Development of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture

The European funded research project ORGAP intents to provide scientific support for the implementation of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming. Furthermore, the project will assess its long-term and short-term effects.
In June 2004 the European Commission released the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming. With this action plan the Commission intends to assess the situation of organic farming and to lay down the basis for policy development in the coming years. The plan will thus provide an overall strategic vision for the contribution of organic farming to the Common Agricultural Policy.

The European funded research project ORGAP gives scientific support for the implementation of the European Action Plan, and it will assess its long-term and short-term effects.

**Objectives**

The project will:

- Develop a toolbox to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the European Action Plan in the following areas: information, training and education, research, production, processing, market development, certification, and public expenditures
- Test the toolbox on a selected existing national action plans
- Identify conflict areas between targets of European and national action plans
- Analyse the implementation processes and procedures
- Make policy recommendation to the European Commission, national authorities as well as further actors

**ORGAP work plan**

The working plan consists of six workpackages (WP)

**WP1** Project coordination and management

**WP2** Development of Evaluation Toolbox (ORGAPET)

WP 2 involves the development of the organic action plan evaluation toolbox (ORGAPET), incorporating quantitative and qualitative product and process indicators covering the key areas of the EU organic action plan, building on existing socio-economic and agri-environmental policy evaluation methods (MEANS, IRENA) and incorporating work from current and previous projects on organic farming policy analysis and development. Stakeholder input into the development of the toolbox is emphasised.

**WP3** National action plan analysis

**WP4** European Action Plan analysis

**WP5** Synthesis and policy recommendations

**WP6** Stakeholder integration and dissemination (national stakeholder groups European advisory board/ EU-Seminar/ IFOAM EU Group)
Work package 3:
National Action Plan analysis
WP 3 provides a general overview and status quo analysis of national action plan objectives, design and implementation in 8 case study countries, as well as an analysis of the results of existing evaluations of a selection of these national action plans in order to a) draw conclusions concerning issues affecting the success or failure of these plans and b) determine the potential contribution of the results and available data to the application of ORGAPET at the European level. Group interviews with stakeholders in the case study countries are used to assess the feasibility of applying the ORGAPET approach at national level and to prepare for its application at the European level. In a special subtask there will be a focus group discussion on the identification of areas of conflict and/or synergy between objectives of national and EU action plans and their significance for the implementation of the EU Action Plan at national level. This provides the basis for the development, again with stakeholder input, of strategies aimed at resolving the potential conflicts and exploiting the synergies in order to facilitate implementation of the EU Action Plan at national level.

Workpackage 4:
European Action plan analysis
WP 4 provides an early assessment of the potential risks and problems associated with specific policy-relevant areas and assists in the initial implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan by offering a structure for thinking through the likelihood, seriousness and probability of detection of potential problems. The work package also involves the testing of the ORGAP evaluation toolbox at the European level in the context of the early stages of implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan.

Work package 5:
Synthesis and recommendations
WP 5 involves the synthesis of the results of the analyses of national action plans and the implementation of the EU action plan, taking into account potential conflict/synergy areas and risk/problems. Policy conclusions relating to the implementation and development of EU and national action plans are identified. On the basis of the testing in earlier work packages, the ORGAP evaluation toolbox will be revised and a manual for the initiation and evaluation of action plans produced.

Work package 6:
Stakeholder integration and dissemination
WP 6 parallels the project co-ordination work package, focusing on the effective integration of stakeholders in the project work by means of national workshops, interviews with national stakeholders, European advisory committee meetings, electronic discussion groups and other means of consultation with dissemination to stakeholders and non-academic audiences. In addition, a mid-project European seminar will be organised in order to present results of early work packages and consider issues for more detailed analysis in later work packages.
Facts on ORGAP

Project duration
The project started on May 1st 2004 and it will last for three years.

Partners
The project partnership consists of 10 partners from 9 countries, covering different disciplines, stakeholder views and experiences with national action plans for Organic Agriculture. The partners are:

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Partner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FIBL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>University of Wales, Aberystwyth (UWA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>University of Hohenheim (UHO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Università Polytechnica Marche, Ancona (UPMA)</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>University of Southern Denmark (USD)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Institute of Sustainable Development (ISD)</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Institute for Agricultural Economics (VUZE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Sociedad Española de Agricoltura Ecológica (SEAE)</td>
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Project Coordinator
Otto Schmid (scientific coordinator), Bettina Landau (administrative coordinator), Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Switzerland

Follow the progress of ORGAP
ORGAP will organise national workshops as well as meetings with an Advisory Committee on European level. In May 2006, the project will participate in a major organic congress to be held in Odense, Denmark. The congress will be held in collaboration with other EU funded projects.

The ORGAP web site www.orgap.org and the free electronic newsletter will inform on activities and conclusion in the project, for instance workshops, conferences and new publications. Please visit the CORE Organic website at www.orgap.org. The website will also include a discussion forum, which allow to dialogue with the public.

Contact
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