



In cooperation with:

Burundi Organic Agriculture Movement (BOAM)

Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN)

Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement (ROAM)

Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM)

National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)

Regional cooperation for Organic Standards and certification capacity in East Africa

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OSEA Phase II

November 2010 to December 2013

Public Information March 2011



1. Executive Summary

Organic Agriculture is an environmentally friendly production method, which has particular advantages for small-scale farmers in Africa. It also provides interesting marketing opportunities. Problems in the area of standards and certification currently pose limitations to the further development of the sector in East Africa both for exports and for local and regional market development. Limited public awareness and lack of supportive policies are additional obstacles.

The project will support the further development of regional organic standards and certification capacity in East Africa and to support an enabling framework for organic agriculture. The project is a continuation of the successful project to establish a regional organic standard for East Africa. The East African Organic Products Standard was adopted by the EAC Council in April 2007 and officially launched by the Prime Minister of Tanzania at the organic conference in Dar May 2007. An East African Organic Mark was also established. This has provided the fundamentals for a further development of the local and regional markets.

The project aims at increasing income for rural communities through local, regional and international trade in organic products.

The project will accomplish the following results:

- Improved certification services in East Africa.
- Appropriate conformity assessment systems for EA smallholders and local and regional organic marketing exist.
- Market access to the EU is improved.
- More comprehensive standard and standard revised according to practical experiences.
- Operators understand and implement the standards
- Improved local market opportunities.
- The East African Organic Mark is well managed.
- Increased intra-EAC trade in organic products
- Better government policies and plans for the organic sector.
- The sector in Rwanda and Burundi is further developed.
- Existence of comprehensive information about the development in East Africa

It will be implemented by IFOAM and the National Organic Agriculture Movements in Kenya (KOAN), Tanzania (TOAM) and Uganda (NOGAMU) in close cooperation with the organic stakeholders and governments in the East African countries.

After considerable delay, the project started 1 November 2008 and continues for three years.

2. Table of contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Table of contents	3
3. Rationale and background	4
3.1 Obstacles for the development of certified organic production in East Africa	4
3.2 The OSEA project – phase I	4
4. The OSEA II Project	7
4.1 Objective and project purpose	7
4.2 Project components, results and activities	7
4.3 Stakeholders and target group	12
4.4 Implementation	12
4.5 Management structure	12
4.6 Cooperation and synergies with other initiatives	12
4.7 References	13

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used

BOAM	Burundi Organic Agriculture Movement
CBTF	UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Development Task Force
EAC	East African Community
EAOPS	East African Organic Products Standard
EAOM	East African Organic Mark
EPOPA	Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICS	Internal Control Systems (see explanation below)
ITC	International Trade Center, Geneva
KOAN	Kenya Organic Agriculture Network
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
ISO 65	Guide 65: 1996(E), General requirement for bodies operating product certification systems.
NOAM	National Organic Agriculture Movements (see explanation below)
NOGAMU	National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System (see explanation below)
ROAM	Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement
TOAM	Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement
UNCTAD	United National Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

3. Rationale and background

3.1 Obstacles for the development of certified organic production in East Africa

Problems in the area of standards and certification currently pose limitations to the further development of organic production in East Africa. For the certified (or certified to be) production, access to affordable certification service as well as adapted standards is a critical factor. Also the certification systems themselves need adaptations to the conditions in East Africa, in particular to be accessible for small-holders. For export purposes equivalence with systems in the importing countries is crucial for market access.

For the development of the local and regional markets, the availability of local certification and the application of standards that are relevant in the conditions of the producers are of fundamental importance.

A recent study by IFOAM¹ concludes that a big share of the organic products is sold without 3rd party certification, and most without any systematic conformity assessment. There are two main factors in play here: Firstly the market doesn't necessarily demand certification, secondly certification is considered to be very demanding and costly. The latter perception is reinforced by the fact that most certification is developed for the export markets, and includes more rigorous procedures and higher costs than realistically appropriate for the local markets. Efforts to establish local certification bodies have been one strategy to facilitate access (e.g. through the support of the EPOPA programme). However, due to high overhead costs for accreditation and the associated quality system, as well as low volumes, the local certification offered is often not that affordable, even if it is cheaper than the foreign-based. Recent studies² show that local certification in East Africa is almost as expensive per farmer as in Europe, while value of production per farmer is often a fraction. It is therefore needed to develop realistic conformity assessment systems.

Consumers in East Africa are interested in organic. However, a survey of 600 consumers in main cities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda showed that many don't know or are not sure what organic is and even most of those who say they do are in reality not fully conversant with what organic really entails. Therefore, substantial efforts are needed to make increase consumer awareness.

3.2 The OSEA project – phase I

The project *Regional cooperation for Organic Standards and certification capacity in East Africa – “OSEA”* was initiated by IFOAM 1 Jan 2006 and runs to the end of 2007, with Sida as the donor. It was developed as a result of a feasibility study by Sida (2002)³ about the development of certification capacity in East and Southern Africa and a regional stakeholder meeting in Arusha 2003. In that meeting, representatives of all major stakeholders agreed that there was a need for a regional organic standard and also for closer cooperation in the region.

The OSEA project purpose was:

¹ Local Organic Markets in Africa, IFOAM 2007, available at www.ifoam.org

² PGS in East Africa, IFOAM 2007

³ Feasibility study for the establishment of certification bodies for organic agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa, Grolink 2002

To improve income and livelihood of rural communities in East Africa through facilitation of trade in organic products by means of a regional standard and regional certification cooperation.

Tangible results were expected to be:

1. A draft standard is developed through stakeholder consultations and by field testing by the end of 2006
2. Joint protocols for the verification of compliance with standards are developed.
3. An East Africa Organic Standard is formulated and adopted by early 2007
4. A governance structure for the East Africa Organic Standards is established.
5. The East African Organic Standard has been approved by IFOAM.
6. Consumers in the East African Countries have been informed about the standards and increased their understanding of organic agriculture.

IFOAM contracted Grolink AB for the overall project management, and employed a regional coordinator who worked part time with the project. The project has been implemented according to plans. One main difference compared to the originally designed project, was that the UNEP/UNCTAD CBTF⁴ project had as one of its objectives the development of a regional standard. IFOAM and CBTF agreed to manage that component jointly. All in all that has contributed positively to the result. This meant that more activities could take place and with more people involved, and the participation of governments were largely facilitated by the CBTF project. In the same time there was more work needed for project coordination. Through the cooperation the OSEA project has also contributed considerably to the policy development in East Africa. When the project was planned, the EAC had only three members: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. However, in 2006 Rwanda and Burundi sought membership of the EAC, and the project tried to integrate them in the major activities, e.g. the standards working group. Budget constraints, however, didn't allow for their full integration.

The results 1-4 are fulfilled. The East African Organic standard became the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS), adopted by the East African Community and thereby the official standard for the five EAC member states. In annex 3 there is detailed account on the process leading to the adoption of the standards. The standard itself has been submitted to SIDA earlier. Result 5 will not be fulfilled, mainly due to that IFOAM is in the process to amend its procedures for approval of standards and there is no possibility to submit the standard for such approval before the end of the project period. Re result 6: a consumer awareness campaign was initiated in May and will increase consumer awareness. However, to really reach the relevant consumers more will be needed. As a sub-result of result 6, the stakeholders agreed to the development of an East African Organic Mark (see front page). The mark will be used as a signal that products are produced according to the East African Organic Product Standard, and will be a corner-stone for local and regional market development.

Both the mark and the standards were launched by the Prime Minister of Tanzania at the East African Organic Conference in May 2007. The launch was attended by more than 250 people, including the Swedish Ambassador, the Minister of Agriculture of Tanzania and the Minister of Trade of Uganda. The conference was co-organized between the OSEA project, IFOAM, CBTF, EPOPA, TOAM and the Ministry of agriculture of Tanzania.

The Mark has been registered by the National Organic Agriculture Movements in Kenya and Tanzania is under registration in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. An information package has been developed to support the introduction of the mark. Now, gradually the Mark is coming to use.

⁴ <http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/>

The project identified that there was a need to further develop other conformity assessment mechanisms than third-party certification. Even if third-party certification is available, the costs and procedures make it too demanding for many small producers. The group certification with Internal Control System as designed for the export market is not well adapted to the local market situation as the certificates are owned by exporters, with interest in one or two crops and not the whole diverse production typical for organic farms. With additional funds from IFOAM a workshop was carried out to further develop more appropriate systems, in particular so called Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). However there is still quite a lot to be done before those systems are well established and appreciated in the market place.

The OSEA project has been a real success both from its actual accomplishments and for the general boost it has provided to the sector. It has provided a good foundation for future development of the organic markets locally, regionally and internationally. It has also provided the organic sector in East Africa with a common platform for international negotiations and recognition. It has further established a working regional cooperation both on the government level in the form of the East African Community (as custodian of the regional standard) and between the National Organic Agriculture Movements around market development and the management of the East African Organic Mark. A real dialogue has also been established between the government and the private sector.

As been related above, there is still quite a lot to be done before the sector can come into full bloom. This project proposal is therefore suggesting a three year extension project. The proposal has been developed by the three National Organic Agriculture Movements in Uganda and IFOAM assisted by consultants. Input has also been sought from various other stakeholders, including government representatives as well as from the UNEP/UNCTAD CBTF project.

4. The OSEA II Project

As it is a three year project, the activities should be seen as indicative and some activities may be revised and others added depending on the developments in the region and the priorities of the stakeholders.

The project will build on the foundation and the momentum created by the adoption of the EAOPS and the East African Organic Mark and use those as major tools to further develop the sector, with an emphasis on market oriented production for the local and regional markets. Activities oriented to supply capacity and farmers' and extension workers' education are also important for the successful development of the local and regional markets. It is assumed that other projects and initiatives will be able to address that. If that is not the case some revision of the project might be needed to address these issues to some extent.

4.1 Objective and project purpose

The overall development objective is to improve income and livelihood of rural communities in East Africa. This will be accomplished through the development of market oriented organic production. Key component needed to be successful in this are appropriate quality assurance systems adapted to small producers, appropriate standards and consumer awareness resulting in an increased demand for organic products locally and regionally. It should be noted that the focus of the project is local, national and regional markets. However some component of the project is also oriented to the acceptance of the East African organic standards and conformity assessment system in the EU. In reality the markets are interlinked and the development of national and regional markets will also build supply capacity for the export market, as some of the major obstacles for the export market are related to limited supply.

The project purpose is:

To improve income and livelihood of rural communities in East Africa through facilitation of trade in organic products by means of a regional standard, development of the conformity assessment system, promotion of a regional mark and raising consumer awareness.

4.2 Project components, results and activities

The project has a number of components that all are interrelated. A standard needs a conformity assessment system, and consumer awareness. The organic mark is what links all those together for successful promotion. In turn the market development benefits from a conducive policy framework and proper market information systems.

A Building certification capacity in the region

There are already organic certification bodies in Uganda, Kenya (two) and Tanzania, none in Rwanda and Burundi. The four organizations are new and there is a need to further support them to improve their work. To have functional and accessible local certification bodies will reduce the costs for certification and make the service more accessible.

Result: Improved certification services in East Africa.

Activities:

- a. Regional trainings of inspectors and certification staff
 - b. Development of joint resource materials and tools
 - c. Capacity building of emerging certification bodies in R&B
- NB: the project will not itself establish certification bodies in R&B, but will assist them if developed, and bring them into the cooperation.

B Making conformity assessment accessible for small producers

The project will both work with third-party certification and Participatory Guarantee Systems to develop conformity assessment mechanisms that are accessible for smallholders. Independent, third party certification is currently the norm for international trade in organic products. The systems developed internationally for certification are not particularly well-adapted to the situation of small holders in East Africa. In the same time also other conformity assessment mechanisms are being developed, such as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)⁵. While those alternatives will probably not, within the time frame of this project, be acceptable for exports, they are relevant for the local and regional market. There is, however, a lot of development needed for those systems.

Result: Appropriate conformity assessment⁶ systems for EA smallholders and local and regional organic marketing exist.

Activities:

- a. Workshops and studies (document success and failures) to further develop the PGS concept and share experiences
- b. Coaching emerging PGS
- c. Production of external information materials to explain and promote PGS
- d. Development and publication of handbook for the development of PGS in East Africa
- e. Advise to local certification bodies how to design services more adapted to small producers

C Working with market access to the EU

The EU is currently the main destination for organic products from East Africa. The recent revision of the EU regulation opens up new opportunities for equivalence, among others the direct approval of foreign certification bodies by the EU. Market access can be facilitated through several routes: acceptance of the EAOPS as equivalent to the EU regulation, direct application for approval by the domestic Certification Bodies (CBs) and possibly through inclusion in regional trade agreements (e.g. the EPA). The project will assist the parties in their efforts to get recognition, first by facilitation of the direct approval of the certification bodies and thereafter by applying to the EU for equivalence for the EAOPS. Approval of the EAOPS by IFOAM will assist in making the standard recognized by private sector organizations (such as KRAV in Sweden) and it will also influence the process of recognition by the EU.

Result: Market access to the EU is improved.

Activities:

- a. Coaching of and support to the CBs for applications to the EU
- b. Coaching of and support to governments/EAC in the process to get acceptance of the EAOPS as equivalent to the EU regulation
- c. Application for IFOAM approval of the EAOPS

⁵ IFOAM is working globally for the acceptance of PGS systems.

⁶ IFOAM normally refers to these conformity assessment systems as “guarantee systems”.

- d. Exploring other options for improved market access

D Including new areas in the standards and review of the standards after their initial use.

The recently launched East African Organic Products Standard contains the basic production rules, but lacks coverage in some areas of relevance, such as aquaculture. In addition they are likely to need revision after been used a couple of years. The development of new areas and the revision of existing standard will follow the same participatory process as the original development of the EAOPS. To expand the coverage of the standards will allow bringing more product categories to the market. To revise the standards after their use a couple of years will ensure that they will be appropriate for use.

Result: More comprehensive standard and standard revised according to practical experiences.

Activities:

- a. Review of the standard through workshops by experts and national consultation (after a few years)
- b. Inclusion other areas as demanded by the stakeholder, e.g., aquaculture and fisheries

E Assisting in the implementation and practical use of the standards.

To have a standard is a starting point and a foundation, but users also have to be informed about the standards and be able to understand how they can be implemented in practice. Proper information and understanding of the standard also leads to better compliance and thereby strengthen the credibility of the system.

Results: Operators⁷ understand and implement the standards

Activities

- a. Production and dissemination of short forms of the standards for direct use by operators, translation to relevant languages
- b. Other tools to spread the message

F Information and awareness raising activities linked to the standards, the conformity assessment systems and the mark, and their promotion for consumers; producers groups; the tourism sector; traders; processors; retailers and government bodies.

The standards and the system are a very good foundation for market communication. It is one thing to have a good system and another one to make it known and understood. Experiences from other countries (e.g. Sweden) show how important it is that stakeholder, the trade and consumers are well informed. The whole conformity assessment system needs to be well promoted and understood by all stakeholders in order to be useful for market development.

Result: Improved local market opportunities.

Activities

- a. Production and dissemination of brochures, posters and other marketing support materials etc.
- b. Support to national action plans for improved local markets
- c. Other tools to spread the message

⁷ Operators means here the users of the standards, including but not limited to the farmers.

G Maintenance and development of the mark

The East African Organic Mark is a corner stone for the development of the local and regional markets. Experiences from other countries show how important it is to have one mark that signals organic and is trusted in the market place. The East African Organic Mark is now under the custody of the three National Organic Agriculture Movements in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda⁸. They have signed an agreement for the management of the mark, but needs further assistance to set up the management structures needed, to get legal advice, to develop the registration system etc.

Result: The East African Organic Mark is well managed.

Activities

- a. Support and advice to NOAMs to implement and maintain the mark, registration process, design instructions etc.
- b. Development and implementation of a monitoring scheme for the mark to prevent its abuse
- c. Legal services related to the management of the mark

H Regional trade development

There is a small regional trade in organic products. The potential for regional trade in organic products is assessed to be fairly high. However, there are also a number of limitations. Some are logistical and mainly related to the small volumes; others are administrative (the flow of goods between EAC countries is still not without hurdles). There is also a lack of information of what is really available. To support regional trade can also be of use for the exports out of the region, as it helps to build supply capacity and information systems.

Result: Increased intra-EAC trade in organic products

Activities:

- a. Study of barriers and potential for regional markets, development of strategy for regional market development
- b. Establish market information systems that facilitate regional trade
- c. Support regional participation in farmers' markets, national trade fairs and events

I Advice and support governments on relevant policy issues for development of the sector.

The organic sector in East Africa has developed despite lack of government policies and with little government involvement. Recently the governments have been much engaged in the development, to a large extent as a result of the CBTF and OSEA projects. It is important that continued guidance can be provided to the governments and that the NOAMs can take an active part in this. Lack of capacity on the side of the government has been identified as a main limiting factor. The component also includes awareness-raising of policy-makers regarding the benefits of organic agriculture and how it can contribute to general policy objectives in the region.

Result: Better government policies and plans for the organic sector.

Activities

- a. Capacity building of policy-makers through training and studies

⁸ There is currently no partner in Burundi and Rwanda, but that is expected to be developed during the project period.

- b. Supporting NOAMs to interact with governments
- c. Support to national development plans for organic agriculture
- d. Support stakeholder forums for proper consultations
- e. Study visits to organic farms, other countries and organic events to engage policy makers.

J Support the development of the organic sector in Rwanda and Burundi.

There are emerging organic sectors in Rwanda and Burundi, and there is substantial interest, in particular in Rwanda. The last meeting of the OSEA I project was in Kigali, coorganised with the ITC, Geneva. The development in the two countries can build on the experiences in the three other countries and they can become real partners in the further development of the sector within the East African Community. It would not be wise to predict in too much detail what should happen and what will have the highest priority in the two countries, therefore the activities here are broad and indicative. The starting point will be to map the current status of the sector and from that analyzes the needs and priorities.

Result: the sector in Rwanda and Burundi is further developed.

Activities

- a. Study of the actual situation in Rwanda and Burundi
- b. Workshops to spread knowledge and get stakeholders together
- c. Organizational support to BOAM and ROAM

K Monitoring and documenting the development of the sector in East Africa

Again and again, the lack of proper information of the sector comes out as a hurdle in all areas: market development; research; policy development etc. The project will establish proper channels to get information about the development of the sector and ensure that the information is also made available to the relevant stakeholders. The data collection is also of great use for the monitoring of the project results. Towards the end of the project, relevant organizations will be supported to take over the system for collection and dissemination of information. A consumer survey was conducted 2006 to guide consumer awareness activities. A similar survey will be conducted towards the end of the project period, which will serve the double function of evaluating how consumer awareness has developed throughout the project period and also guide future activities

Result: Existence of comprehensive information about the development in East Africa

Activities

- a. Establishment and support to appropriate channels and tools to get and update data about the development of the sector, institutionalization of data collection and dissemination
- b. Establishment of web site for EA with updated data on development of the sector including policies and national plans
- c. Publication of relevant data
- d. Consumer survey

4.3 Stakeholders and target group

The ultimate target group for the whole intervention is organic farmers (and their households) and processors (and their employees) that will benefit from better conformity assessment systems, well-adapted standards, increased local and regional markets and better market access for exports.

The direct stakeholders in the project are the organic sector organizations, certification organizations, the East African Community and relevant government agencies in East Africa. Leading local organization will be ROAM, NOGAMU, TOAM, BOAM and KOAN. Supporting institutions such as extensions service, schools, business associations will be engaged as well as consumer and environmental organizations.

4.4 Implementation

The implementation of OSEA Phase II will be similar as for Phase I, with a stronger role for the National Organic Agriculture Movements both for implementation and direction. The project will be implemented by IFOAM, in close cooperation with the National Organic Agriculture Movement (NOAMs) in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Qualified local, regional and international experts and service-providers will be contracted for different project components. Through the project regional and local expertise will be developed both within the NOAMs and by emerging business service providers.

4.5 Management structure

IFOAM has contracted a Project Leader (Gunnar Rundgren from GroLink AB) and a Regional Coordinator (Patricia Wangong'u) for the management of the project. The NOAMs in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda will be the national partners, partners in Rwanda and Burundi to be included when they emerge. One person in each NOAM will be National Coordinator (part-time) for the project.

Management Committee

There will be a Management Committee composed of representatives of NOAMs, IFOAM, the Project Leader and the Regional Coordinator. The Management Committee is expected to meet three times per year.

Regional conferences

Regional Conferences will be organized. These will contribute to that all stakeholders are well-informed about the developments. They will also be of direct use for consultations, increasing awareness, identification of new actors, creating synergies with other initiatives etc.

4.6 Cooperation and synergies with other initiatives

The project will seek close cooperation with other initiatives in the region to avoid redundancy and look for synergies. If the CBTF project will continue a similar cooperation as in phase I will be sought, in particular for components C,D,F,H, I and K.

The Swedish National Board of Trade (Open Trade Gate Sweden) has indicated its interest to partner with the project regarding component C. There is also a strong link between that component and the agenda of the International Task Force for harmonization and equivalence in the organic sector.

ITC, FAO and several other development partners are active, or plan to be active in the organic sector in Africa. The OSEA project is well positioned to be a “hub” for these other initiatives.

IFOAM has an Africa Office and the activities in the OSEA project forms a part of a wider agenda for the development of the sector in Africa. Already in Phase I, people from other African countries were invited to conferences and other events, to share their experiences and to learn from East Africa. Now already, processes similar to the one in East Africa are initiated in West Africa and Southern Africa, inspired by the OSEA project. Ethiopia has showed interest in adopt the EAOPS. Through the IFOAM network the influence is global and IFOAM and IFAD are together implementing a similar project in the Pacific. This will continue also during this project.

For the organization of regional events, co-organization and co-financing will be sought with governments, other projects and organizations.

4.7 References

More information about IFOAM is found at www.ifoam.org

More information about KOAN is found at www.koan.co.ke

More information about NOGAMU is found at www.nogamu.org.ug

More information about TOAM is found at www.kilimohai.org