

## *IFOAM EU Regional Group: Work plan 2006-2008*

### **RESEARCH**

<b>Person responsible (committee chair)</b>	<b>Otto Schmid</b>
<b>Other persons involved</b>	Victor Gonzalvez, members of the subcommittee, Office Brussels
<b>Countries involved</b>	CH ES Other
<b>Estimated working-days/country</b>	15 1* 2-4**
<b>Estimated office working days</b>	1-1.5 month/year

\*payed through research projects as research assistant

\*\* work for ca. 5-6 members of the research committee: ca. 0.5 days per meeting ca. 2 days at IFOAM EU Group meetings + ca. 2 days (consultation, interaction with national researchers)

#### **Background**

Strengthening organic farming research is an important tool to develop organic production systems and thereby increase the societal benefits of organic agriculture. Furthermore, other farming systems can profit from research on organic farming as the majority of organic agriculture research can be applied to other farming systems.

In September 2004 the IFOAM EU Regional Group produced a first paper on "Future research priorities of Organic Agriculture" to emphasise to the Commission and the European Parliament how to improve the environmental, health and quality benefits of organic farming. Research themes have a bearing on organic/low input farming and climate change, organic/low input farming and biodiversity, quality, health and food security of organic produce, animal welfare, etc. These research proposals include the input of all the IFOAM EU Regional Group Board members and highlight the special input from the East European countries. These priorities have been updated in September 2005 on the basis of a broad consultation process. In the past it has been shown that thanks to the good cooperation of IFOAM EU RG with DG Research it has been possible to initiate several research themes in the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, where research consortia have applied successfully. This good collaboration should be continued.

#### **Objectives**

1. To gain recognition for the holistic requirements of organic food and farming research in research commissioning and funding.
2. To communicate the research priorities of organic farming as formulated by the organic sector as a whole to the EU commission and relevant national bodies.
3. To ensure dedicated funding for organic farming research in the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Research Framework Programme.
4. To achieve that the IFOAM EU Group is regularly involved by the EU commission in policy relevant research projects as representative of the organic food and farming sector.
5. To ensure that the stakeholders, in particular farmers, processors, traders and consumers, are strongly involved in the elaboration, design, discussion of results and the dissemination of the research.
6. To ensure that the EU Commission, in particular DG AGRI and other relevant DGs, are regularly informed about the outcomes of research projects where IFOAM EU Group is involved (on going)
7. To achieve that a technology platform on organic farming and low input farming will be established.

### **Deliverables (Date)**

- 1a. Brief policy makers and administrators on EU level on the need for targeted research funds for organic farming, highlighting the broader societal benefits of organic farming research. (on-going)
- 2a. Update the position paper on current and future research priorities for organic food and farming once a year by collecting feedback from IFOAM member organizations, researchers and other stakeholders and communicate these to DG Research and DG AGRI (consultation round September-November 2006).
- 3a. Prepare and hold a meeting with the new research Commissioner/his cabinet to communicate the research funding needs of the organic agriculture sector (January - June 2006)
- 3b. Meetings with Commission staff from DG Research, Environment, Agriculture and Members of the European Parliament to ensure that relevant research needs are taken up in the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Research programme (2-3 times a year).
- 3c. Prepare, present and publish a paper regarding stakeholders involvement in transnational organic research projects to disseminate the IFOAM-EU Group experience for the Odensee Congress (February-May 2006)
- 4a. Participate actively in the following 3 research projects as a partner: Organic Revision Project (start 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004 until End of February 2007), Organic Action Plan evaluation project (start 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2005 until End of April 2008) and Organic Wine project (Start 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2006 until End of January 2009)
- 4b. Ensure the link with other relevant EU research projects through participation with experts from the EU Board (Organic Input evaluation, Quality of low input food, Eisfom – European Information systems for organic markets). (on-going).
- 4c. The Research committee informs the board about coming relevant projects or lobbies the European Commission to launch proposals on needed European topics.
- 4d. Ensure in conjunction with the other committees that IFOAM EU Group takes part at all policy relevant organic research projects.
- 5a. Inform IFOAM EU Group members about relevant research projects through the group newsletter (on-going)
- 5b. Communicate regularly results from Research projects, where IFOAM EU is involved, with the newsletter and file archive (on-going).
- 5c. IFOAM-EU Group members are involved in Research projects by circulating reports, gathering comments and sending back their own position to all those research Projects where IFOAM EU Group is involved (on going)
- 5d. Organise thematic workshops with interested IFOAM EU Group board members and invited experts (as part of funded projects):
  - workshop on Action plans for organic farming related to the EU Project ORGAP in conjunction with an IFOAM EU Group-Meeting (March 2006).
  - Promote the idea of pilot-farm/demonstration farm projects and on-farm research projects, e.g. through a workshop and communication (second half of 2006).
  - workshops other thematic areas of high relevance to be defined by the research subcommittee (from 2006 on)
- 6a. Sum up the stakeholder view point and comments to research projects, where IFOAM EU is involved, to the relevant DGs in the European Commission.
- 7a. IFOAM EU Group is actively involved in a proposal for a research platform for organic agriculture in the framework in collaboration with the organic research community in the 7<sup>th</sup> Research framework programme (January – February 2006).
- 7b. Apply together in a consortium for a specific support action (SSA) at DG Research for basic funding.
- 7c. Develop with partners a proposal for a technology platform.
- 7d. Coordinate the organic industry participation.
- 7e. Convince policy decision makers about a need of such a technology platform.

### **Resources / Interactions / Relationships**

The work is mainly funded by the active participation of members of the Research Subcommittee and by support of the work of the chair of the subcommittee by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL. Since 2005 the IFOAM EU Group is actively involved as partner in policy-oriented research projects (Organic-Revision, ORGAP – Evaluation of Action Plans for organic food and farming, Organic Wine ORWINE since 2006) and has part-time employed a research officer (Victor Gonzalvez). 20 % of the Research costs goes as overhead to the Brussels office.

The following interaction with other subcommittees are made:

- SC Regulation: Key problems of the regulation 2092/91 are taken up in research projects.
- SC Policy: Relevant policy issues are taken up in EU funded research projects.
- SC Administration: The participation of IFOAM EURG in research projects contributes to the budget.

There is a cooperation with ISOFAR, the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research, with regard to the planned Technology Platform.

### **Public relations and communications**

- Summaries of the Research work in the IFOAM EU newsletter communicated to all IFOAM EU members.
- IFOAM is responsible for the Internet forum in the EU ORGAP project on the evaluation of organic action plans and the project newsletter ([www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)).

#### **Date/status:**

Final draft, 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2006