

Workshop on Alternatives on Certification for Organic Production

April, 13-17 2004
Torres-RS-Brazil



PROCEEDINGS

Alberto Pipo Lernoud and María Fernanda Fonseca
Editors

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This Compilation Document was commissioned by IFOAM. Grolink, publisher of The Organic Standard, financed it.

The Edition was done by Alberto Pipo Lernoud, IFOAM Vice President and organizer of the Workshop, and María Fernanda Fonseca, from PESAGRO, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, rapporteur of the event. Assisting with the edition was Marcela Piovano, from Cocina de la Tierra, Argentina and with the electronic edition, Ron Khosla, from Certified Naturally Grown, USA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IFOAM commissioned Alberto Pipo Lernoud to organize an International Workshop on Alternative Certification for Organic Production. MAELA, the Latin American Agroecological Movement was approached as partner for the event. Centro Ecologico, from Torres, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, volunteered to host the workshop. To all of them our deepest thanks.

IFOAM wishes to thank the SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation), VECO, Belgium, HIVOS, the Netherlands, FAO, MAPA/CONAB (Brazil Agriculture Ministry/Supply National Company, MDA/SAF (Brazil Agrarian Development Ministry/Family Farmers Secretary, all of which helped fund the Workshop.

ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

As this workshop united a great variety of organizations and people from 20 different countries, and they are using different names for their guarantee systems, the Working Title of the Workshop was Alternative Certification. Many other names were mentioned during the preparation of the event and during the event itself, names like “local”, “informal”, “participative” or “appropriate” certification or guarantee. At the end of the workshop, there was a general consensus that what have to be further explored and developed are “Participatory Guarantee Systems”, those which include the participation of consumers, other farmers, NGOs, governmental agencies, etc, in the building of the organic guarantee, identifying those constructions as basically different from Third Party Certification, as accredited by IFOAM and ISO 65.

After the Workshop, the IFOAM Executive Board decided to take that name, Participatory Guarantee Systems, for use in all events and publications from now on. The Workshop itself, and its Proceedings and Workshop Reader, retain the name “Alternative Certification for Organic Production” as that is the way they were made public, and because they included many experiences that can not be named Participatory.

THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS

- A Preface by IFOAM President, Gunnar Rundgren
- An Introduction that was the original invitation for the Workshop by Alberto Pipo Lernoud
- An article on the Workshop by Maria Fernanda Fonseca, originally published in The Organic Standard
- A Map of Alternative Certification Experiences, and one on Weaknesses and Strengths, made during the Workshop by Claudia Schmitt and Alberto Bracagioli, the moderators
- The systematization of the results of the Working Groups
- The Action Plan, voted at the end of the Workshop by all participants
- The Torres Letter, a public declaration by the participants of the event.
- A Glossary



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PREFACE

IFOAM, a platform for discussion and exchange

Gunnar Rundgren, President IFOAM

With this workshop on Participatory Guarantee Systems, one could say that organic is back where it began. Some may think that this is a step back, some will see it as a progress. The first attempts to formalize and standardize the organic guarantee were mainly an internal thing within an organic association. Sometimes these organizations were called “farmers associations”, but often they were a mixture of producers, consumers and generally people who were concerned with organic. They developed simple standards and often some kind of internal control of the producers within the organization. That control was sometimes done by an employed technician, sometimes by the members of the group themselves. In other cases, producer-consumer based system developed, like Community Supported Agriculture, where the need for formal control was seen as small.

In the eighties, when organic entered supermarkets and international trade, these “in-house” or informal systems of quality assurance were not seen as sufficient to bridge the confidence gap between the producer and the consumer, often there were a number of parties in between and/or a big geographic distance. From thereon the ruling idea was that organic needed formal third-party certification. This was even more emphasized with the governmental regulations emerging in the nineties. It is clear that third party certification has played a critical role for the organic market, and for the general development of the sector. We would not have a 25 Billion US Dollar market for organic products without this certification.

However, there are also reasons to be a little critical to the development. For many people “organic” now means “certified organic”. This can not be right. There are many good organic farms that were never certified. Some because they found no reasons to go into certification, their clients don't ask for it, or their production is such that there is no developed organic market for it. Others because they didn't like the underlying paradigm, the idea that external control is the best method to ensure integrity. Others again, simply because they found certification too costly, or the procedures too onerous. Some of these producers have chosen to develop “alternative” ways to guarantee that the production is organic, alternatives that mainly are participatory.

I can't see anything wrong with the desire to develop new concepts for an organic guarantee. I am sure that these concepts can borrow some ideas from the third party certification world. I also think they have a lot to learn from each other, which was the focus of this workshop, and very much the role of IFOAM: to be a platform for exchange.

I am also equally sure that the third party organic certification has come to a position, where it needs to really reflect on what and who it serves, and if the future organic guarantee will be based on “more of the same”, i.e. more inspections, more paper-work, more standards, or if there are reasons to see how to bring responsibility back where it belongs to the producers. In that, the direct or indirect critique from the participatory systems might be one useful input, and well operating participatory systems may point a

way forward.

One complication is that we get isolated markets where products can't circulate from what can be called participatory guarantees to the third-party system. I don't know exactly where this will end, but why should I? Most changes in the world are not initiated with a clear road map to the future. The organic movement if any should not be afraid of taking on new ideas and challenge established truths!

Workshop on Alternative Certification for Organic Production

IFOAM-MAELA

Introduction

Organic producers all over the world have been developing methods for guaranteeing the organic status of their product to consumers, processors, traders and increasingly also to governmental agencies in charge of food quality. It has also been important for producers to differentiate organic products from non-organic producers making “organic” or organic-like claims. Consumers demand guarantees about organic methods used to produce and bring the food to the market.

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has been developing an organic guarantee system with a democratic process of consultations with the people involved in organics since the 70s, which has resulted in a sophisticated and effective structure. This Organic Guarantee System, consisting of IFOAM Basic Standards, Criteria for Accreditation, the IFOAM Accreditation Programme and the IFOAM Seal, has demonstrated its efficiency over the years, especially in the mass-markets of developed countries and in the ever-growing international organic trade.

Many of the existing certification bodies began as farmers associations or similar organizations. Due to professional development and external pressures, they have developed concepts to conform with other certification schemes, which has resulted in the IFOAM Guarantee System being based on a similar approach to quality assurance as the ISO norms (such as ISO 65)

In the local sphere, some groups of farmers in different countries have meanwhile developed less formal methods for guaranteeing the ecological status of their production. Following the worldwide agreement on what the word “organic” means, most of them use the General Principles or the Standards that were developed over the years by the organic movement. But the application of those principles in the overseeing of production and trade varies widely. Some have written standards, some rely on affidavits or producer’s statements; some have seals from farmers or consumers organizations, and some guarantee through the name of a company or shop, etc. The reasons for these “alternative” methods of certification vary, but often result from certification costs, disagreement with the paradigm for ensuring credibility, or a political ambition to strengthen the farmers. In some cases ISO 65 type certification is seen as unnecessary.

These systems often address not only the quality assurance of the producer, but are linked to alternative marketing approaches. All over the world, box schemes, home deliveries, community supported agriculture groups (CSA’s or Teikei’s), farmers markets, popular fairs and other direct and indirect sales arrangements help to educate consumers about products grown or processed with ecological methods, which build trust and confidence in organic agriculture.

IFOAM has decided that the time is ripe to assess the status of alternative certification schemes around the planet. The Centro Ecologico, located in the rural area surrounding Porto Alegre, Brazil, has been working effectively with “participatory certification” in the Eco Vida Network for many years, and offered to be the hosting organization for a meeting on alternative methods for organic guarantee systems. MAELA, the Latin American Agroecology Movement that unites small farmers from the continent and has been an IFOAM member for a long time, has decided to co-sponsor the event.

The Workshop

The objective of the meeting is to develop an evaluation of existing “informal” methods by the people who are working with them. As a result, the participants will learn from each other and analyze the common issues that may need further development.

If comparisons are made to the ISO 65/IFOAM style of certification during the workshop, it is with the objective to better understand the difference in approach. Possibilities to improve both “informal” or “formal” systems will obviously be touched upon, but the goal is not to discuss if the existing “official” or “formal” systems or regulations - whether national or international, governmental or private - are good or bad, or to put up the different approaches against each other. The debate and information exchange should rather end up with concrete proposals on how to link the “informal” systems to the “official” or “formal” systems, so that all organic producers can work together.

Objectives

- Develop an evaluation of the existing “informal” systems, carried out by the people who is working with them
- Promote the dialogue and exchange of experiences between different projects involved in the search of alternative or local guarantee systems.
- Stimulate, within the participating organizations, the debate on the different systems.
- Formulate an action plan that strives to give international legitimacy to the informal or alternative processes of guaranteeing organic production.

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ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION AND A NETWORK CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Maria Fernanda Fonseca

The last issue of TOS (May, issue no. 37) reported briefly on a workshop on 'Alternative Certification' organised by IFOAM, Agroecology Movement for Latin America and Caribbean (MAELA) and Centro Ecologico/Rede ECOVIDA, and held in Brazil. The following article provides further details from the workshop, covering the findings as well as reflecting on the role of these systems and governance in the organic food industry.

The first International Workshop on Alternative Certification took place on 14 –16 April 2004 near Porto Alegre in southern Brazil. The people and organisations attending represented a wide range of initiatives, some that began in the 1970s in the early days of the organic agriculture movement, right up to the schemes that appeared in the 1990s and even more recently. These included the early community supported agriculture schemes (CSAs) in the USA; the Teikei system in Japan and COOLMEIA Ecological Fairs in Brazil, as well as more recent developments that offer alternatives to big anonymous markets and national regulations on organic labelling. These schemes mainly involve small farmers and small enterprises working in a system that promote social and environmental aspects that are important for sustainable living. To achieve their goals they have all developed a method that allows local customers to identify their products within the market place. They included schemes in seven countries with implemented organic regulations (Argentina, Costa Rica, India, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, USA), three with finalised organic regulations but not yet fully implemented (Brazil, Chile, Mexico), four with a draft regulation/standard (Peru, Lebanon, Uruguay, New Zealand), and three where no regulatory developments have yet taken place (Palestine, Paraguay, Uganda). The type of organisations involved in Alternative Certification were diverse, including farmers' associations, consumers cooperatives, clubs, marketing organisations and informal and formal non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A common label, logo or seal is normally used but also written statement (affidavits). Means of promotion varies, including mouth to mouth communication, publications (brochures, newsletters) direct mailing, farmers' markets, training sellers' staff and websites. Schemes can be local, regional or national in scope.

Results from the workshop

Although the Alternative Certification schemes (ACs)* represented at the workshop all have very different backgrounds and function in very diverse conditions, they share many common features. Most use standards based on the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS), Codex and/or national regulations adapted to their local socio ecological conditions, small-scale production and processing, and local marketing. Procedures are simple. There is minimal bureaucracy to maintain low costs to farmers or time spent filling-in forms. Most rely on an educational process and social control involving all actors from productive chain focusing on consumer participation to uphold their organic quality system. Transparency is maintained through stimulating active participation within the network.

Key features of Alternatives Certification systems

Principles, values and ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food sovereignty ('no' to agrifood sector) concentration), food security and food safety. Appropriate to small farmers' realities and small agricultural and enterprises. Flexible system emphasizing a learning process in a transparent and trust-building system. Priority to local markets and long term relationships. Co-responsibility and decentralised decision-making, emphasizing empowerment, capacity building and gender sensitivity.
Participation	Inclusion of grassroots participation not just 'qualified' technicians.
Standards & norms	Inclusion of social justice norms alongside organic production norms.
Co-responsibility of the Guarantee System programme	<p>Principles and standards are built together, put in practice and verified through the involvement of all participants (farmers, partner organisations, distributors, consumers, technicians) in the network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards/norms are normally revised every 2 or 3 years. Minimal and simple paperwork and registration procedures. Frequent meetings, visits and social interactions between participants within the network. Visit report is evaluated by committees in the network. Approval, sanctions and deregistration are decided collectively Conflict of interest is managed through prohibiting farmers or stakeholders to take part in the evaluation related to their property, and encouraging the active participation of conscientious consumers Emphasis is placed on training and empowering participants in the network to take an active role in the norm setting and certification process.
Documentation and transparency	Transparency and open access to information is the general norm for all schemes. Some are mainly based on oral accounts, most function with minimal paper work
Funding and resources	Schemes rely a lot on voluntary work. Direct costs are covered by membership dues, donation, consumer payment in advance and/or percentage of sales. Many indirect costs are covered by development funding from international and/or national government and private agencies.

Quality assurance

The ACs presented at the workshop have adopted different types of assurance systems:

- First-party assurance, where farmers take on a pledge and sign an affidavit, e.g. NOFA-NY (USA) and Tierra Viva (Chile).
- Second-party assurance, where the organisation that markets the products backs the scheme with its reputation, e.g. El Rincon Organico (Argentina), NOGAMU (Uganda) and COOLMÉIA (Brazil).
- Third-party assurance, where a farmers' organisation belongs to group certification scheme with an internal control system, implemented to facilitate the export of their

main crop; individuals or groups of farmers can then sell their side crops in the local market, e.g. GreenNet (Thailand) and ANPE (Peru).

- Participatory network assurance, i.e. Organic Farm (New Zealand), ECOVIDA and ACS (Brazil), IIRD (India) and CNG (USA)

Network and third-party conformity assessment and controls methods

Third-party certification is based on a third-party's assurance that the product, service, system, process or material conforms with specific requirements. The conformity assessment (i.e. the inspection) is carried out by an independent certification body. It was recognised that normal third-party organic certification is too much of a cost burden for small-scale farmers. To accommodate this problem, smallholder group certification was developed. Whilst such group certifications lower certification costs for small-scale producers and share some common features with participatory network certification, their origin, main purpose and practises are different from each other.

Participatory network certification is based on an assurance by a network of people and organisations involved in the production, distribution and consumption/use of the product/service with co-responsibility for guaranteeing the quality system. Farmers in a group certification scheme normally have similar production and centralised marketing. The certificate of a group certification belongs to the group. Production in a participatory network is normally diverse, and marketing is not always centralised. Participatory network farmers are certified as individuals, and the certificate belongs to the farmer.

Group certification, based on an internal control system, is mainly used for organic production by smallholders in low income countries who want to export to markets in high income countries. Income is believed to be the primary objective of farmers joining a group certification scheme. Participatory network certification, on the other hand, is based on peer review visits and social control, and is for domestic marketing for the time being. Participatory network farmers' objectives for organising themselves include food security and food sovereignty, as well as a fair price.

Group certification schemes focus on the managers and field officers/inspectors to ensure compliance through the internal control system. Participatory network certifications focus on training everyone (farmers, workers, consumers) involved in the process of production, distribution and consumption of organic food. They conduct 'peer reviews' instead of inspections. Peer review visits are carried out by extension workers and farmers that have practical knowledge in organic production and include support activities. Consumers also take part on the visits and share responsibility for the quality guarantee system. The certification decision-making is decentralised.

Participatory networks also rely on '**social conformity**', enhanced through procedures and social conventions, such as common group purpose, group standards setting, co-responsibility of certification, membership codes, interaction, interdependence and long term relations. Trust is engendered within the social construction and processes of the participatory network built over time between all participants within the network. A

trusting relationship, however, does not eliminate opportunities for deliberate violations, but neither are third party systems 100% fraud free.

Strengths and weaknesses

The table below lists strength (advantages) and weaknesses (disadvantages), identified from questionnaires filled by participants before the workshop and some discussions in which alternative certification systems were compared with ISO65/IFOAM accredited certification systems

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stronger communication and relationships between producers and consumers/society. ■ Easier assess for small producers and agri-enterprises' to a quality assurance system. ■ Stimulates local development. ■ Raises farmers' reputation to urban people and technicians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need a high degree of dedication from stakeholders. ■ Difficult to develop a group where self-esteem and confidence is low. ■ Long term process – requires time for competency and capacity building to achieve results. ■ Lack formal recognition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater ownership and responsibility by users of the guarantee system. ■ High transparency within the supply-consumption network. ■ Long term relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires more meetings between participants to establish social control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decentralised power and decision-making (individual and community empowerment and involvement). ■ Local development-base adapted to local social cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complex social organisation. ■ Group specific – difficult to multiply model to others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Less documentation and bureaucracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Little accurate data collection and record keeping.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low direct costs to farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires a lot of voluntary work. ■ High indirect costs to maintain support services, e.g. extension and marketing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inclusion of support services (extension, research, marketing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Could happen a High level of conflict of interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Standards and norms adapted to local conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Standards and norms currently not widely recognised.

Recognition pending

Achieving recognition is a common challenge for all the Alternative Certification schemes (ACs) represented at the workshop. In countries with implemented organic labelling regulations, an alternative method employed by ACs* is to avoid labelling their products as 'organic' but to use some other term that implies the naturalness of the product. For

instance, in the USA one scheme labels their products 'Certified Naturally Grown'. Another option (e.g. in Costa Rica) is to lobby governments for 'extra-official' recognition of ACs* managed by farmers' associations in partnership with NGOs, universities and/or agriculture research institutes (public and private). It is acknowledged that these would act as a guarantee system for sales in local markets but not as a formal certification. In countries such as Brazil and New Zealand, where regulations are yet to be implemented, ACs* are lobbying to be recognised within the legal framework.

One characteristic of Alternative Certification systems that needs to be discussed is that most, if not all, currently involve few processing units, downstream from the production, using little or no raw materials from outside the system. The possibility to include these and facilitate trade between distant countries and distant conscientious consumers would be a major challenge for such systems. Formal recognition of such systems will enhance further development of their procedures as a credible assurance system.

Over the past three decades the organic food system has evolved from a loose assortment of independent local networks of producers and consumers to a global, formal and regulated trade system. Market activities are not purely economic relationships. They encompass social norms and institutions that mediate their effects. Governance evolves and reflects conventions developed between key social, political and economic players engaged in developing and enforcing particular ideas and practises.

Since its formation in 1972, IFOAM's role in the governance of the organic food system has focussed largely on the international promotion of certification systems, established largely by Northern producers and organisations to regulate organic quality. Current efforts to define and enforce 'certified-organic' quality specifications inadvertently promotes the superiority of 'certified-organic' labelled products over all others, bolstering industrial and commercial conventions (based on efficiency, standardisation, bureaucratisation and price competitiveness) at the expense of organic-movement oriented domestic and civic values (personal trust, local knowledge, ecological diversity and social justice), practises and institutions.

Since the 1990s, one of the main objectives of Agroecology Movement for Latin America (MA and Caribbean (MAELA), has been to promote participatory certification systems, established by Southern producers and organisations to regulate organic quality and promote local markets. It promotes social control methods and supports domestic civic conventions. Whilst national government regulations bolster the authority of organic certification systems and define the world market for certified organic products, Alternative Certification systems are trying to be recognised as quality guarantee systems and define a global, socially-oriented fair trade of organic products.

Social movements are as important as state authorities and economic organisations in fuelling and regulating international trade. There continues to be value contradictions in the global trade of organic products within mainstream industrial-commercial conventions. Market values rooted in efficiency, standardisation, and price competition are chipping away domestic-civic conventions linked to personal trust relationships, ecological diversity and social justice. Globalisation has, to date, extended market conventions more rapidly

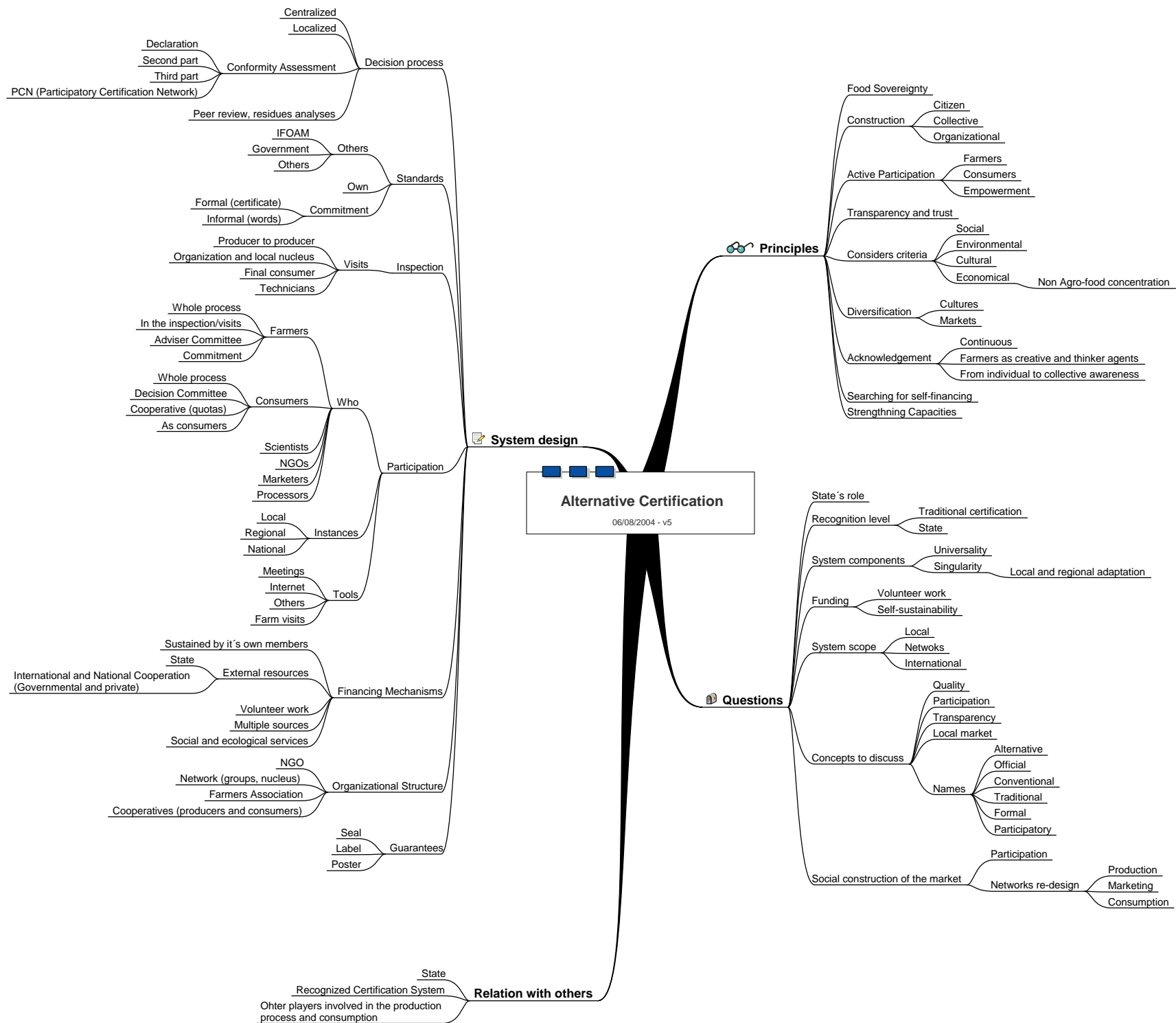
than social commitments. The existence of Alternative Certification systems is a promising sign of new initiatives that revitalises social norms and practices in organic food networks globally. They are a reality to be stimulated and supported, alongside current formal certification systems.

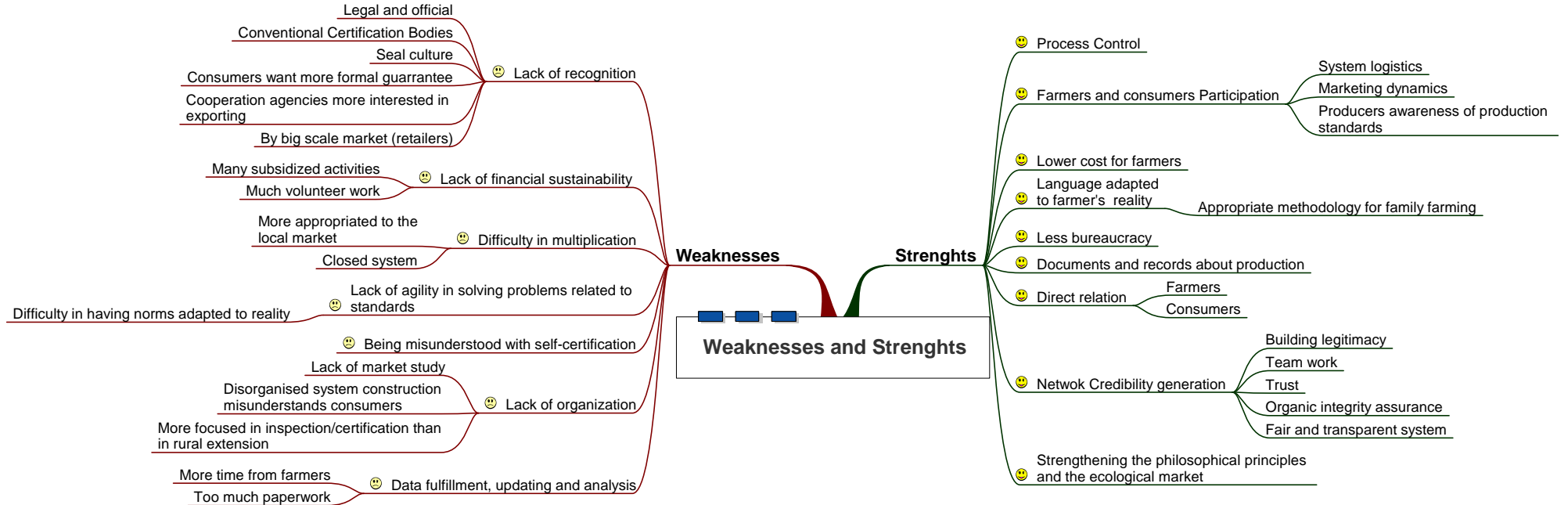
Recognition by IFOAM that it is time to pay attention to Alternative Certification systems – exemplified by its decision to organise this workshop (in partnership with MAELA) and also initiate a project (SASA Project) with the Fair Trade Labelling Organisation (FLO) on harmonising Organic and Fair Trade standards and certification procedures – was viewed as a positive sign by the workshop participants that the international federation may be moving beyond formal certification systems to promote conventions rooted in social cultural values. The sentiment in the end of the workshop was ‘Another world is possible’ and it is ‘fun to share’.

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RESULTS OF WORKING GROUPS

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Variable	Strengths	Weaknesses	Similarities/Convergences	Differences/Divergences
Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The market acceptance gives legitimacy to the process Focus on local markets allows popular access to food, based on cheap prices & fresh produce 	In some countries there is no local market or it is too small	<p>All experiences showed the need of support to create conscious consumers</p> <p>Need of stimulating & maintaining farmer-consumer relations</p> <p>Giving priority to local market, mostly to work in network</p> <p>When there is success, there is a tendency to enter big traditional markets (wholesalers, retailers)</p> <p>The credibility building should not be limited to local markets, trying to be accepted by consumers & industry in general.</p>	<p>The size of domestic markets and potential consumer base is very different in different countries.</p> <p>Cultural differences also define ways to develop the system and reach the market. There is no unique recipe, it has to be culturally and geographically adapted</p> <p>The concept of local market should be discussed.</p> <p>Is bigger better or is small beautiful? Which is the ideal size of the network? Local, regional, national?</p>
Participation	<p>A grassroots based, bottom up approach</p> <p>Participation and control come from all players involved in the chain, from producers to consumers</p> <p>It is a continuous learning process for all, growing from individual consciousness to group thinking and political awareness.</p>	<p>Lack of consumer participation</p> <p>Difficult in some rural areas where transport is complicated</p> <p>Need of a common language & culture</p>	<p>Need for a more effective participation of consumers</p> <p>State shouldn't "take possession" of the process, but support it.</p> <p>Farmers are complex and creative thinkers, because nature is complex, the system should allow space for this creativity</p> <p>Need of an active awareness and readiness for change</p>	In some cases the number of consumers is incipient and limited

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Variable	Strengths	Weaknesses	Similarities/Convergences	Differences/Divergences
Financing	<p>Some systems emerged with their own resources (% of sales, members payment, foreign aid, volunteer inputs, grants)</p> <p>Most of the systems are supported by NGOs, universities extension services, research institutes</p> <p>System shouldn't depend on external funds, better not having subsidies</p>	<p>Takes a long time to achieve self-financing. Perseverance furthers.</p> <p>In general, there is no government support</p> <p>Lack of indirect resources through stimulating organizational process, technical advice and research</p>	<p>State should contribute with a public policy to strengthen the process</p> <p>State should finance some phases (technical advise, research, etc) encouraging farmers and consumers organizations</p> <p>State should make sure regulations do not limit development of local markets.</p>	<p>About the role of the State, the discussion is not over yet. Some regions depend greatly on state support, while others are 100% privately or NGO run.</p> <p>Need for financing growth depends on regions. It should be discussed with farmers and consumers and its viability in time be considered</p>
Legality - Legitimacy	<p>A participatory, social and open model implies co-responsibility</p> <p>Process is legitimated in its own context, by the people who participate</p>	<p>State doesn't make those processes easier</p> <p>Lack or little legal recognition makes future uncertain.</p> <p>Lack of recognition by formal certification and accreditation systems makes expansion difficult</p>	<p>State should make the social process easier</p> <p>State shouldn't take possession of the process, only facilitate it</p> <p>State should facilitate a legal, legitimated and institutionalized framework</p>	<p>Lack of a clear definition about how the State participation should be</p> <p>Passing below the radar system of organic products governmental control is seen as a strength in some (developed) countries.</p> <p>Some experiences want external and legal recognition, some want to be out of the game.</p>

Fonseca(2004)

TABLE N° 03c - SUMMARY ON DISCUSSIONS (continuation)

Variable	Strengths	Weaknesses	Similarities/Convergences	Differences/Divergences
Mechanisms of Control	<p>Participatory/inclusive process</p> <p>Empowering and building capacities</p> <p>Transparent Systems</p> <p>Sensitization of farmers and consumers</p> <p>Consumers trust in small-scale</p> <p>In some cases, women's empowerment; in others, consumers participation is very high</p> <p>Utilization of advanced technology/internet</p>	<p>Limitations of farmers access to the internet</p> <p>Focus on high end markets</p> <p>Not legally recognized</p> <p>Initial lack of large scale consumers recognition</p> <p>Consumers participation in large-scale is formalized</p>	<p>Participatory/inclusive approach, consistent with the process of certification (to build trust)</p> <p>Empowering and building capacities of marginalized groups</p> <p>Transparent systems</p> <p>Committees that include farmers, consumers and scientists</p> <p>Focus on local marketing</p> <p>Some sorts of review mechanisms/inspection systems (peer review, local visits, external technical visits, pledge), no third party overseer</p> <p>Standards Manual</p> <p>Farmers commitment, pledge</p>	<p>Using pledge, local, national and international standards (IFOAM, CODEX)</p> <p>Using the internet</p> <p>Lack of farmers/consumers direct participation</p> <p>Inspections carried out by group, individual, farmer, technical staff</p> <p>Subjective vs. objective assessments (evaluative vs. check sheet)</p>

Fonseca(2004)

ACTION PLAN

The last day of the Workshop, in a Plenary meeting, an Action Plan was voted by all participants. The plan includes some short term assignments (Publication of Press Release, Workshop Declaration and Proceedings) and some long term proposals, for which an International Working Group of seven members was selected, including representatives from the organizers (IFOAM, MAELA and Centro Ecológico) and other participants.

1. PUBLISH THE RESULTS OF THE EVENT

1.1 Write a press release (Already done)

1.2 Write a declaration based in the results of the workshop

See “Torres Letter”

1.3 Organize/publish the proceedings of the workshop

These Proceedings

1.4 Discuss the results of the workshop in the different regions/org.

Ongoing activities

2. BUILD A NETWORK OF PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS*

2.1 Establish a working group on Participatory Guarantee Systems from the organizations (IFOAM/MAELA)

2.2 Strengthen farmers groups capacity to set up Participatory Guarantee Systems

2.3 Create internet platform

2.4 Create mechanisms to enable different organizations to exchange their experiences on Participatory Guarantee Systems

2.5 Discuss Participatory Guarantee Systems at different levels (NGOs, Governments, etc)

2.6 Do study of the ecological and social advantages of P.G.S.

2.7 Seek reciprocity with existing Certification Systems

2.8 Build a “Draft Guide” organizing the key elements of Participatory Guarantee Systems

2.9 Introduce P.G.S. concept with other bodies through personal and institutional links

2.10 Organize the next workshop on Participatory Guarantee Systems

2.11 To agree on a working name, eg Participatory or alternative.

* After the event, IFOAM Executive Board decided that from now on, IFOAM will call these systems Participatory Guarantee Systems, because that is the main feature that identifies them and differentiates them from the Third Party /ISO guarantee systems.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION – Final Letter

Organic producers all over the world have been developing methods for guaranteeing the organic status of their product to consumers, processors, traders and increasingly also to governmental agencies in charge of food quality. It has also been important for producers to differentiate organic products from non-organic producers making “organic” or organic-like claims.

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has been developing an organic guarantee system with a democratic process of consultations with the people involved in organics since the 70s, which has resulted in a sophisticated and effective structure. This Organic Guarantee System, consisting of IFOAM Basic Standards, Criteria for Accreditation, the IFOAM Accreditation Programme and the IFOAM Seal, has demonstrated its efficiency over the years, especially in the mass-markets of developed countries and in the ever-growing international organic trade.

Many of the existing certification bodies began as farmers associations or similar organizations. Due to professional development and external pressures, they have developed concepts to conform with other certification schemes, which has resulted in the IFOAM Guarantee System being based on a similar approach to quality assurance as the ISO norms (such as ISO 65 Guide)

In the local sphere, groups of farmers in different countries have meanwhile developed less formal methods for guaranteeing the ecological status of their production, especially in the countries of the South looking for systems more adapted to their realities. Informal systems also exist in the North, where the interest is growing. The reasons for these “alternative” methods of certification vary, but are often a result of high certification costs, disagreement with the paradigm for ensuring credibility, or a political ambition to strengthen the farmers. In such cases ISO 65 type certification is seen as unnecessary.

Following the worldwide agreement on what the word “organic” means, most of them use the General Principles or the Standards that were developed over the years by the organic movement. But the application of those principles in the overseeing of production, processing and trade varies widely. Some have written standards, some rely on affidavits or producer’s statements, some have seals from farmers or consumers organizations, and some guarantee through the name of a company or shop, etc.

These systems often address not only the quality assurance of the product, but are linked to alternative marketing approaches. All over the world, box schemes, home

deliveries, community supported agriculture groups (CSA's or Teikei's), farmers markets, popular fairs and other direct and indirect sales arrangements help to educate consumers about products grown or processed with ecological methods, which build trust and confidence in organic agriculture.

It is in this context that IFOAM and MAELA (Latin American Agroecology Movement) promoted the International Workshop on Alternative Certification, hosted by the NGO Centro Ecologico, in the North of Porto Alegre, State of Rio Grande do Sul, in April 13 to 17, 2004.

More than 20 countries were represented in the Workshop. Organized in discussion groups, the participants discussed the common points in their diverse systems to guarantee the credibility of the organic product, and the challenges to provide legitimacy to these methods.

In the participants view, there is a need to look for alternatives adapted to the different economic, social and cultural realities of small farmers all over the world.

Experiences like Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in USA, the Ecovida Agroecology Network in the South of Brazil and the Organic Farm in New Zealand, among others, demonstrate the importance of the involvement of farmers and consumers in the generation of credibility for the organic product. It was a common perception of the participants of the Workshop that these mechanisms of certification, that involve the participation of the key parties interested in the production and consumption of organic products, can be very efficient in guaranteeing the organic quality of the products. The participants also agreed that for the local markets, which are high priority for organic producers, the alternative certification systems are very adequate. One of the conclusions of the Workshop was the need to search ways to legitimize and get recognition of these strategies of certification on markets that go beyond the local sphere.

The recent Brazilian Organic Legislation, that doesn't require certification for trading processes that are based on a direct relationship between producers and consumers and that recognize Participatory Certification as a valid methodology on the certification process, was seen as an interesting example, and various participants from several countries pledged to lobby their governments so their countries legislations include similar contents.

Lastly, the participants stressed their decision to work together, not only in the quest for legitimacy of these alternative methods in other spheres, but also to prevent the growing "conventionalization" of organic agriculture, where so called "markets needs" have separated the organic movement from its initial platform.

IFOAM and MAELA, and the rest of the participating organizations, pledged to promote this issue within their structures. A Working Group with representatives from various continents was elected to take responsibility in assuring the continuity of the discussions and actions generated during the Workshop.

Torres and Dom Pedro de Alcântara, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, April 2004.

- AAA - Arab Agronomist Association parc@parc.org
- ABIO - Associação de Agricultores Biológicos do Rio de Janeiro (Biological Farmers Association of Rio de Janeiro) www.abio.org.br contato@abio.org.br
- ACERT - Associação dos Colonos Ecologistas da Região de Torres (Torres Region Ecological Settlers Association) www.acert.org.br
- ACT - Organic Agriculture Certification of Thailand actnet@ksc.th.com
- AECIA - Associação de Agricultores Ecologistas de Ipê e Antônio Prado (Ecological Farmers Association of Ipê and Antonio Prado) www.aecia.com.br
- AGRECOL - Centro de Información e Intercambio para la Agricultura Ecológica (International and Networking Center for Ecological Agriculture) info@agrecol.org
- ALTER VIDA - NGO Paraguay www.altervida.org.py
altervida@mmail.com.py
- ANA - Articulação Nacional em Agroecologia (National Articulation of Agro-ecology) aspta@aspta.org.br
- ANPE - Asociación Nacional de Productores Ecológicos del Perú (Ecological Producers National Organization of Peru) anpep2@hotmail
- AOPA - Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Agroecologia ex - Associação de Agricultura Orgânica do Paraná (Association for Agroecological Development) www.aopa.org.br
- APODU - Assosiación de Productores Orgánicos del Uruguay (Association of Organic Food Producers in Uruguay) apodu@adinet.com.uy
- APRO - Assosiación de Productores Orgánicos (Organic Producers Association) altervida@mmail.com.py
- APROBA - Agro Productores Orgánicos de Buenos Aires (Agro producers of Organic Products of Buenos Aires) aproba-ba@yahoo.es
- AS-PTA - Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa (Consultants and Services for Alternative Agriculture) www.aspta.org.br
- BAFPS Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards www.bafps.da.gov.ph
- BILANCE - Katholieke ontwikkelingsorganisatie (Dutch Catholic Development Organization) www.bilance.nl

- BIOGLOBAL - Consultancy Company - Sustainable Business & Agriculture- New Zealandv biomays@clear.net.nz
- BIOGRO NZ - IFOAM accredited CB www.bio-gro.co.nz
- BIOLAND www.blueplanet.de/org/bioland.htm
- BIOLATINA Latin America CB Organizations www.biolatina.com
- CAE - Centro Ecológico (Ecological Center) www.centroecologico.org.br
centro.litoral@terra.com.br
- CB Certified Body
- CCOF California Certified Organic Farmers www.ccof.org
- CEDECO - Corporación Educativa para el Desarrollo Costarricense (Educational Corporation for Costa Rica Development) www.cedeco.org.cr
- CENECOS - Centro de Estudios de Cultivos Orgánicos (Center for Organic Studies)
- CEPAGRO - Centro de Estudos e Promoção da Agricultura de Grupo (Study and Promotion Center of Group Agriculture) www.cepagro.org.br
- CEPOrg-RJ - Colegiado Estadual para Produção Orgânica do Rio de Janeiro (Organic Production State Collegiate of Rio de Janeiro)
- CERTEZA Paraguayan CB
- CEUTA - Centro de Estudios Uruguayo de Tecnologías Apropriadas (Uruguayan Center on Appropriate Technologies) www.chasque.net/ceuta
- CNG - Certified Naturally Grown www.naturallygrown.org
info@naturallygrown.org
- CNPOrg – Colegiado Nacional da Produção Orgânica (National Collegiate of Organic Production) www.agricultura.gov.br
- CNPq - Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) www.cnpq.br
- COAE - Center of Organic Agriculture- Egypt coae@gega.net
- COAP Center of Organic Agriculture- Palestine (working)
- COMISSÃO PASTORAL RURAL - Rural Pastoral Commission www.intercom.org.br

- CONAB - Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento no Brasil (Supply National Company in Brazil) www.conab.gov.br
- CONAPO - Comisión Nacional de Producción Orgánica-Peru (Organic Production National Commission-Peru) www.portalagrario.gob.pe/conapo2.shtml
- COOLMÉIA - Cooperativa Ecológica Coolméia (COOLMÉIA Ecological Cooperative) www.coolmeia.com.br coolmeia@coolmeia.com.br
- COONATURA Cooperativa de Consumidores Produtores Naturais no Rio de Janeiro (Consumers and Natural Producers Cooperative in Rio de Janeiro) www.geocities.com/coonatura/coonaturap4.html
- COOPET - Cooperativa de Consumidores de Produtos Ecológicos de Três Cachoeiras (Cooperative of Ecological Products Consumers of Três Cachoeiras) www.centroecologico.org.br
- COPROALDE - La Coodinadora de Organismos No Gubernamentales con Proyectos Alternativos de Desarrollo (Coordination of Non-Governmental Organizations with Alternative Development Projects) www.coproalde.org
- CSA Community Supported Agriculture www.csacenter.org
- DAR - Deutscher Akkreditierungs Rat (Academy for Inter Religious and Agricultural Studies) www.deutscher-akkreditierungsrat.org
- ECOAGRO NATURAL– Environmental company for marketing processed agroecological products in Paraguay altervida@mmail.com.py
- ECOCERT - Organisme de contrôle et de certification française (French Control and Certification Organization) www.ecocert.fr info@ecocert.fr
- EcoLógica CB-Peru www.ecologicaperu.com
- ECOTEC – Corpo Técnico da Coolméia (Technical Body of COOLMÉIA) www.coolmeia.com.br
- EFA –Ekologiska Lantbrukarna Sverige Ecological Farmers Association-Sweden www.ekolantbruk.se
- EMATER – RIO - Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Technical Advisory and Rural Extension Company of Rio de Janeiro) www.emater.rj.gov.br
- EMBRAPA - Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (Brazilian Agriculture Research Corporation) www.embrapa.br

- **FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations**
www.fao.org
- **FAPERJ - Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Rio de Janeiro (Research Relief Foundation of Rio de Janeiro)** www.faperj.br
- **FINEP - Financiadora de Estudos e Projetos do Brasil (Studies and Projects Funding Body - Brazil)** www.finep.gov.br
- **FUNDO NACIONAL DO MEIO AMBIENTE - National Environment Fund – Brazil** www.mma.gov.br
- **FUNBIO - Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (Brazilian Biodiversity Fund)** www.funbio.org.br
- **GAO - Grupo de Agricultura Orgânica (Organic Agriculture Group)**
www.sitiodogao.com.br
- **GREEN NET – NGO – Thailand** www.greennetorganic.com
greennet@asiaaccess.net.th
- **GTZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation Enterprise for Sustainable Development)** www.gtz.de
- **HOAA - Hyogo Organic Agriculture Association** info@joaa.net
- **HIVOS - Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries - Netherlands)**
www.hivos.nl
- **IBAMA - Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Natural Renewable Resources)** www.ibama.gov.br
- **ICCO - Protestant-christelijke ontwikkelingsorganisatie (Protestant Inter-Church for Development Organization)** www.icco.org
- **ICEA - Istituto de Certificazione Etico Ambientale-Italia (Ethic and Environmental Certification Institute-Italy)**
<http://www.aiab.it/nuovosito/campo/controllo/icea.shtml>
- **ICS - Internal Control System**
- **IDMA - Instituto de Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente-Peru (Development and Environment Institute-Peru)** idma@telefonica.net.pe
- **IEP - Instituto de Ecología Política-Chile (Political Ecology Institute-Chile)**
www.iepe.org

- IFOAM International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements www.ifoam.org
- IIRD - Institute for Integrated Rural Development of India www.education.vanl/iird iirdind@born4.vsnl.in
- IMO Institut For Marktokologie (Switzerland CB) www.imo.ch
- INO 07/99 Instrução Normativa nº07 do MAPA- dispõe sobre Agricultura Orgânica (regulation about organic agriculture) www.sitiodogao.com.br
- IN 06/02 Instrução Normativa nº06 do MAPA- trata da certificação e acreditação na produção orgânica (regulation about organic agriculture) www.sitiodogao.com.br
- IOAA - Organic Agriculture Organization of Ichijima QZW07502@nifty.com
- IOAS - International Organic Accreditation Service www.ioas.org
- JAS Japan Agriculture Standard <http://www.maff.go.jp>
- JOAA - Japanese Organic Agriculture Association www.joaa.net info@joaa.net
- Keystone Foundation-India <http://www.keystone-foundation.org>
- MAFF Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan www.maff.go.jp
- MAELA - Movimiento Agroecológico de América Latina y el Caribe (Agroecology Movement of Latin America and Caribbean) www.maela.org
- MAOCO Movimiento de Agricultura Orgánica Costarricense (Movement for Organic Agriculture of Costa Rica) www.javeriana.edu.co/ecored/mexico_li_guad.htm
- MAPA - Ministério da Agricultura e Abastecimento-Brasil (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Supply - Brazil) www.agricultura.gov.br
- MAPO - Movimiento Argentino de Producción Orgánica (Argentine Movement of Organic Production) www.mapo.org.ar info@mapo.org.ar
- MASIPAG - MAGSASAKA en Siyentipiko Para sa Pag-Unlad Ng Agrikultura <http://www.masipag.org> masipag@moz
- MDA - Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário-Brasil (Ministry of Agrarian Development of Brazil) www.desenvolvimentoagrario.gov.br

- MMA - Ministério do Meio Ambiente-Brazil (Environment Ministry-Brazil)
www.mma.gov.br
- MST - Movimento dos Sem Terra-Brazil (No-land Movement-Brazil)
www.mst.org.br
- Naturland German CB www.naturland.de
- NGO - Non Governmental Organization
- NOFA NY - Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York State
www.nofa.org
- NOGAMU - National Organic Movement of Uganda
www.linksorganic.com/minilisting/nogamu/objectives.htm
- NOP - National Organic Program www.nofany.org
- Nucleo Litoral Solidário da Rede Ecovida – ECOVIDA Network Solidary Coast Nucleus www.ecovida.org.br
- NZ New Zealand
- OCCP - Organic Certification Center of the Philippines www.masipag.org
- OCIA - Organic Crop Improvement Association www.ocia.org
- OFC Organic Farmers Components
- PARC - Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee www.pal-arc.org
parc@parc.org
- PCN - Participatory Certification in Network
- PESACRE - Grupo de Pesquisa e Extensão em Sistemas Agroflorestais do Acre (Group of Research and Extension in Agro-forestry Systems of Acre)
www.pesacre.org.br
- PESAGRO RIO - Empresa de Pesquisa Agropecuária do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (State Agricultural Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro)
www.pesagro.rj.gov
- PRONAF - Programa Nacional de Agricultura Familiar (National Program for Supporting Family Agriculture) www.pronaf.gov.br
- RAE Red de Agricultura Ecológica-Peru (Ecological Agriculture Network)
info@agrecolandes.org

- **RASA - Red de Alternativas Sustentables Agropecuarias de Jalisco (Network of Self-Determining Sustainable Growers of Jalisco)** www.javeriana.edu.co/eco-red/mexico_li_guad.htm#alternativas
- **REDE ECOVIDA DE AGROECOLOGIA (Ecovida Agroecology Network)** www.ecovida.org.br
- **SAF - Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar (Secretariat of Family Agriculture)** www.mda.gov.br
- **SEAAPI-RJ - Secretaria de Abastecimento, Pesca e Desenvolvimento do Interior do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (State Secretariat of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of Rio de Janeiro)** www.seaapi.rj.gov.br
- **SEATER - Secretaria de Extensão Agroflorestal do Acre (Secretariat of Technical Support and Extension of Acre)** seater@ac.gov.br
- **SENASA - Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agraria – National Service of Health Control and Quality of Agrofood System** www.senasa.gov.ar
- **SEPLANDS - Secretaria de Planejamento e Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Acre (State Secretariat for Economical-Sustainable Planning of Acre)** seplands@ac.gov.br
- **SEPROF - Secretaria de Extrativismo e Produção Familiar do Acre (State Secretariat of Wild Life and Family Production of Acre)** www.ac.gov.br
- **SSNC - Swedish Society for Nature and Conservation** www.snf.se
- **TIERRA VIVA Asociación Gremial Tierra Viva (Tierra Viva Group Association)** www.tierraviva.net
- **UFAC - Universidade Federal do Acre (Federal University of Acre)** www.ufac.br
- **UFRRJ - Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro (Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro)** www.ufrrj.br
- **ULBRA - Universidade Luterana do Brasil (Lutheran University of Brazil)** www.ulbra.br
- **UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** www.unesco.org
- **URUCERT - Asociación Certificadora de Agricultura Ecológica del Uruguay (Uruguayan Certifier Association of Ecological Agriculture)**
- **USDA - United States Department of Agriculture** www.usda.gov

- **VECO - Vredeseilanden Coopibo (Belgium NGO)** www.vredesilanden.org