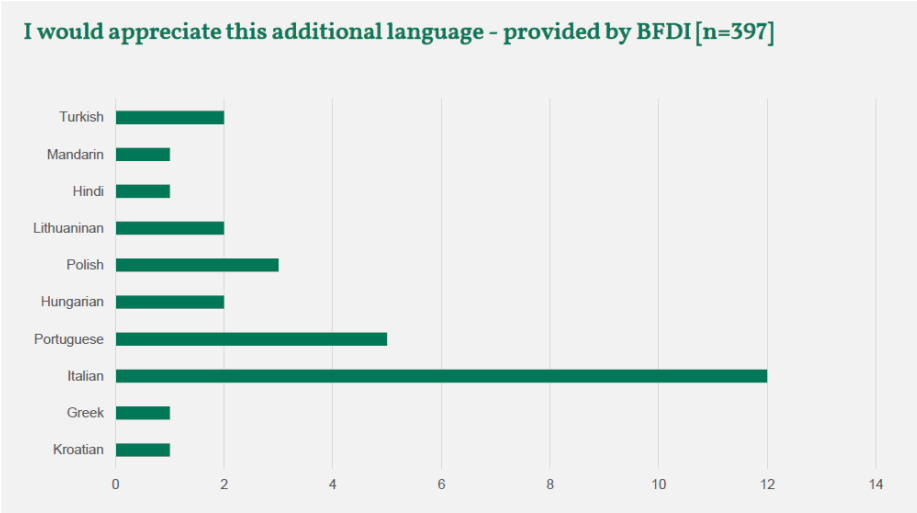
Since the survey in some aspects was primarily aimed on the International Standard, we wanted to know which version is used by the respective participant, result has shown that mainly national version are in use.



We compared the answer with an analysis by origin of the respective participant. The result allows the interpretation, that some are using an international version (in the respective language) without even realizing.

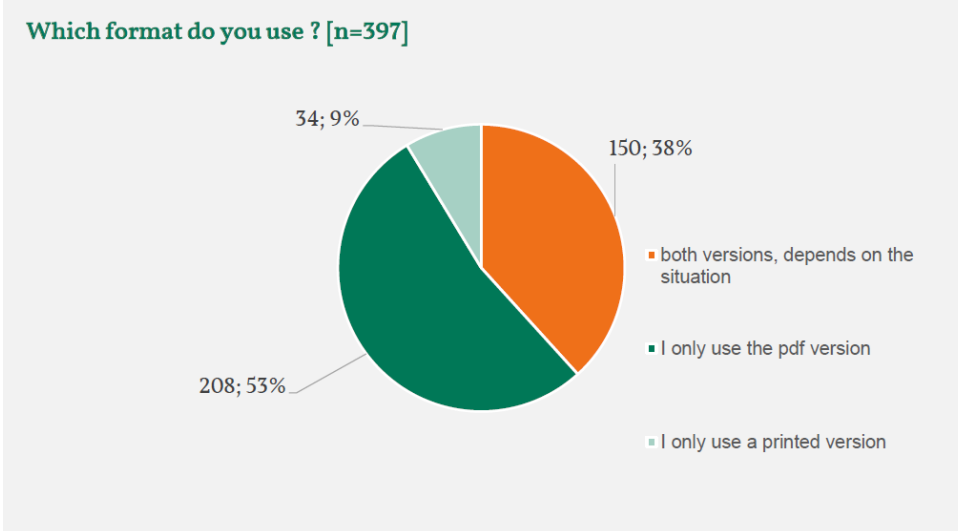


The result concerning the languages used reveals a surprising result, it was expected that the German version is hardly used anymore, which is not the case.



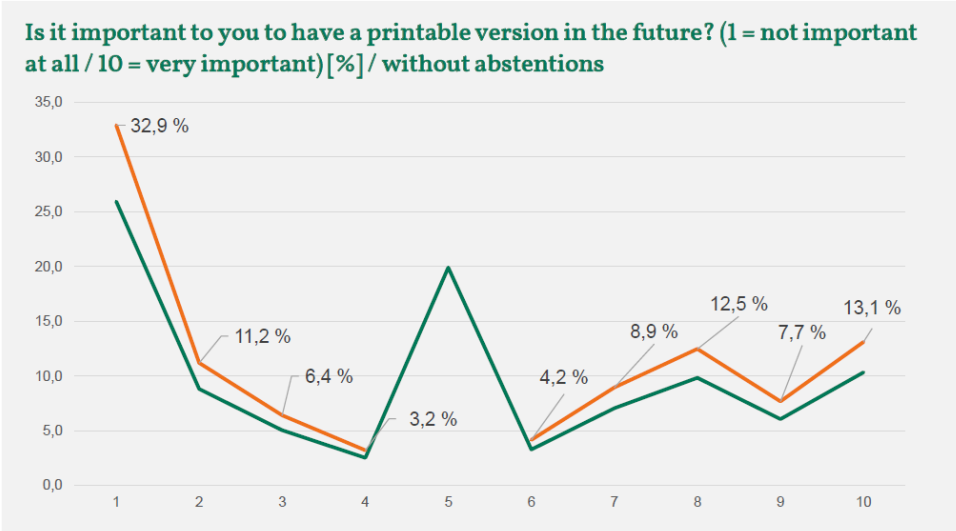
There is always the question of whether there should be other versions besides the four official ones (English, German, French, Spanish); in this regard, the survey does not provide a clear direction.

To maintain the Standard in a document form brings certain limitations, an app or wiki solution would enable completely different, more intuitive formats, therefore we were interested how often printed versions are still used at all.



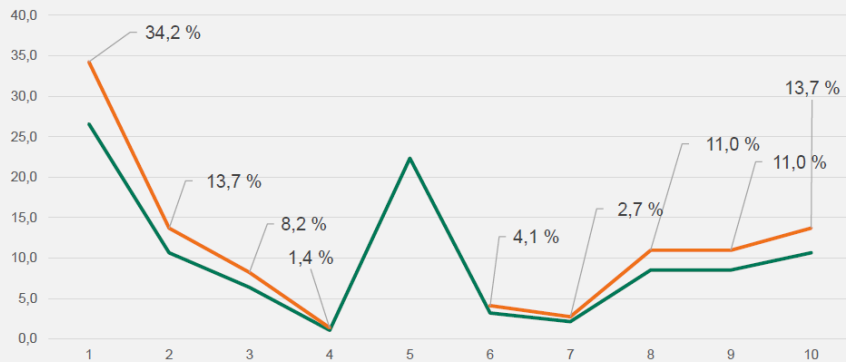
Although less than 10 % use a printed version, much more participants are of the opinion it is important to have the Standard still in a theoretically printable version. 45 % are rather of that opinion.

The green line shows the absolute figures for each answer. In case that a participant has no opinion on a specific item, we asked him or her to leave the number slider with number five as kind of an abstention. It was indicated in the survey, that we will not count the results in these cases. Nevertheless we want them integrated in the presentation of results somehow. That is why next to the absolute figures (green line) we also display the answers without the “abstentions” (orange line). Since the basic population is then smaller, the percentage of remaining answer options increases accordingly.



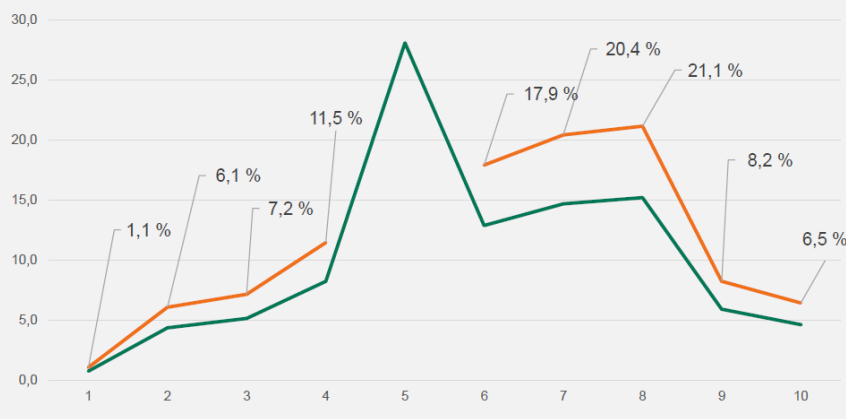
Since that result also came surprisingly, we tried some variations in cross reference with other questions, but the result stayed more or less the same.

**Is it important to you to have a printable version in the future? (1 = not important at all / 10 = very important)[%] / without abstentions – only participants which at least use the Standard “from time to time” and without a national version [n=94]**



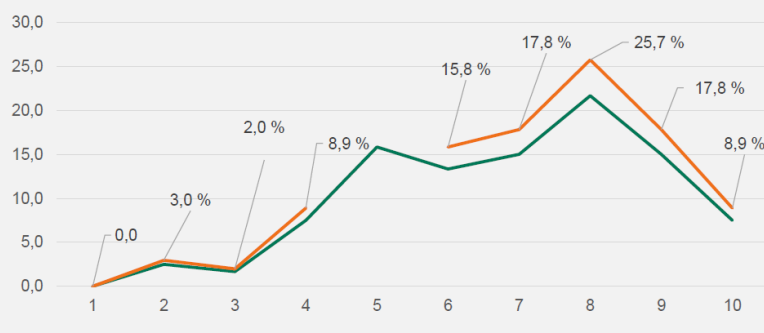
Compared to the feedback we get, the number of participants who find good access to information was encouragingly high. However, the result also shows a work order, after all, the document should be structured so that information is always found.

**Do you find the information in the BFDI Standard you are looking for? (1 = nearly impossible / 10 = easily) – [%] without abstentions [n=397]**

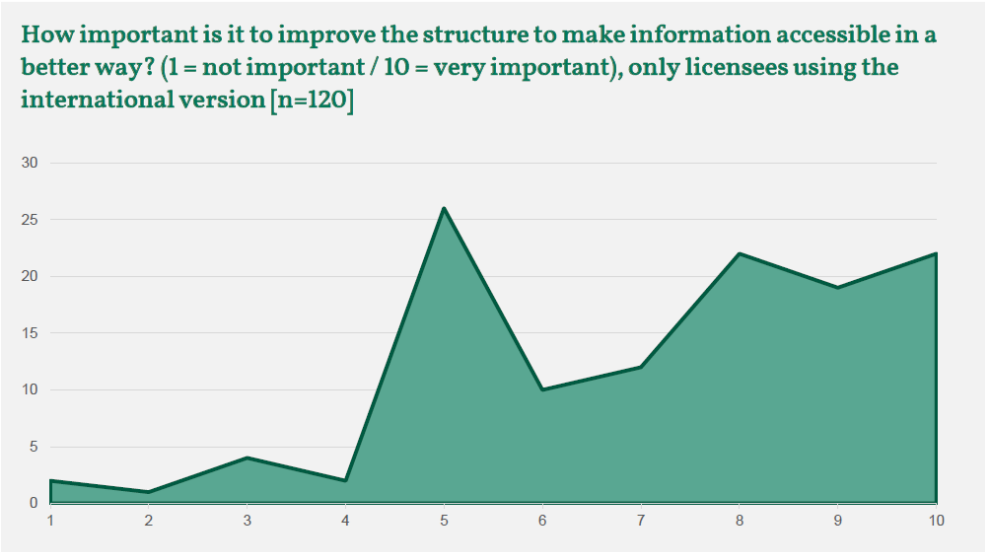


Also here we tried a few variations, for example we would have assumed that licensees find information less than heavy users like certifiers and inspectors and we assumed that national version are easier to access since they most of the time focus on the structure of licensees of the respective organisation and are therefore, significantly less extensive result shows, that is not the case.

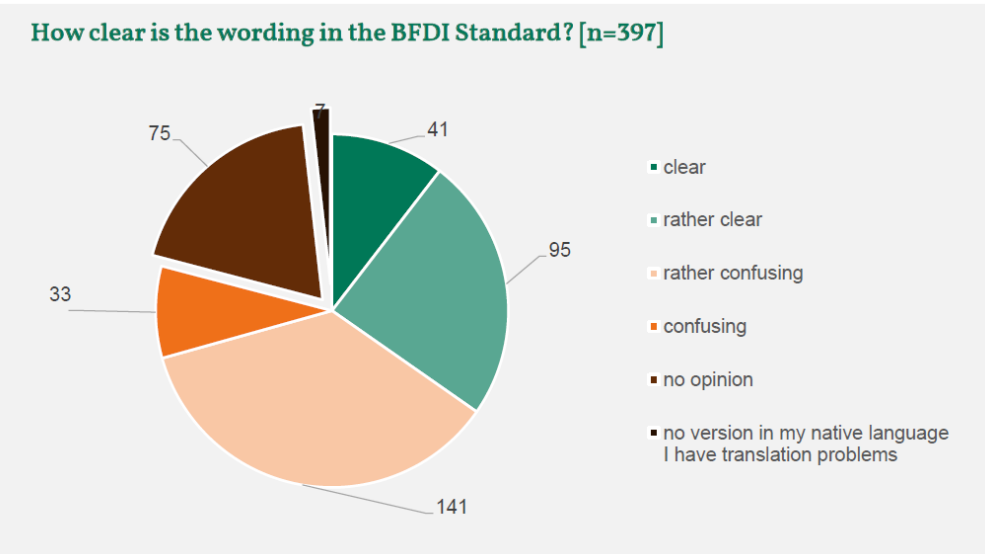
**Do you find the information in the BFDI Standard you are looking for? (1 = nearly impossible / 10 = easily) – [%] without abstentions – only licensees using no national version [n=120]**



Although information is predominantly found well, an overwhelming majority nevertheless believes there can be improvements here as well.

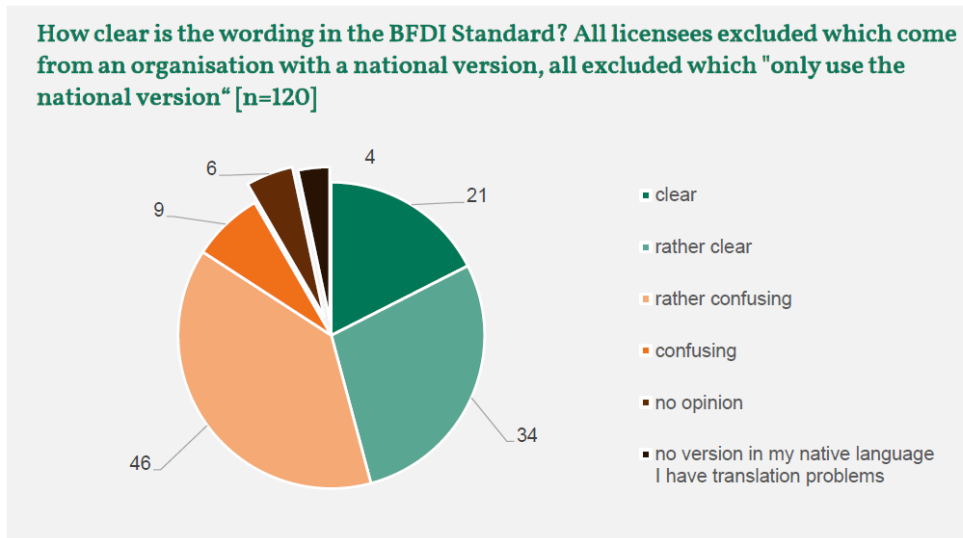


The comprehensibility of the content is frequently criticized, both by heavy users like certifiers and inspectors, and licensees. The survey confirms this and shows a clear work order.

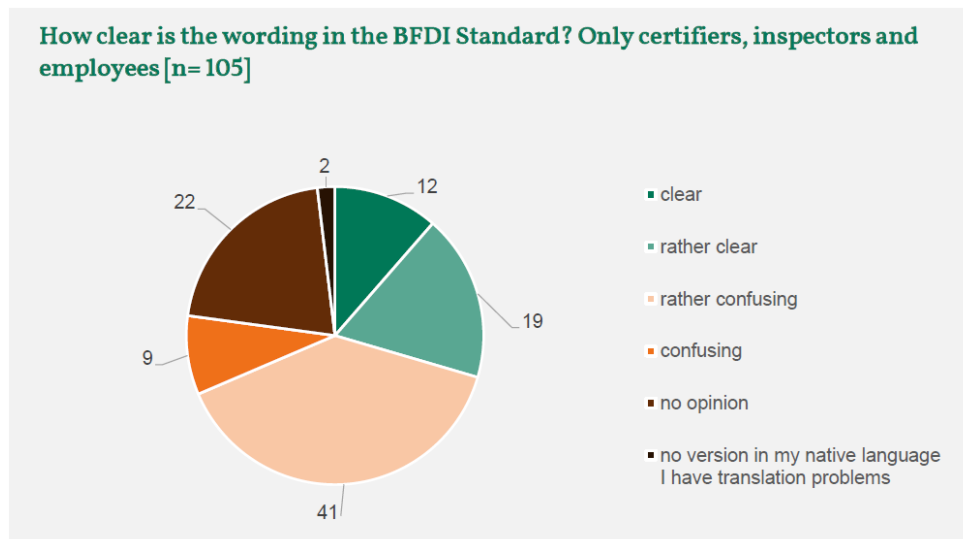


The situation is sometimes less negative depending on the respective stakeholders or guideline versions, but the overall picture always remains the same; there is an urgent need for

improvement here, only clear requirements can provide clear certification procedures.



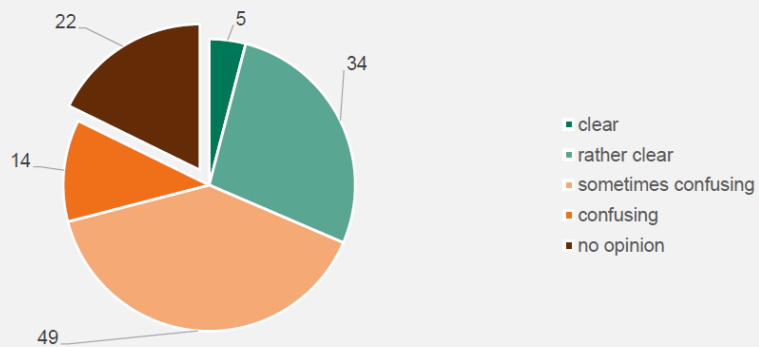
One of the basic assumptions was, the more the Standard is used, the clearer are structure and wording, the survey does not confirm this at all. The highest confusion is obviously with the heavy users.



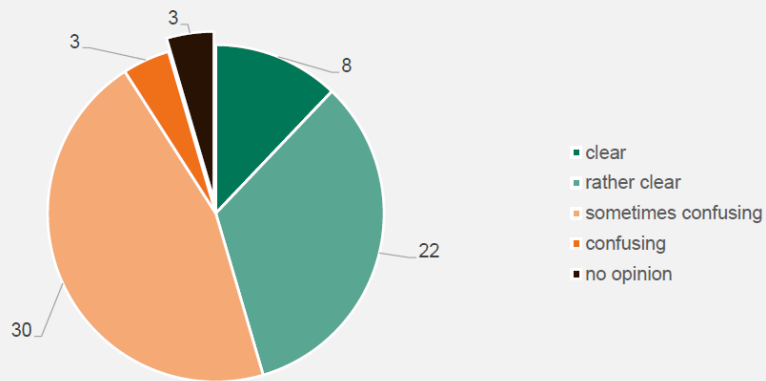
There seems to be little or no connection with the language used; the problem is similarly pronounced in all four languages, respectively the problem is even stronger in the German version than the English version.



**How clear is the wording in the BFDI Standard? Only users of the German version [n= 124]**

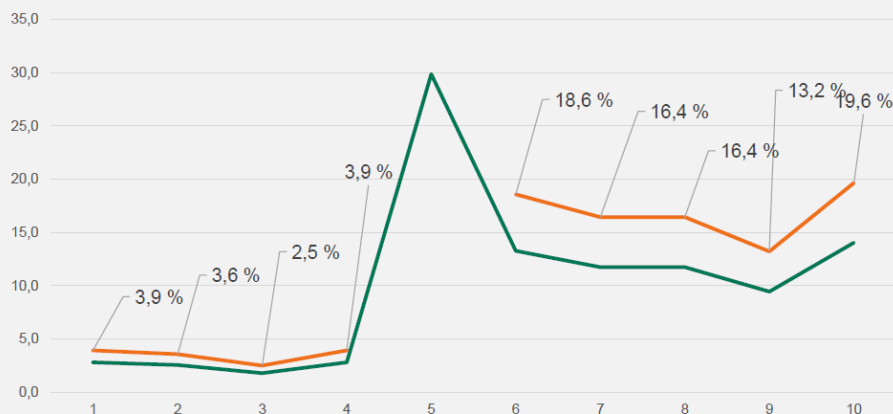


**How clear is the wording in the BFDI Standard? Only users of the English version [n= 66]**



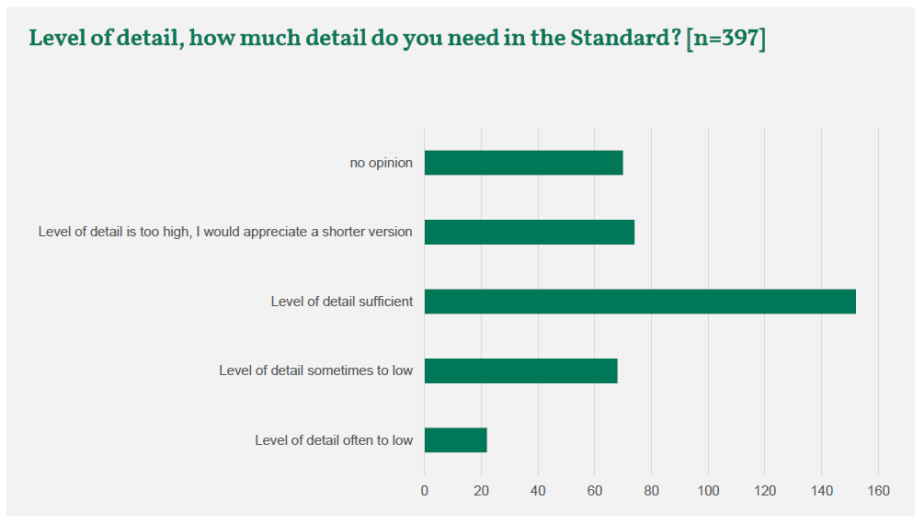
This result leads to the clear work order to strive for significant improvements here.

**How important is it to you to improve the comprehensibility of the language? (1 = not important / 10 = very important) [%] without abstentions [n=397]**

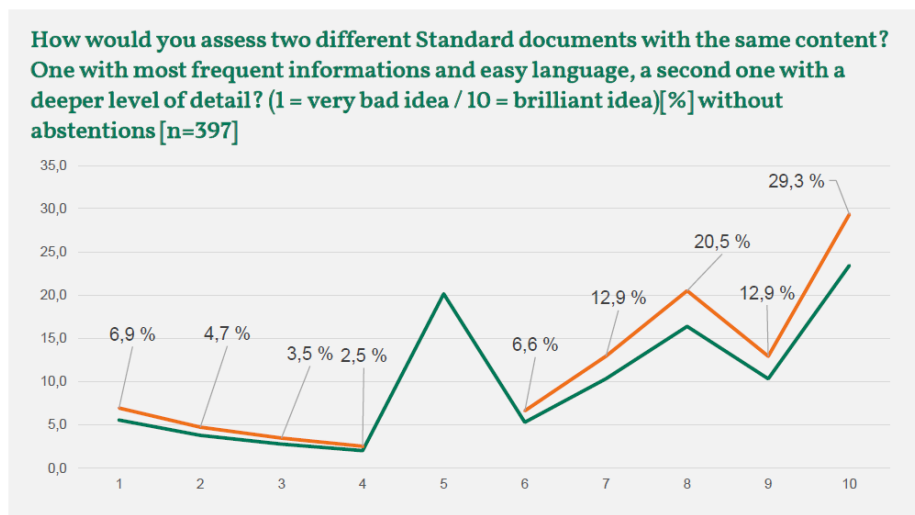


Another point of criticism was often the volume and richness of detail of the document. The counter argument was always, complexity needs description. In this respect, the result is

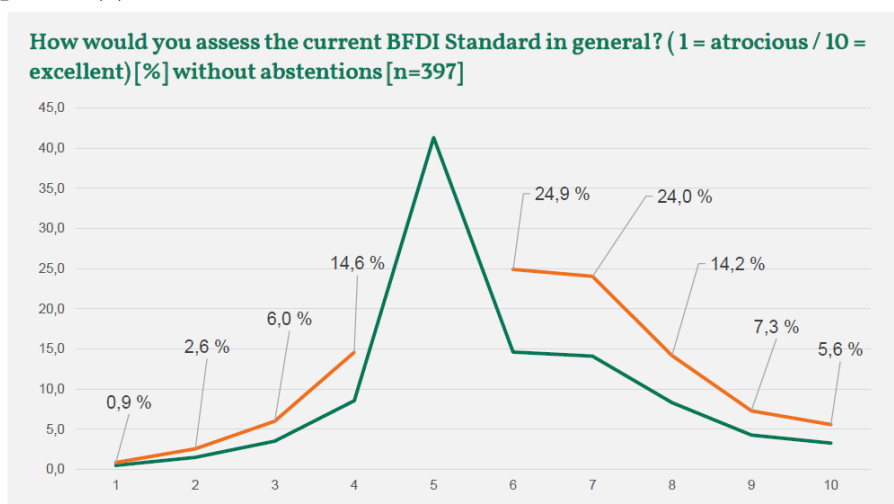
surprising that the group of those for whom the details are insufficient is unexpectedly large.



This leads to the question of how to please both groups, and that is really only possible with different documents. Accordingly, this idea meets with great approval. More than 50 % rank such an approach with an 8, 9 or even 10.

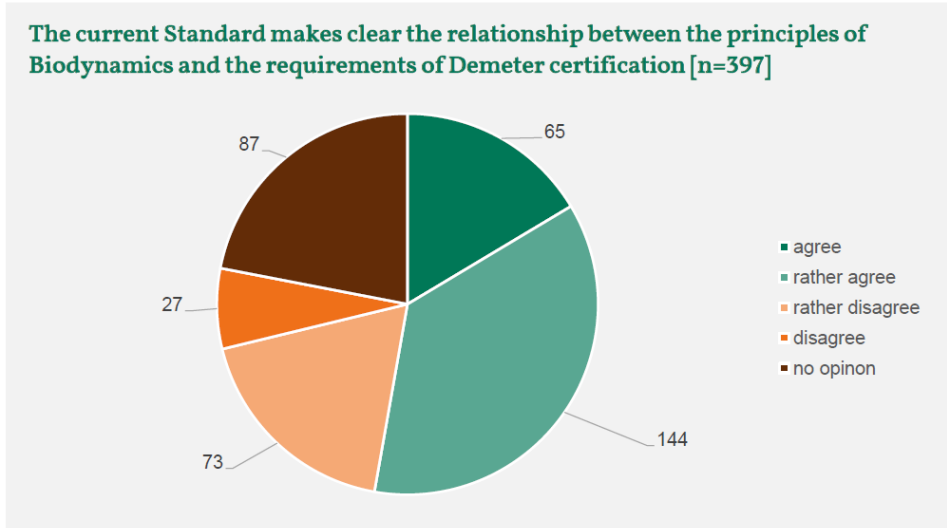


The overall score for the current Standard was expected to be worse, but must of course be aimed for much better for future versions. What is surprising here is the very high number of unrated responses (5).

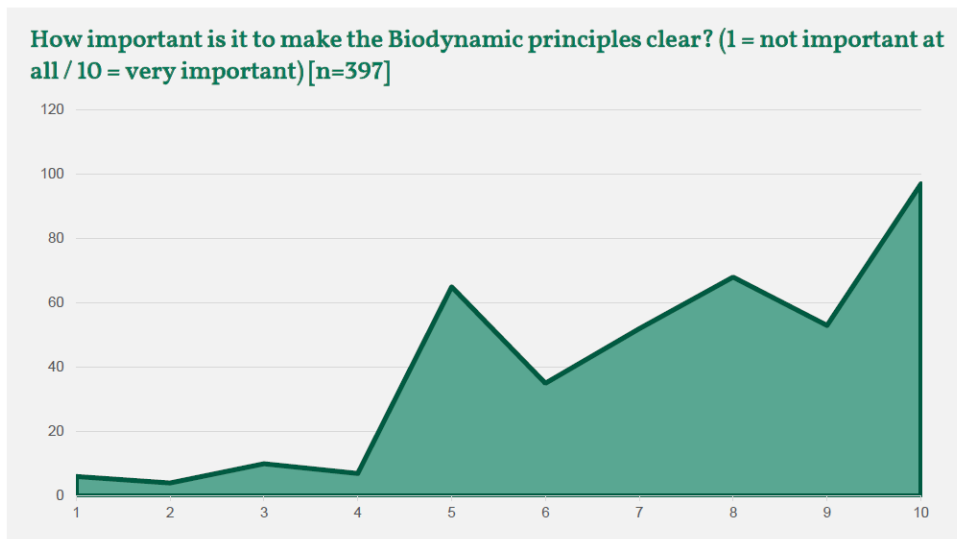


## Standard and Principles

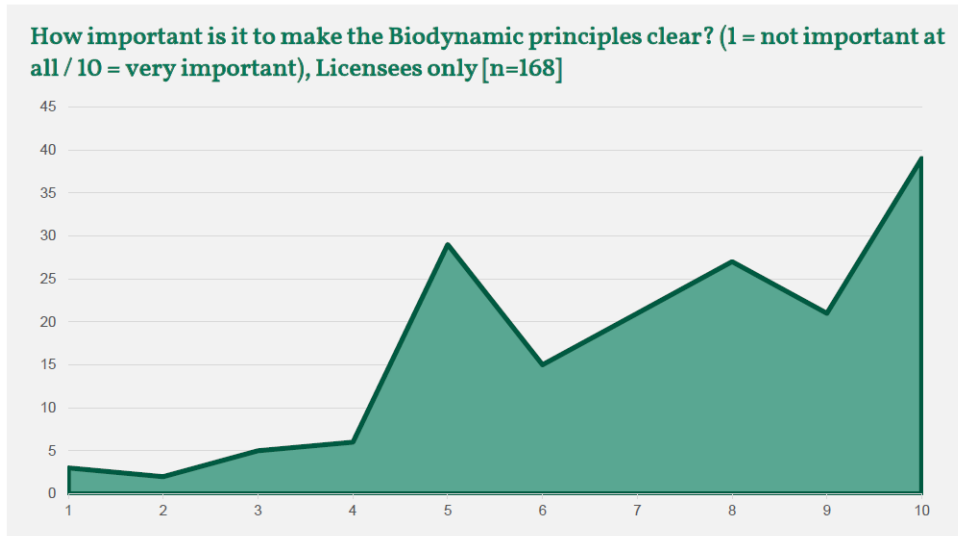
The combination of Standard and Biodynamic Principles was vividly discussed that last years, the result shows, there is already quite a basis in the current Standard, only one fourth misses a clear relation between these aspects.



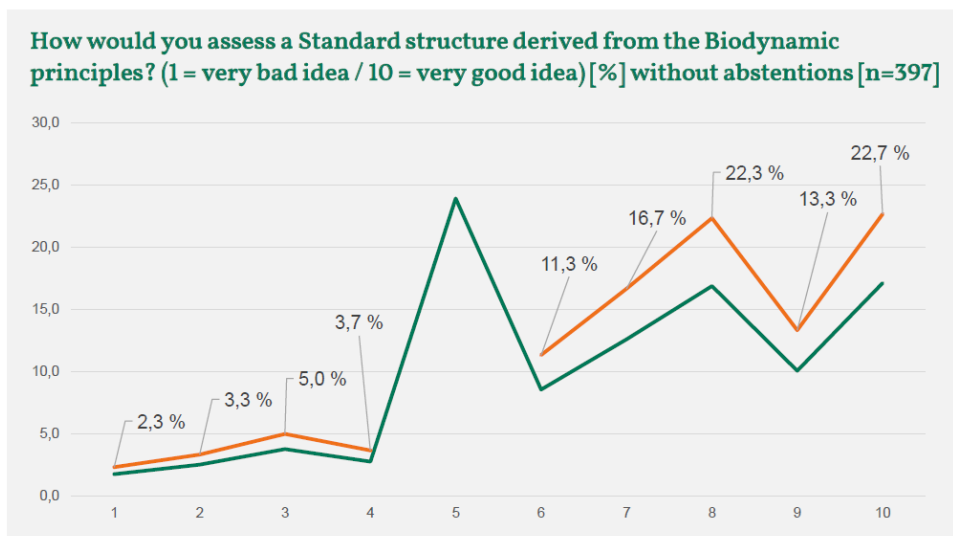
However, also here are opportunities for improvements identified. An overwhelming majority wants a clearer development in that direction.



It makes practically no difference which group you ask, the result is always more or less the same.



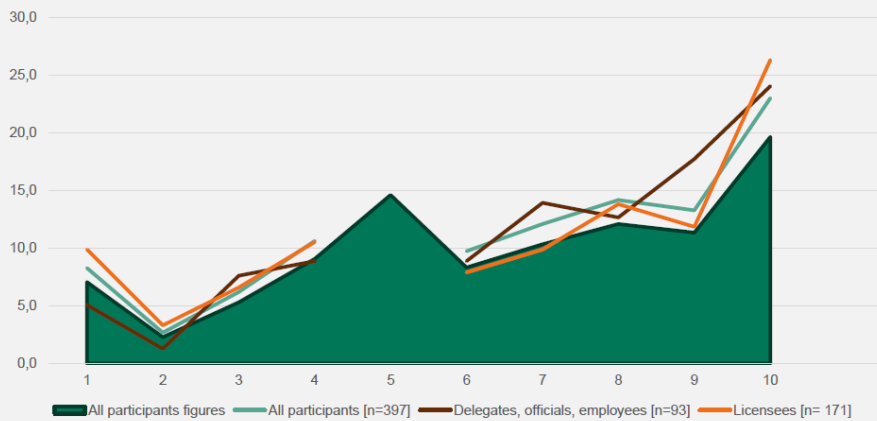
That is then also reflected in the answer concerning a future improvement of the topic.



## Standard and Scope

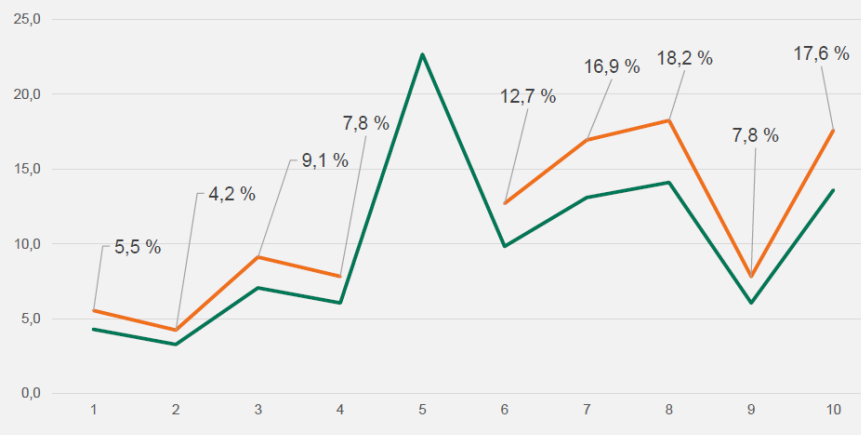
The claim “strictest organic Standard” is used by several organisations. It has always been suspected that the effort behind this is primarily on the part of marketing and certifiers. At least this survey partially disproves that. Agreement is very high across all groups, but it seems to be most important to licensees.

**Scope and Marketing - How important is it to you that the Demeter Standard is the strictest Standard worldwide? (1 = not important at all / 10 = very important)**



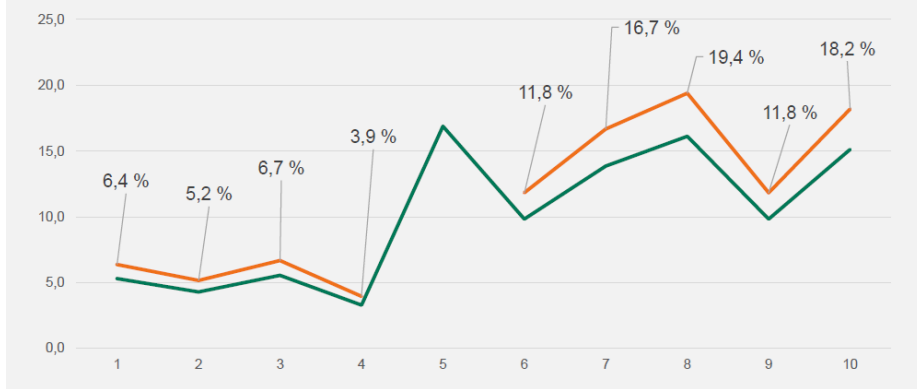
Two more surprising answers came from the questions on the extension of the scope of the Standard. From the discussion in previous years it seemed to be common sense, that the scope of the Standard should not be widened, due to the fact that the number of requirements and the level of detail was already considered as overflowing. The result indicates another direction, both the extension to new product categories and the extent to other sustainability aspects found a clear support by the participants.

**How important is it to you to extend the scope of the Standard to new product categories? (1 = not important at all / 10 = very important)**



It was also a question whether we should completely re-design the Standard in the context of climate change and carbon neutrality. This idea also meets with high approval here, even if it is somewhat lower overall than other approaches.

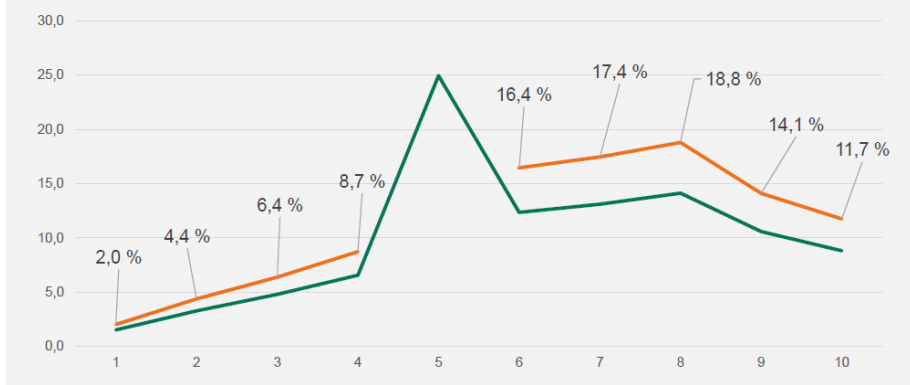
**How would you assess the integration of other sustainability aspects (Packaging, Transport, Energy, Carbon Foot Print) in the Standard? (1 = not important / 10 = very important) [n=397]**



## Standard, certification and compliance

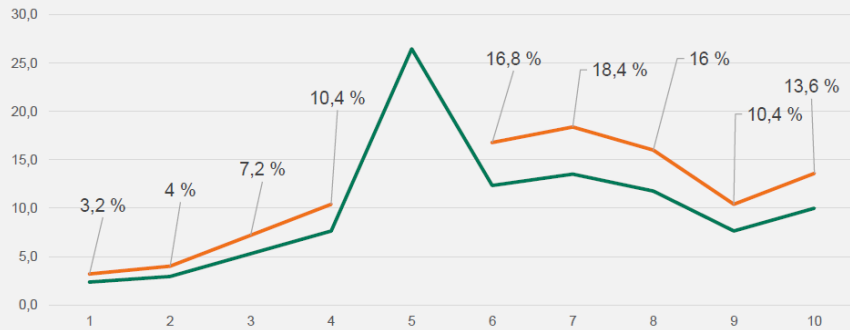
One of the least expected results of the survey relates to the relationship between Standard and certification. Here, the discussion in recent years would have led us to expect a much lower level of approval.

**How do you assess the current way of Standard and certification, minimal requirements (red line) and sanctioning by formulating non-compliances and corrective actions? (1= very negative / 10 = still the best approach we have) [n=397]**

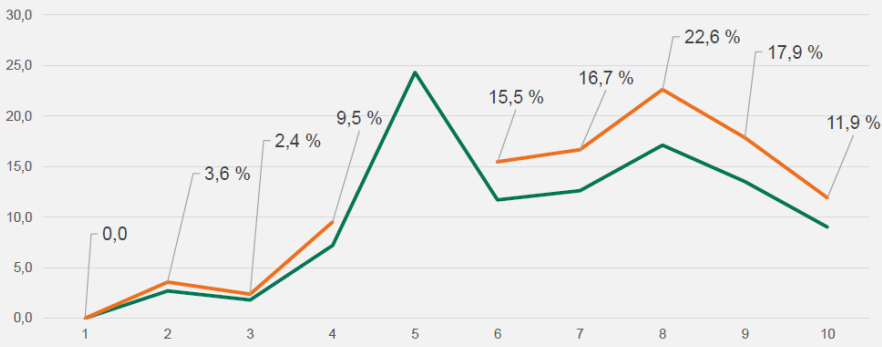


Here, there are few differences with regard to the various stakeholder, even if, as expected, there is somewhat less support from licensees.

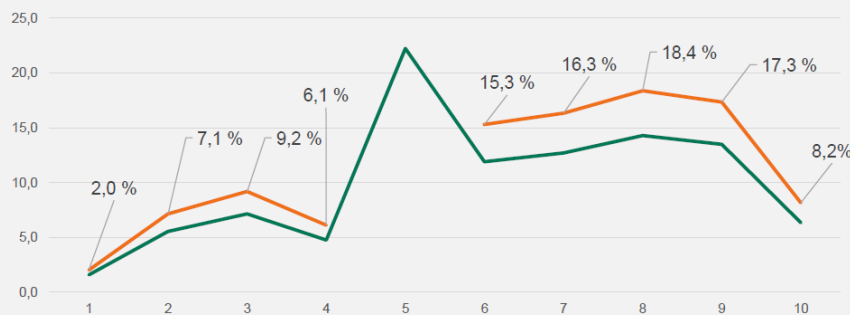
**How do you assess the current way of Standard and certification, minimal requirements (red line) and sanctioning by formulating non-compliances and corrective actions? (1= very negative / 10 = still the best approach we have) [n=170], Licensees only [%], without abstentions**



**How do you assess the current way of Standard and certification, minimal requirements (red line) and sanctioning by formulating non-compliances and corrective actions? (1= very negative / 10 = still the best approach we have) [n=111], Certifiers, inspectors, employees only [%], without abstentions**

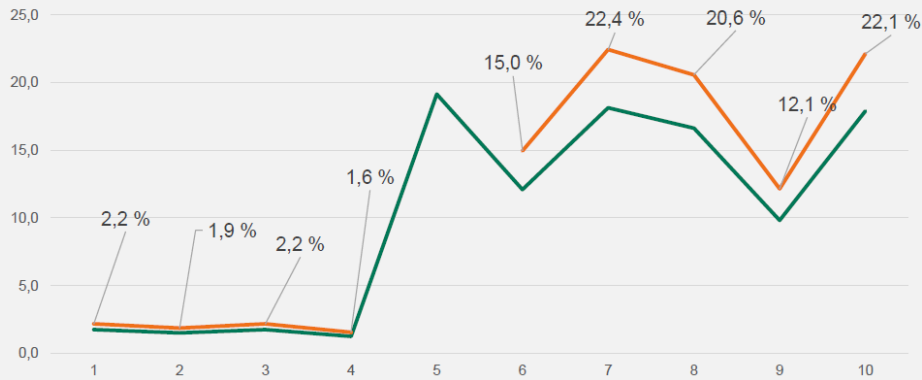


**How do you assess the current way of Standard and certification, minimal requirements (red line) and sanctioning by formulating non-compliances and corrective actions? (1= very negative / 10 = still the best approach we have) [n=124], Advisors, delegates, elected officials only [%], without abstentions**



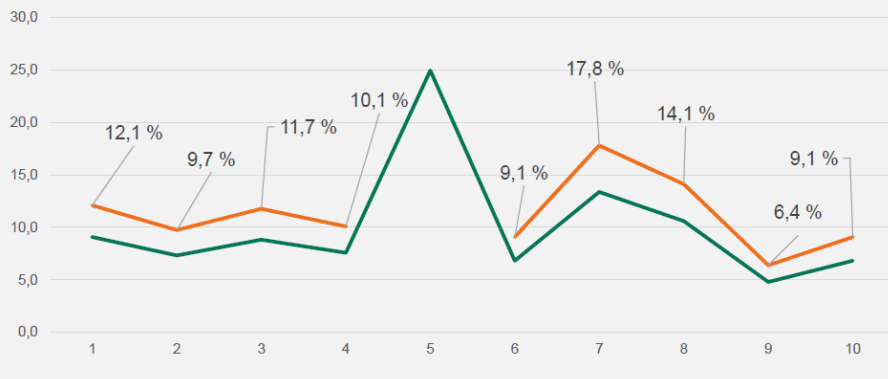
An expectedly clear result brought the question, whether we should combine the current way of certification with an appreciative approach to also emphasize performances beyond the Standard requirements.

**How do you assess an approach of Standard that formulate a red line that is the basis for certification, but also values practice above the Standard (1= very negative / 10 = very positive)[n=397]**



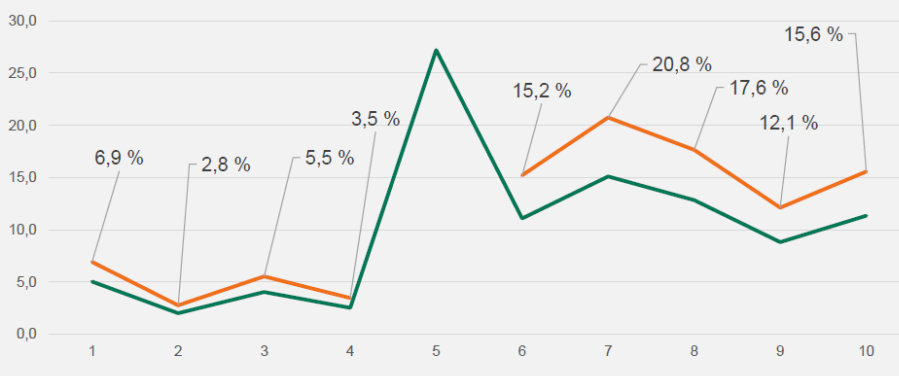
There was a tendency to reject a Standard based purely on freely selectable topics in combination with a points system or score card, at least compared to other approaches.

**How do you assess an approach of Standard that only formulates a catalogue of possible requirements in combination with a score card, certification is granted based on a certain score a licensee has to reach? (1=very negative, 10 = very positive)[n=397]**



A combination of a points system and minimum requirements, however, meets with a significantly higher level of approval

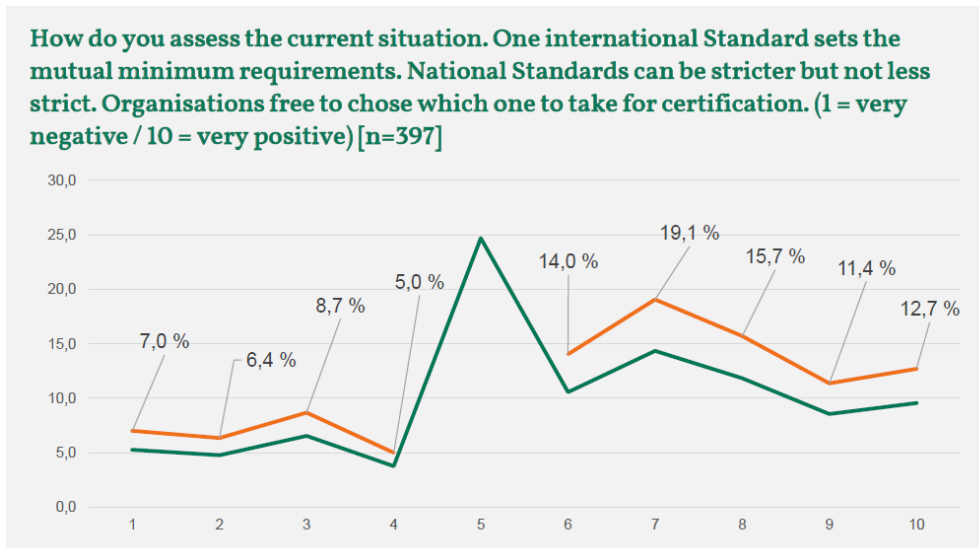
**How do you assess an approach of Standard that combines a red line with a score card, minimal requirements for all licensees, additional aspects to reach full compliance base on free selection and a certain reached scoring level? (1 = very negative / 10 = very positive)[n=397]**



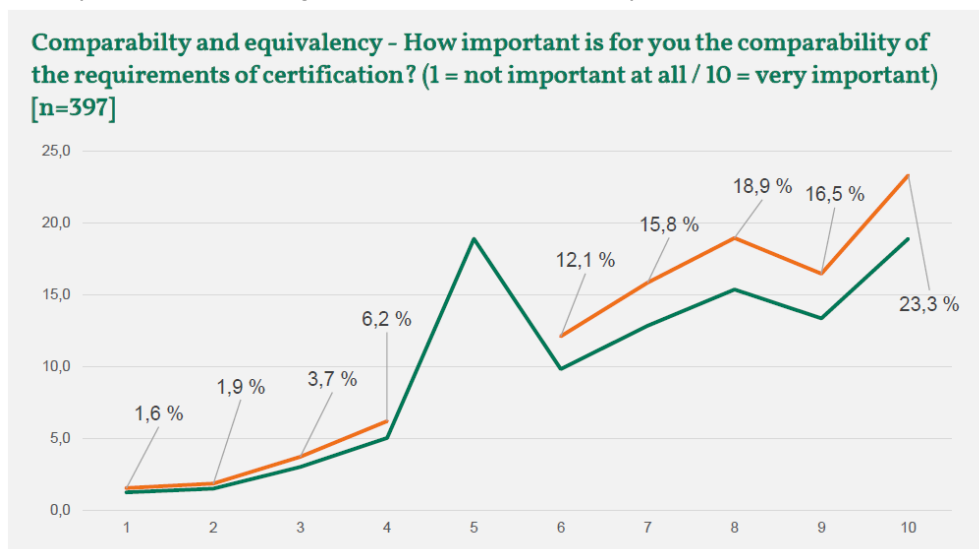


## Standard and comparability

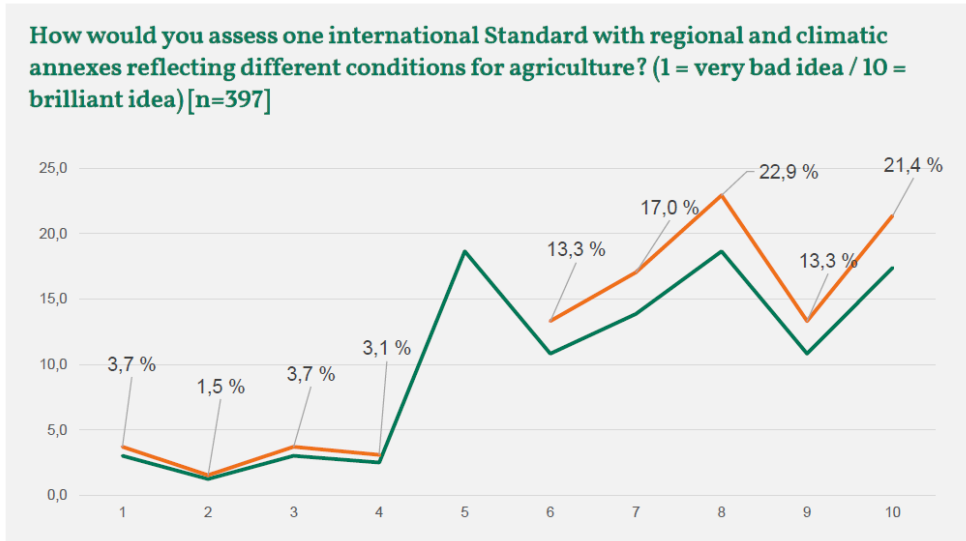
One of the central aspects of the motivation for the survey was, to bring some light into the questions of the relations of the different Standard versions (national and international) with regard to how comparable certification results worldwide should be and can be.



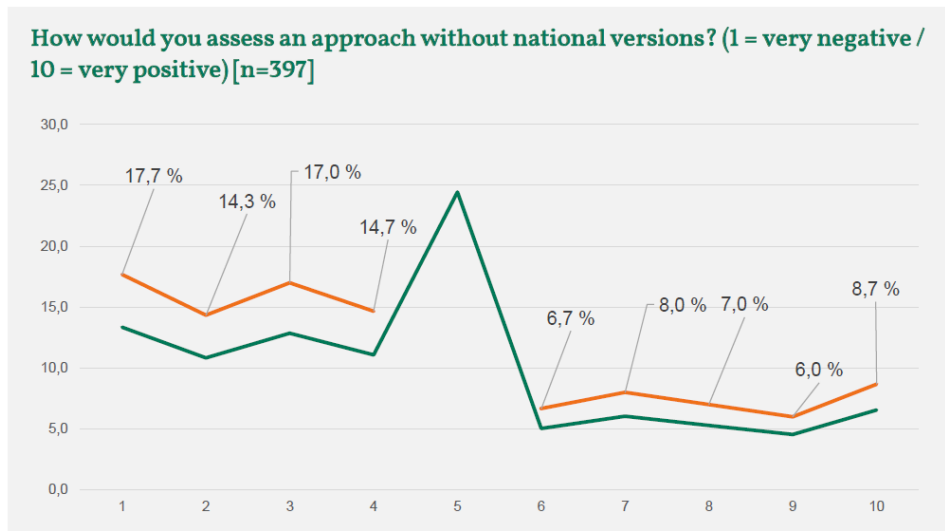
The current construct, one internationally binding baseline with several national versions and a free choice for the certifying organisations, finds approval, although not overwhelming. A reason for that maybe can be found in the next question, where the importance of comparability reaches one of the highest scores of the overall survey. It does not matter which group is surveyed, the level of agreement is identical everywhere.



Notwithstanding the high level of agreement regarding comparability, the issue of regional and climatic differences also receives a high level of agreement. The trick will probably be to combine both aspects in such a way that neither suffers.

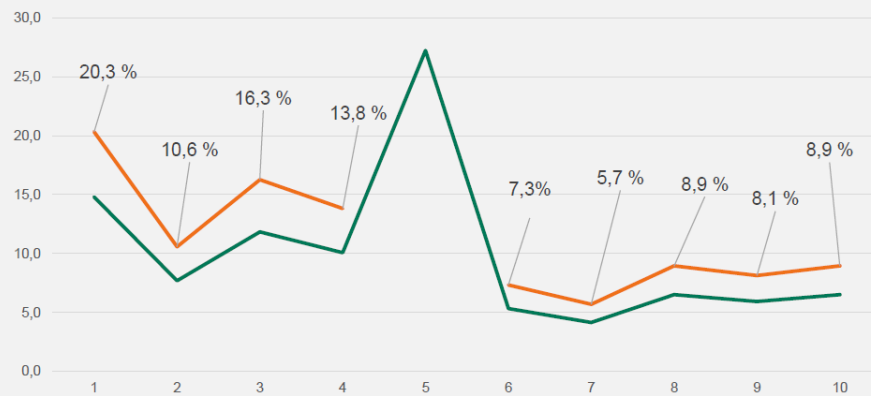


This result, of high agreement to reflect regional aspects in the international guideline, is difficult to reconcile with the result of the next question. The motivation of a regionalized international Standard would primarily be to avoid having to map the special national rules into national Standards. However, a waiver of national regulations is very clearly rejected in the next step.

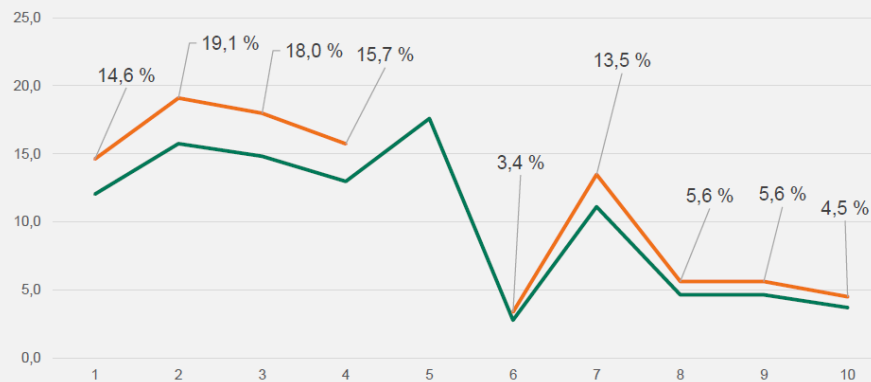


The opposition here comes from all groups of stakeholders, albeit with varying degrees of vehemence.

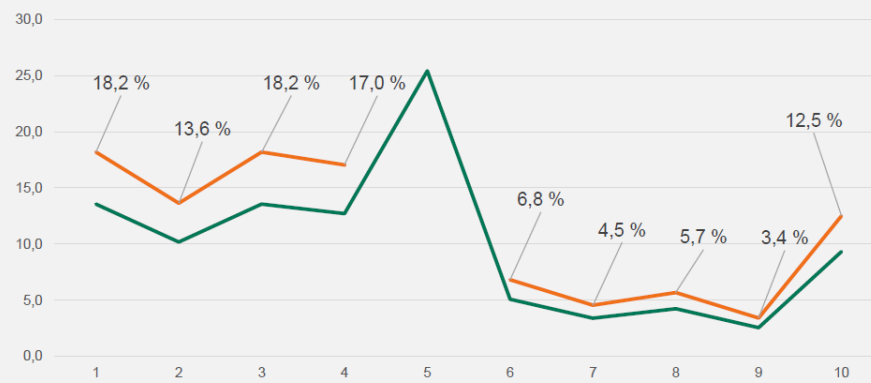
How would you assess an approach without national versions? (1 = very negative / 10 = very positive); Licensees only [%] without abstentions [n=170]



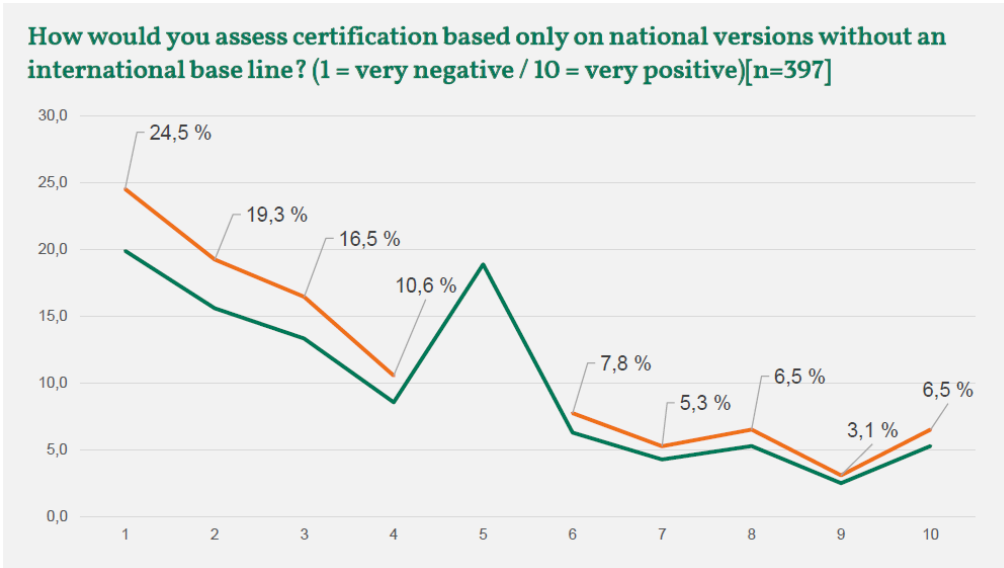
How would you assess an approach without national versions? (1 = very negative / 10 = very positive); Certifiers, inspectors, employees only [%] without abstentions [n=108]



How would you assess an approach without national versions? (1 = very negative / 10 = very positive); Elected officials, advisors, delegates only [%] without abstentions [n=118]



An even lower value can only be achieved by completely dispensing with an international baseline.



## Summary

The survey produced a number of unexpectedly clear results. The challenge now is to bring these into line with the work assignment to the Standards Committee. Part of the challenge will be that some findings will be contradictory and not provide the clarity hoped for about the strategic direction of a revised Standard. For example, it is to be expected that Standard structure derived from the Biodynamic Principles will not necessarily lead to improved access to the information sought.

It will also be difficult to reconcile the frequently called-for reduction in targets with several of the survey's findings, extended scope, appreciative requirements beyond the Standard, additional sustainability aspects. Most of the conflicting goals would be solvable with an alternative electronic format, unfortunately, there was only very restrained approval for this in particular.

One of the advantages of answering via a scoring system is the ability to combine percentage selections and selected numbers to display total scores. To conclude, a brief overview regarding the answers with the highest scores.

Question	score
How would you assess a Standard structure derived from the Biodynamic principles? (1 = very bad idea / 10 = very good idea)	749
Scope and Marketing - How important is it to you that the Demeter Standard is the strictest Standard worldwide? (1 = not important at all / 10 = very important)	680
How do you assess an approach of Standard that formulate a red line that is the basis for certification, but also values practice above the Standard (1= very negative / 10 = very positive)	760

Comparability and equivalency - How important is for you the comparability of the requirements of certification? (1 = not important at all / 10 = very important)	757
How would you assess one international Standard with regional and climatic annexes reflecting different conditions for agriculture? (1 = very bad idea / 10 = brilliant idea)	746