



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Federation
of Organic Agriculture
Movements



United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

ITF Communication Plan3.doc

ITF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2007-2008

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PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

One of the three stated objectives of the ITF is “to formulate proposals for the consideration of governments, Codex Alimentarius Commission, relevant bodies of FAO, UNCTAD and IFOAM and other appropriate organizations” on opportunities, mechanisms and measures necessary for the harmonization and equivalence in organic agriculture. Another stated objective of the ITF is “to advise stakeholders and provide information on developments following discussions of the ITF proposals”. Currently, the ITF has entered its “Communication Phase”, which involves, among others, seeking political support to its work.

- **Why we are communicating?**
 - To convince governments regulating organic agriculture to adopt ITF proposals, tools, and recommendations;
 - To convince private sector involved in the organic guarantee system actors to adopt ITF proposals, tools and recommendations;
 - To disseminate information from the organic sector work on harmonization, equivalence and cooperation to other sectors, demonstrating how public-private partnerships can provide synergy. Experience in organic agriculture, and lessons from processes applied in organic guarantee systems (both failures and successes) can be of use in other sectors, especially for those operators working in sustainable agriculture and searching for practical and efficient certification systems.
- **What we are communicating?**
 - ITF approaches and processes, results and potential benefits of outcomes, including of public-private partnerships.
- **To whom we are communicating?**
 - To inter-governmental agencies that guide government and industry in general, namely: Codex Alimentarius Commission (re. international standard setting), WTO (re. trade disputes based on international standards), FAO, UNCTAD, UNECE, OECD, all of which advising governments on issues of equivalence and mutual recognition;
 - To highest possible levels of government agencies regulating organic agriculture;
 - To civil society and private sector involved in organic agriculture.);
 - To private sector institutions involved in accreditation and certification in general, namely IAF, ISO and IOAS.
- **How we are communicating?**
 - Governments with ITF members: briefings through ITF members;
 - Governments not having an ITF member: through intergovernmental organizations such as FAO, UNCTAD and the EU Commission; and also private sector bodies, e.g. IFOAM and IFOAM members;
 - Private sector involved in organic agriculture: through IFOAM members and stakeholder’ lists;
 - Private sector not involved in organic agriculture (e.g. IAF and ISO): ITF Steering Committee members.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Where and when we are communicating to target groups, who is responsible, and tools?

- **Inter-governmental institutions:**
 - FAO and UNCTAD: the relevant ITF members will, in cooperation with concerned officers in their respective institutions, prepare and commit to distribute ITF communications through their proper channels, including websites, press releases, flyers and ad hoc briefing sessions targeting specific governing bodies meetings;
 - Codex Alimentarius Commission: the relevant ITF member to inform the appropriate body of the CAC (e.g. Codex Committee on Food Labelling) of the outcome of the ITF (in the framework of FAO activities)
 - WTO: UNCTAD and FAO to disseminate ITF information material to TBT Committee, and also Committee on Trade and Environment
 - UNECE, OECD, UNEP: relevant ITF members to explore with UNECE OECD and UNEP the potential to gain exposure of ITF results through their workshops, briefings, roundtables.

- **Governments:**
 - US and EU: ITF Steering Committee to engage in special communications, including addressing with the EU Commission ways to communicate to EU Member States. The ITF Steering Committee has already met with EC in May 2007 and USDA in September 2007. Follow-up meetings will be made in 2008;
 - Donor governments: Steering Committee ad hoc visits to ITF donors' countries (i.e. Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) to present fruits of their capital investments;
 - ITF members required to present the ITF results to the higher level possible in their respective countries. ITF members to sketch out a national communication plan in December 2007 and report on results in 2008.

- **Civil society and private sector:**
 - IFOAM members: the relevant ITF members to prepare and commit a communication plan for their constituency, including certification bodies, trade organizations, consultants and other IFOAM member groups. This will consider utilizing members' websites, regional groups meetings, international events, regular internal communications. IFOAM could seek special help from key members such as OTA;
 - Organic community in general: Biofach is an ideal forum for a very wide organic audience, including visiting government representatives and eminent persons. Biofach 2008 edition to be informed by progress thus far by the ITF Steering Committee. Biofach 2009 to include, in the Opening Session, an International Harmonization theme in order to present the ITF end results. The Organic World Congress in June 2008 is another key event;
 - IAF: first briefing made in March 2006 by a member of the ITF Steering Committee and the full Steering Committee meet with selected individuals (i.e. Reinaldo Figuerido and other ANSI personnel) in September 2007. ITF IT Steering Committee meets with IAF Technical Committee.
 - ISO/CASCO: Steering Committee to arrange representation of IROCB in the CASCO working group for ISO 65.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

▪ **ITF Website:**

The current (renewed) website will develop a new section summarizing ITF results, including the Communication Strategy and Plan and communication tools to be developed (2007-08).

▪ **Press releases:**

Press releases will be prepared by FAO, UNCTAD and IFOAM on ITF outcomes and disseminated through respective channels (after November 2007). English and Spanish.

▪ **Power Point presentation:**

A professionally developed Power Point presentation will be prepared for the use of ITF members and others for briefing different constituencies, including basic messages, photos and graphs (after November 2007). English and Spanish. Key events for the power point presentation will be identified, including e.g. Biofach, Organic World Congress, UNCTAD XII.

▪ **Brochure:**

ITF to commission a communication specialist to develop a simple and attractive brochure, in English and Spanish, describing the work and results of the ITF (after November 2007) for a non specialized audience. The Brochure will contain the ITF basic messages, photos and quotes from some representative ITF members and others about the public-private partnership, the relevance of ITF to developing countries benefits for traders, relationship with WTO). English and Spanish.

▪ **Articles**

ITF to develop a few articles to be published in specialized journals such as *The Organic Standard* and *Bridges* as well as general organic journals, (*Ecology and Farming* and national organic journals). Also “political” articles that could be planted, i.e. articles by national politicians, consumer or farmer organizations.

▪ **Information kit (a folder with different flyers, in both English and Spanish):**

- A glossy colored folder featuring the ITF identity;
- Who’s who:
 - ✓ ITF Terms of Reference, with an introduction on the problems and benefits derived from harmonization;
 - ✓ List of ITF members, including also Steering Committee members;
 - ✓ List of important players in OGS (like the messy chart of Gunnar depicting the need to bring order in a chaos)
 - ✓ Communique
- Background information:
 - ✓ History of ITF (a narrative of the working procedure, dates of meetings, 3 development phases, list of studies, list of outputs – inspired from the ITF synthesis report);
 - ✓ Fact sheet on international organic standards (IFOAM and Codex);
 - ✓ Fact sheet on public-private partnerships (in ITF and beyond).
- ITF tools:

- ✓ Fact sheet¹ on IROCB (when finalized);
- ✓ Fact sheet on Equivalency Tools (when finalized);
- ✓ Fact sheet on Cooperation.

- Beyond the ITF:
 - ✓ Recommendations for areas to be further explored;
 - ✓ External information services (e.g. IOAS database, FiBL?)

¹ A Fact sheet is envisioned as one sheet, one or two sided with basic background, conclusions and related proposals.

**International and Regional Events in 2008-09
deserving ITF-related briefings or active advocacy intervention**

February 2008: Biofach

March 2008 (on the outcome of ITF 2007) and November 2008 (outcome of ITF 2008): WTO TBT Committee

May 2008: Codex Committee on Food Labelling June 2008: IFOAM World Organic Congress

[List to be further developed by ITF members]