

IFOAM Information Points

Background

At worldwide level, the organic movement is organized and represented by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

IFOAMs mission is leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity. Our goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of Organic Agriculture.

The federation is democratic, with all fundamental decisions taken at its General Assemblies during which its World Board is elected. IFOAM has more than 750 member organizations - farmers groups and cooperatives, processors, traders, scientists, consultants and certifiers - in more than 100 countries. Members organize themselves according to geographic regions or sector interests. IFOAMs Head Office is situated in Bonn, Germany.

IFOAM represents and continuously 'builds the global platform for the organic movement'; this goal being set by the IFOAM World Board in 2003 represents one of five goals to be achieved during the coming years. IFOAM is establishing Information Points at regional level carrying out the implementation of relevant parts of the IFOAM Work Program.

Selected regions for establishing an IFOAM Information Point

The most important criteria for countries / regions where an IFOAM Information Point will be established are:

- Countries / regions where IFOAM is yet not strongly developed and in particular where organic agriculture is developed to a certain extent, but in proportion to this only few IFOAM members exist.
- Countries with an emerging industry in the organic agriculture sector

- Countries, regions with a strong likeminded movement (e.g. sustainable agriculture, agro-forestry, biodiversity, etc.).

Based on these criteria the IFOAM World Board prioritized among others China, the Arabic Region, India, and Brazil.

Objectives of an IFOAM Information Point

- To increase IFOAMs visibility selected regions/countries, where IFOAM is not yet strongly present.
- To develop contacts with the organic movement in selected regions/countries and to establish a linkage between IFOAM and the movement.
- Information flow into two directions is assured: IFOAM <-> OA movement in relevant country / region
- To facilitate quick access to IFOAM material and other information and resources.
- To increase the number of members of selected regions/countries.
- To contribute to national and / or regional platform building of the existing movement on Organic Agriculture and to facilitate their cooperation and negotiation with local governments.
- Partnerships with other organizations are built.

Tasks of an IFOAM Information Point

- To represent IFOAM in coordination with the Head Office
- To maintain close contacts with members in the region.
- To serve members and non-members with Organic Agriculture issues in the relevant countries / region.
- To provide quick local access to IFOAM materials (complete package) and other resources and information.
- To analyze the actual situation of the regional Organic Agriculture movements, other actors (e.g. donor agencies) and to assess the needs to strengthen OA in the relevant countries / regions.
- To establish linkages to the regional organic movement.
- To pro-actively promote IFOAM and organic agriculture by the means of special activities / drives (like conferences,

workshops, organization of IFOAM Board and committee meetings, etc.). Proposals on the basis of an annual work plan and budget have to be elaborated and transmitted to Head Office for approval.

- To inform farmer organizations, NGOs, entrepreneurs and relevant governmental institutions about the potential of Organic Agriculture.
- To establish contacts to organizations/institutions related to organic, sustainable agriculture in the region in order to establish linkages.
- To enhance active participation of regional members within IFOAM, e.g. internal structures like regional groups, writing articles for the IFOAM magazine "ecology and farming", etc.
- To report regularly to IFOAM Head Office.
- The Information Point coordinator will work under the instruction of IFOAMs Head Office.

Criteria to run an IFOAM Information Point

Persons that are considered for running an Information Point have to meet the following requirements:

- To be familiar with IFOAM, coming from an IFOAM committee or been long-time involved in any other IFOAM body/structure, if available.
- To be a respected person of the organic movement in his/her country/region and possess sufficient influence.
- To prove good, experience in organic agriculture.
- To possess good communication skills and must be fluent in English.
- To possess personal integrity.
- Cannot serve at the same time as an IFOAM World Board member.
- To be willing to sign a confidential agreement (Annex 3 of Policy 24 'Conflict of interest and confidential agreements')
- To be as far as possible independent from local / regional institutions / organizations (also IFOAM groups), and to have no own/private political agenda.
- To be willing to declare conflicts of interest.

Budget and Financing

The estimation of the annual costs for an IFOAM Information Point are based on

- Costs for personnel
- Office costs (phone, mail, infrastructure, overheads)
- Travel costs

Costs have to be born by outside funding or by IFOAM and its members/partners in the region. IFOAM and interested parties will have to agree on financing the respective Information Point in a separate contract.

For establishing the Information Point and executing further activities in the region separate project proposals may be developed, in close cooperation with the IFOAM Head Office in Bonn.

Starting up the IFOAM Information Point

After identification and contracting a candidate for operating the IFOAM Information Point, a briefing and intensive training at the Head Office in Bonn will follow.

Within the overall IFOAM program 2008 the appointed person has to develop an appropriate work plan for the IFOAM Information Point in close cooperation with IFOAM HO. The plan will be finalized and adopted within the first six months of running the IFOAM Information Point by the Executive Director of IFOAM. Based on the plan a reporting scheme and an annual internal evaluation process will be installed. The person in charge will be directly accountable to the Executive Director.

Gerald A. Herrmann
Executive Director

IFOAM Head Office Bonn, November 2004