



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Federation
of Organic Agriculture
Movements



United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Summary Report International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture 2003-2008

Note to ITF members: This paper is a summary of the main issues and of all clear agreements reached by the ITF; if any new agreements are reached at the last meeting, they will be incorporated. Some agreements have already been expected; they are highlighted in gray.

The Steering Committee, September 2008

Secretariat:
Diane Bowen Secretary
d.bowen@ifoam.org
phone +1 414 352 5789
fax +1 253 669 7921

Table of contents

Introduction3
Activities and Results of the ITF.....3
Agreements and Recommendations5
 General strategy.....5
 Production standards6
 Requirements for organic certification bodies7
 Procedures to improve market access7
 Developments in organic certification12
 Communication and influence13
 Assisting countries with emerging organic regulations13
Summary14

Introduction

The International Task Force (ITF) on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, convened from 2003 to 2008 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), served as an open-ended platform for dialogue between public and private institutions (intergovernmental, governmental, and civil society) involved in trade and regulatory activities in the organic agriculture sector. The objective was to facilitate international trade and the access of countries to international markets. The Terms of Reference for the ITF were to formulate proposals for the consideration of governments, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), relevant bodies of the FAO, IFOAM, and UNCTAD, and other appropriate organizations on:

- opportunities for harmonization of standards, regulations, and conformity assessment systems
- mechanisms for the establishment of equivalence of standards, regulations, and conformity assessment systems
- mechanisms for achieving mutual recognition among and between public and private systems
- measures to facilitate access to organic markets, in particular by developing countries and smallholders

Activities and Results of the ITF

Eight international meetings took place (see Annex 1), providing a discussion platform for government agencies, inter-governmental agencies, and civil society and other private sector organizations involved in organic agriculture. See Annex 2 for a complete list of participants.

In the first phase, the ITF reviewed and analyzed the situation, including the impact of established organic regulations on trade, current models and mechanisms that enable organic trade, experiences of cooperation, recognition and equivalence in the organic sector, and potential models and mechanisms for harmonization, equivalence and mutual recognition.

In the second phase, the ITF developed solutions in three areas: standards for organic production and processing, conformity assessment, and new ways of public and private cooperation.

The ITF also studied established and potential forms of cooperation that can increase access to organic trade, e.g., expert private evaluation services for governments, services by certification bodies to provide inspections (and perhaps even make decisions) for another certification body, and participation and cooperation among more private-sector accreditation bodies in organic accreditation. For this purpose, several **discussion and briefing papers** were developed. A list of all ITF papers and publications is in Annex 3.

The discussions and outcome of the ITF were **presented to several national and intergovernmental agencies**, e.g., the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), EU Commission, the IAF, the ISO, and the OECD. They have also been presented in regional events in Africa and Asia. A **communication strategy** for advising stakeholders and advocating for adoption of the ITF proposals and tools was developed and professional communication material was created. Apart from the studies, the tools and recommendations of the ITF have induced more cooperation, influencing both the public and private sector.

This paper summarizes the agreements and recommendations of the ITF.

Agreements and Recommendations

The essential ITF agreements and recommendations are described below with a shorter explanatory text. In order to understand the full background to an agreement and recommendation, the reader is advised to consult the related paper and the meeting report where that agreement or recommendation was made. For each agreement or recommendation it is indicated at which ITF meeting the agreement was made. ([ITF 5] means the 5th ITF meeting; see Annex 1 for a list of the meetings).

“ITF agreements” are either regarding the ITF itself or a policy statement. “ITF recommendations” are advisory statements and calls for action (or something like that) by other actors.

General strategy

Initially, the ITF agreed on the following key components of a strategy to reach its objective¹:

- production standards equivalent to a single international “reference” standard
- mechanism for the judgment of equivalence to the above-mentioned reference standard
- one international requirement for conformity assessment
- cooperation, such as common international procedures for approval or accreditation of certification bodies, which reduces duplication of work and improves access to markets, including by countries in which the regulatory infrastructure is absent or less well developed²

The first component in particular was modified during the course of the work.

The ITF agreed that solutions should **provide for the continued growth of organic agriculture and maintenance of its principles** and be based on the following criteria:

- benefit to producers and consumers and the organic market as a whole
- recognition of national sovereignty
- access to markets with minimal bureaucracy
- fair competition among operators
- adequate and consistent consumer protection and trust
- sensitivity to different biophysical, socio-economic environments
- stakeholder support and involvement
- support for market choice
- transparency of operation and decision-making

It was also agreed that special consideration should be given to the situation of developing countries (ITF 3).

The ITF was not in favor of the creation of any new permanent structures to deal with the harmonization issues. Therefore, the solutions presented build on existing systems, programs, and organizations.

¹ See the ITF paper “Strategy on Solutions for Harmonizing International Regulation of Organic Agriculture,” April 2005.

² Certification body is here used for a conformity assessment body involved in the organic sector.

Production standards

Initially, the ITF concluded that production standards used should be equivalent to a single international reference standard. There are currently two international standards for organic agriculture, the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (GL 32–Rev. 2–2004) - CAC/ GL32 - and the IFOAM Basic Standards (published as part of the IFOAM Norms; latest revision: July 2005).

The ITF agreed that a single reference for organic standards is not yet a feasible proposition; although the guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS) are very similar in content, their scope and governance are too distinct to be merged. The ITF furthermore agreed that having two international reference standards, from the public and private sector respectively, is valuable, provided that there is effective linkage between the sectors (ITF 6).

The ITF recommends that for import approvals, governments use Codex Alimentarius Guidelines and the IFOAM Basic Standards as the basis (ITF 6). This means that they should accept imports if they comply with any of the two international standards.

Apart from the structure, coverage, and content of the international standard, the governing structure and the process to revise them are also essential components. Not surprisingly, governments tend to feel more comfortable with the Codex Alimentarius Commission as a standard-setter while the private sector feels more comfortable with IFOAM. Both assert that they are open and transparent and that they allow for input and participation from stakeholders. The ITF recommends that public-private participation be improved in decision-making for both international organic standards (ITF 6).

The paper “Objectives of Organic Standards Programs” (October 2005) contains an overview of areas where standards diverge. There are also many side-by-side comparisons done by both public and private stakeholders. The opinion of most experts is that the differences between the various organic standards are not huge. The differences are rather in details, e.g., the allowance of a particular input as pest control or fertilizer.

In the ITF there were discussions about the establishment of a comprehensive database to study this. A database of standards and regulations may not be a pre-requisite for progress on equivalency, but it clearly can help the stakeholders gain a better understanding of the issues. Furthermore, it can be of use for countries planning to develop regulation. The ITF recommends that major stakeholders join forces to establish a common database of organic standards and regulations (ITF 5).

For production standards, the ITF agreed that equivalence is a more workable approach than harmonization. Production conditions simply vary too much to form the basis for a single, detailed international standard. Thus standards used in various countries will be different but should follow a basic framework that can be the basis for equivalence. The framework, therefore, needs to be based on principles and criteria. It should give guidance to the national/regional standards and be useful in making an equivalence assessment. The Codex Alimentarius Guidelines (CAC/GL32) are written in the style of a production standard to be

directly applied and used as a minimum.³ They should not, therefore, prevent governments from establishing more detailed and country-specific standards. The IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS) were initially written as a production standard, but seven years ago they started to be reshaped into a “standard for standards,” which is more in line with the ITF’s view. The ITF recommends that the ITF members recommend that Codex revise the organic guidelines so that they are based on principles and criteria (ITF 6).

Requirements for organic certification bodies

With regard to requirements for third-party certification bodies, there is a realization that there are differences between countries. However, the differences tend to be small and are mainly related to questions of scale and stage of development and to legal and administrative traditions. In this case, harmonization seems to be a realistic option, i.e., one set of requirements could be applied universally, as long as there are sufficient provisions for sensitivity for scale and stage of development. The report “*Requirements for certification bodies – situation and scope for harmonization*” (October 2005) showed that the ISO 65 guide provides valuable guidance in this, while the requirements in some aspects are too demanding and miss other aspects. The IFOAM Accreditation Criteria are more specifically developed for the organic sector, building on the ISO 65 framework; they are also too demanding but cover all essential aspects of organic certification.

The ITF developed and approved a set of *International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)*, on the basis of ISO 65 and the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria. The document will serve as a benchmark for equivalence. It can furthermore be used for direct accreditation. Ultimately it can lead to convergence among the established requirements (ITF 6).

The ITF recommends that the *International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies*, developed by the ITF, be used when regulating imports and developing requirements for organic certification bodies (ITF 6).

The ITF recommends that the *International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies* be considered in the revision of the ISO 65 (ITF 7). ITF members should also consider proposing them as a work item to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (ITF 7).

The ITF agreed that IFOAM should be the short-term steward of the document, with support from FAO and UNCTAD, which should approve any changes to it. In the long term, IROCB should become either a Codex Alimentarius or ISO document (ITF 7).

Procedures to improve market access

With the agreement of using the two international standards as the reference for standards equivalency judgments and a single harmonized set of requirements for certification, there is still a need to make these norms operational in order to provide for the market access sought. The ITF discussed four options for how market access can be facilitated⁴:

³ Note that the CAC/GL32 is not intended to be used by producers directly; the statement refers to how the standards are written.

⁴ A fifth option is de-regulation. There are proponents of a no-regulation scenario for organic products, and that option is still a reality in most countries in the world, but mainly countries with small organic sectors. It is not a realistic option that governments that have a comprehensive organic regulation in place will scrap it,

- equivalence on the level of governments
- mutual recognition agreements, cooperation or acceptance between accrediting bodies
- mutual recognition agreements, cooperation or acceptance between certification bodies
- cooperation between various levels

The challenges and opportunities for the four options above are outlined below, keeping in mind that the task is to improve market access and that the possibility of that will increase with more options rather than one single option. Solutions should also work for trade between regulated and non-regulated markets; i.e., governments regulating the organic market should develop procedures that will allow imports from countries without regulations.

Equivalence Agreements

As it is agreed that equivalency is the concept to use on the level of production standards, the question on how to make equivalence determinations also arises. The CAC has developed “Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements Regarding Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems” - CAC/GL34. Notably, it has not been the intention that CAC itself would also make the equivalence assessment. The CAC/GL34 is about equivalence of inspection and certification systems and not the underlying standards that are used.⁵

In its “approval for standards system” (Policy 42), IFOAM developed both the framework and the criteria for assessment if a particular organic standard fulfils the international reference standard (the IBS). The use of the system has shown that it is a difficult exercise and that the system needs revision (as explained in “Experiences of equivalence and recognition in the regulation of organic agriculture” (October 2005). The IFOAM process can also be used for regulatory systems, as long as there is agreement that it is to the international reference that equivalence is established (and not to the national regulation). Governments might not, however, want to bind themselves to equivalence assessments by IFOAM or **any** other party. However, governments could be advised by the assessments made by IFOAM, or at least use the criteria as developed by IFOAM as guidance.

Neither IFOAM nor the CAC/GL34 has criteria to judge the equivalence between conformity assessment systems. However the ITF concluded that there could be one unified standard (the IROCB) for certification requirements, which would make such criteria redundant.

The ITF agreed to develop a guidance document for determining equivalence of standards based on the IFOAM criteria for variations and within the framework of the WTO TBT

and in most cases the organic sector in the countries supports the regulation. Therefore, the ITF has not elaborated on this further.

A sixth option is unilateral acceptance of other systems, something exemplified by South Korea and the rules governing the East African Organic Mark.

⁵ There is also another CAC Guideline for the “judgment of equivalence of sanitary measures” (CAC/GL 53). This applies to the Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) area and not to the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) area where we find organic foods. There was also in development such a guideline (on standards) for the TBT area, but that work item has been cancelled.

principles and guidelines and CAC/GL34 Guidelines for development of equivalence agreements. This is the document “Tool for Equivalence of Organic Standards and Technical Regulations” (**EquiTool**), an international guideline for determining equivalence of organic standards, approved by the eighth meeting of the ITF in Geneva in October 2008.

Another approach to facilitate equivalence agreements is to use the process of Common Regulatory Objectives (CRO), e.g., as defined in the UN/ECE Recommendation L (see “Objectives of organic standards programs” [October 2005]). Regardless of the process used, there is merit in that objectives are made clear as a basis for any equivalence agreements. The paper “Common Objectives of Organic Standard Systems” (September 2006) outlined key objectives, explicit or implicit, in a number of organic regulations. The paper can serve as a reference for parties wanting to embark on such a process and as guidance for governments wanting to develop regulations.

Organic equivalence negotiations could also be included in the many regional trade agreements that are under development. Some concern was expressed that “organic could be traded away” in bilateral or regional trade agreements. The ITF has reached no conclusion regarding this.

Resistance from operators or consumers can be a main stumbling block for equivalence agreements. The ITF discussed the possibility of studying in more depth consumer perceptions or expectations on standards to see whether this is a real problem. From literature reviews, the ITF concluded that it is not likely that consumers have knowledge so detailed about standards that they would be an obstacle to equivalence, unless their engagement was stirred from other groups.

Finally, the ITF noted that there are potential risks with equivalence agreements, mainly if some parties conclude an agreement based on “bad” regulations and these bad regulations are perpetuated. There is also a risk that equivalence between two countries may harm parties not part of the agreement. This was studied further in the paper “Potential Negative Impacts of Equivalency of Standards and Technical Regulations” (October 2007). The ITF concluded (ITF7) that while there may be some negative effects, they should not be seen as a general impediment for such agreements. Rather, parties should consider those in their negotiations for equivalency.

Limits to equivalence agreements between governments as the main component for market access

Using equivalence agreements as a main tool presupposes regulation in all participating countries. Therefore it provides no solution for the un-regulated markets. Also, equivalence agreements are demanding and therefore will normally only be prioritized if both parties have a substantial stake in the trade (see “Objectives of organic standards programs,” October 2005). Finally, it is clear that current systems do not have the capacity to deal with direct government equivalency as the sole or even main option for market access. This has been demonstrated by the experiences of the European Union, Japan, and the United States of America. For more details, see “Experiences of equivalence and recognition in the regulation of organic agriculture” (October 2005). Therefore, the efforts of the ITF cannot be limited to equivalency agreements.

The ITF recommends governments to utilize and encourage in their regulatory systems cooperation and mutual recognition on the level of conformity assessment (ITF 5). Outlined

below are the various options for how such cooperation and mutual recognition can facilitate market access.

Mutual recognition agreements, cooperation or acceptance between accreditation bodies

The paper “Experiences of equivalence and recognition in the regulation of organic agriculture” (October 2005) outlined the experience of cooperation among accreditation and approval bodies. It concluded that “recognition of conformity assessment systems at the level of accreditation has proved less problematic than equivalence assessments.” Within the IAF framework there is a multilateral agreement between national accreditation bodies. The main limitations for this in the context of the organic sector are that:

- most organic regulations do not have accreditation of an IAF member as a requirement
- the ISO 65, which forms the basis of the IAF multilateral agreement (MLA), is not universally recognized, and even where it is recognized, such as in the European Union, there are additional requirements formulated
- most accreditation bodies involved in the accreditation of organic certification bodies are not part of the IAF MLA (the International Organic Accreditation Service [IOAS], USDA, Hungary, Quebec, and some other governments)

However, the format for the IAF MLA could be used for a similar agreement special to organic certification. The ITF agreed that an organic MLA could be useful (ITF 6).

Outside an MLA there are also a number of examples of cooperation between accreditation bodies, most notably between the IOAS and the DAP (Germany), SINCERT (Italy), and UKAS (United Kingdom). Such practical cooperation, while not delivering grand solutions, is cost-saving and fosters converging applications, to the benefit of the certification body and ultimately of the market.

The ITF agreed that:

- one evaluation/assessment could form the basis for several accreditations (ITF 3)
- cooperation between accreditation bodies should be further developed and encouraged (ITF 5)

Further, the ITF recommends that a platform be created for cooperation between accreditation/approval bodies for organic certification (ITF 6).

Mutual recognition agreements, cooperation or acceptance between certification bodies

While accreditation is a common and powerful mechanism to facilitate trade, it has a number of limitations. To begin with, it is expensive, and in a situation in which there are also other mechanisms for supervision of certification bodies one can question the economy of that extra layer. Another limitation is that most countries do not have an accreditation body that is part of the IAF MLA. Accreditation normally (N.B. IFOAM Accreditation is an exception) deals only with the conformity assessment aspects and not with the production standards used, and is therefore not by itself sufficient for acceptance and thereby market access. Most countries still request a separate approval and registration by a competent authority over and above accreditation.

In a similar way that accreditation bodies can recognize each other, certification bodies can also do that. However, if this is not recognized by the authorities this has little value as it cannot be put into practice. The current situation and limitations are explained in “Cooperation between Conformity Assessment Bodies in Organic Certification (October 2005). Mutual recognition between certification bodies is often facilitated by accreditation but can also take place as a result of peer review (peer assessment) as defined in ISO 17040 and ISO Guide 68, or through bilateral agreements. It can be (legally) more acceptable for a government to accept a certification body within its own jurisdiction to be the one responsible for import approval than an accreditation body (whether national or international) in another country. Giving certification bodies a unique position in this respect can, however, be subject to criticism for protectionism and in the cases of monopolies also for market control.⁶ The issue was further studied in “Cooperation in Conformity Assessment for Certification Decisions and Import Approvals” (October 2007). The paper concluded that as long as this option is not the only option for market access, it can provide considerable benefits.

The ITF recommends that governments extend their approval of certification bodies to include acceptance of their approval of imported organic products based on mutual recognition agreements, or bilateral agreements, based on set criteria (ITF 8).

From the exporter’s perspective, it is not only the legal access⁷ to a market that is a hurdle. The dominance of certain marks (certification labels) in certain markets is also a major obstacle. In some instances, the will of the mark owner might be to protect its own producers and therefore it is restrictive in giving access to its mark. More often, mark owners lack the procedures to easily extend their mark/certification to producers certified by somebody else. However, even if they want to, they have limits on their “right” to extend their certification to clients of other certification bodies without redoing the whole process, with costs and delays as a consequence. As explained in “Cooperation between Conformity Assessment Bodies in Organic Certification” (October 2005), the restrictions in ISO 65 and the IFOAM Norms on delegation of certification authority pose immediate problems and generate increased costs for operators seeking multiple certification and market access. It is not at all clear why these restrictions would have to apply between partners in a mutual recognition agreement (MRA) or in cases where the certification body delegating decision-making supervises the other body. “Cooperation in Conformity Assessment for Certification Decisions and Import Approvals” (October 2007) argued that delegation of certification should be acceptable if parties follow the requirements in ISO Guide 68.

In the IROCB, the ITF included opportunities for the delegation of certification decisions under set conditions (ITF 7).

IFOAM has taken the initiative to create a global forum for organic certification bodies. Such a forum can play a big role in working out practical cooperation between organic

⁶ If a certification body is mandated to judge the reliability of other certification bodies as a basis for import approval, there is a risk that they would not approve in order to expand their own market in the country of operation of the other certification body.

⁷ There are also technical obstacles in the form of special procedures, such as import certificates. These were not discussed to any major extent in the ITF, but can constitute a barrier or at least a major hurdle for trade.

certification bodies. The ITF welcomes the initiative by IFOAM to convene an international certification forum (ITF 6).

Cooperation between the actors

Governments and the private sector alike can seek to use expertise, work, and structures by others to lighten their workload. It does assume a certain level of trust and confidence, which often is a stumbling block. In addition, especially for governments, it can be difficult to delegate authority. The paper “Experiences of equivalence and recognition in the regulation of organic agriculture” (October 2005) gives examples of how governments have used the technical expertise of the IOAS (for example, the use of IOAS reports for import approval to some European Union member states and contracting the IOAS for oversight by Australia). The government of Canada has approved the IOAS as an accreditation body for their regulation, and the government of South Korea accepts imports based on IFOAM accreditation. The use of one inspection (audit) for several certifications is already standard practice in most cases.

The ITF recommends that actors on all levels cooperate, e.g., by the use of inspection (audit) and evaluation (assessments) for several purposes (ITF 5).

Acceptance of government systems by private sector bodies

The work of the ITF and most of the recommendations above serve to break down the walls between governments and private sector and induce an atmosphere of cooperation. IFOAM’s revision of the Organic Guarantee System goes in the direction of more inclusiveness and more cooperation with governments. The ITF recommends IFOAM to proactively seek to evaluate the equivalence of the organic regulations with the IFOAM Basic Standards (ITF 6), and the revision of the Organic Guarantee System provides for that opportunity.

Developments in organic certification

Group certification

The ITF looked into one issue of special concern for smallholders in developing countries: group certification. Certification based on individual farms doesn’t work well and is simply too costly for poor farmers. Therefore, models for group certification have been developed. Richer countries, regulating their organic sector, have mostly not catered to group certification in their regulations, as it has not been practiced in their own territory. At times, both major import markets (the European Union and the United States) for organic products have sent signals that group certification was no longer to be accepted. The ITF repeatedly discussed group certification, and it agreed that the concept of group certification should be accepted, according to set criteria.⁸ This has been reflected in the IROCB.

⁸ The ITF discussion on group certification was limited to its relevance to smallholders in developing countries.

Innovative conformity assessment or quality assurance systems

While third-party certification is a well-defined and trusted mechanism and is now embedded in organic regulations, other systems for quality assurance have been developed, such as participatory guarantee systems. Participatory guarantee systems (PGS) are based on the direct and voluntary involvement of the producers, and often other stakeholders, in forming the organic guarantee, and they have developed in particular for local marketing initiatives. When they make the entry level to organic markets easier and can satisfy consumers' demand for assurance, they are useful tools. It remains to be seen whether and how the trade from actors in a PGS system can extend to the third-party certified trade⁹. The ITF recommends that consideration be given to emerging alternatives to third-party certification, such as participatory guarantee systems (ITF 6).

Communication and influence

The ITF is a unique platform for dialogue between governments, the private sector, and international organizations. It is important that the ITF dialogue be brought out to more stakeholders, and that the solutions proposed by the ITF are actively promoted. The Web site and the publications (some key ITF documents are also translated into Spanish) are contributing to this. Furthermore, ITF members are expected to report back and seek consultations among their own constituencies.

The ITF has agreed that:

- the ITF information, process, and results should be presented at relevant international and regional meetings (ITF 6)
- the conveners of the ITF will develop a follow-up project for assisting in the further promotion of ITF and the implementation of its recommendations (ITF 7)

Assisting countries with emerging organic regulations

There is some 20 years of experience of organic market regulations and their effects on markets and trade. The ITF agreed (ITF 3) that it should guide countries in their regulatory efforts and to encourage trade-friendly regulations, based on the recommendations from the ITF. There is a wealth of information in the various ITF papers that can be used by countries considering developing regulations. An ITF paper has been produced with the specific aim of advising governments whether and how to develop organic market regulations. The paper is "Best practices for organic marketing regulation, standards and conformity assessment: Guidance for developing countries" (January 2007).

⁹ This would assume some kind of recognition of PGS by third-party systems.

Summary

The ITF process has largely increased the understanding of many stakeholders of the issues around organic regulations and market access. It has directly and indirectly influenced actors in a direction of more market access and in particular highlighted the need to take consideration of conditions in developing countries.

The main practical outcome of ITF is the development of two tools:

- EquiTool, an international guideline for determining equivalence of organic standards. The purpose of the tool is to enable the parties to judge the identified differences in the standards. EquiTool includes criteria for assessing variations in standards according to a set framework.
- The International Requirement for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB), a reference for determining the equivalence of requirements for organic certification bodies that can serve certification bodies, accreditation bodies and governments to recognize certification bodies and thereby to streamline trade flow.

These tools can be instrumental in facilitating equivalence and mutual recognition.

The ITF agreements and recommendations are giving all stakeholders, private and public, guidance in reducing barriers to organic trade in a concrete and practical manner. There will not be one solution, but many, and each actor (government or private organization) can choose the solutions that fit with their systems and are agreeable to its constituency.

Annex 1: ITF meetings, Steering Committee and Secretariat

Meetings

First	18 February, 2003	Nuremberg, Germany
Second	20-21 October 2003	Geneva, Switzerland
Third	17-19 November, 2004	Rome, Italy
Fourth	28 February, 2005	Nuremberg, Germany
Fifth	5-7 December, 2005	Hammamet, Tunisia
Sixth	9-13 October, 2006	Stockholm, Sweden
Seventh	26-29 November, 2007	Bali, Indonesia
Eighth	6-8 October, 2008	Geneva, Switzerland

Steering Committee

Selma	Doyran	United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO)
Nadia	Scialabba	United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO)
Ulrich	Hoffmann	United National Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
Sophia	Twarog	United National Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
Antonio	Compagnoni	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
Gunnar	Rundgren	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)

Secretariat

Diane	Bowen	Secretary to the ITF
Matthias	Fecht	ITF Coordinator
Katharina	Pfundt	ITF Coordinator

Annex 2: ITF participants

Countries

Argentina	Juan Batista	Government
Argentina	Laura Montenegro	Certification body
Australia	Jenny Barnes	Government
Brazil	Maria Fernanda Fonseca	NGO
Brazil	Sergio Perdino	NGO
Brazil	Maria Cristina Prata Neves	Government
Brazil	Christiane Mascarhenas Sampaio	Government
Brazil	Claudio Martins de la Souza	Government
Canada	Roxann Hooshangi	Government
Canada	Jodi Robinson	Government
China	Lake Mu Ba	Government
China	Yunhua Chen	Government
China	Zhenhui Lu	Certification body
China	Xiaowei Shi	Government
China	Mao Hua Wang	Government
China	Xu Na	Government
China	Xingji Xiao	Certification body
Costa Rica	Felicia Echeverria	Certification body
Costa Rica	Miguel Castro	Government
Cuba	Natacha Guma	Government
Denmark	Per Ahle	Government
Dominican Republic	Jose Gomez Zapata	Government
Fiji	Stephen Hazelman	Government
Germany	Klaus Budde	Government
Germany	Ulrich Hamm	Academic
Germany	Jochen Neuendorff	Accreditation body
Germany	Michel Reynaud	Certification body
Germany	Sibylle Stahr-Sedaghat	Government
Germany	Uwe Slomke	Government
Germany	Mildred Steidle	Certification body
Greece	Katerina Giannoulia	Government
Guatemala	E. Manolo de la Cruz	Government
India	P.V.S.M. Gouri	Government
India	Anup Thakur	Government
Indonesia	Ananto Seta	Government
Italy	Michela Coli	Certification body
Italy	Alessandro Pulga	Government
Japan	Kiyofumi Ishikawa	Government
Japan	Kenji Masumoto	Certification body
Japan	Yasuko Tanaguchi	Government
Kenya	Eustace Kiarii Gacanja	NGO
Netherlands	Wilma Reerink	Government
Philippines	Teresita Oyson	Government
Philippines	Dobrina Reyes	Government

Philippines	Girlie Sarmiento	Government
Philippines	Lara Vivas	Government
Russia	Andrey Khodus	Academic
Samoa	Adimaimalaga Tafuna'i	NGO
Sweden	Christer Arvius	Government
Sweden	Marianne Joensson	Government
Switzerland	Patrik Aebi	Government
Switzerland	Elisabeth Rugg	Certification body
Switzerland	Stefan Shönenberger	Government
Switzerland	Johan Züblin	Trader
Tanzania	Mwatima Juma	Government
Thailand	Indramangala Jintana	Government
Thailand	Montri Klitsaneephaiboon	Government
Thailand	Vitoon Panyakul	Certification body
Thailand	Sanchai Tontyaporn	Government
Thailand	Wibulwan Wannamolee	Government
Tunisia	Samia Maamer Belkheria	Government
Uganda	David Eboku	Government
Uganda	Roy Lugone	Trader
United States	Mark Bradley	Government
United States	Don Gaidano	Trader
United States	Keith Jones	Government
United States	Thierry Pomerleau	Certification body
United States	Christine Strossman	Government

International – Intergovernmental

Dale Andrew	OECD
Charles Arden-Clarke	UNEP
Karim Dahou	OECD
Abaza Hussein	UNEP
Rudy Kortbech-Oleson	ITC
Serguei Kouzmine	UNECE
Vivien Liu	WTO
Asad Naqvi	UNEP
Benjamin Simmons	UNEP
Ronald Steenblik	OECD
Herman Van Boxem	EU Commission
Erik Wijkstrom	WTO
Els Wynen	UNCTAD

International – Civil Society

Ken Commins	Accreditation Body
Sasha Courville	NGO (ISEAL)
Katherine DiMatteo	NGO (OTA)
Paddy Doherty	NGO (IFOAM)
Boudewijn van Elzakker	Accreditation Body

Reinaldo Figuerido	NGO (IAF)
Prabha Mahale	NGO (IFOAM)
Patrick Mallet	NGO (ISEAL)
Eva Mattsson	NGO (IFOAM)
Bjarne Pedersen	NGO (Consumers International)

Annex 3: ITF publications

2008

- **International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)**
- **Guide for Assessing Equivalence of Organic Standards and Technical Regulations (EquiTool)**
- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 6: Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture**

Contents:

EquiTool: Guide for Assessing Equivalence of Organic Standards and Technical Regulations

International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB)

ITF Summary Report and Recommendations

Report of the Eighth Meeting of the ITF (October 2008)

Communiqué of the Eighth Meeting of the ITF (October 2008)

- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 5: Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture**

Contents:

Guide for Assessing Equivalence in Organic Standards and Technical Regulations (EquiTool), 3rd Draft

Potential Negative Effects of Equivalence Agreements (Potential Negative Impacts of Equivalency of Standards and Technical Regulations)

Cooperation in Conformity Assessment for Certification Decisions and Import Approvals

Overview of Group Certification

International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB), 4th Draft

Report of the Seventh Meeting of the ITF (December 2007)

Terms of Reference of the ITF

- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 4: Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture**

Contents:

Study and Recommendations for International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies

Common Objectives of Organic Standards Systems

Review of the ITF Consumer Research Question

Best Practices for Organic Marketing Regulation, Standards and Conformity Assessment: Guidance for Developing Countries

Report of the ITF Workshop on International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies

Report of the Sixth Meeting of the ITF (October 2006)

Communique of the Sixth ITF meeting (October 2006)

Terms of Reference of the ITF

2007

- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 3: Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture**

Contents:

Experiences of Equivalence and Recognition Mechanisms in the Regulation of Organic Agriculture

Objectives of Organic Standards Programmes: Exploring Approaches to Common Regulatory Objectives

Requirements for Certification Bodies – Situation and Scope for Harmonization

Cooperation Between Conformity Assessment Bodies in Organic Certification

Report of the fifth Meeting of the ITF (December 2005)

Terms of Reference of the ITF

2006

- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 2:**

Contents:

Cooperation in Conformity Assessment for Certification Decisions and Import Approvals

Report of the Third Meeting of the ITF (November 2004)

Report of the Fourth Meeting of the ITF (February 2005)

Terms of Reference of the ITF

2004

- **Background papers of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Volume 1: Overview of Current Status of Standards and Conformity Assessment Systems**

Contents:

Overview of Current Status of Standards and Conformity Assessment Systems

Current Mechanisms that Enable International Trade in Organic Products

Existing and Potential Models and Mechanisms for Harmonization, Equivalency and Mutual Recognition

Impact of Organic Guarantee Systems on Production and Trade in Organic Products

Report of the First ITF Meeting, (February, 2003)

Report of the Second ITF Meeting (October, 2003)

Terms of Reference of the ITF