

INOFO POSITION PAPER

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Certification and Markets

Certified organic agriculture has significantly contributed to addressing global environmental and social challenges, aiming to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Developed over decades, organic certification serves as a quality assurance tool for farmers and supply chains, gaining trust from consumers and markets.

From the early pioneers over 100 years ago to the present, organic agriculture has evolved into a global movement. The codification of organic standards and regulations, participatory research, and concerted efforts have all been part of this journey.

Production and processing standards by many private actors and by governments were developed, and certification schemes were introduced to gain the trust of consumers and policy makers.

Markets became regulated and access for organic products came with burden such as costs as well as administrative requirements of managing the access.

This process of using developed third-party certification, where farmers pay certification bodies (who are accredited to these norms, standards and regulation) and undergo ongoing inspection and verification processes against these set standards, came with tremendous challenges for farmers and farmer cooperatives, such as INOFO members.

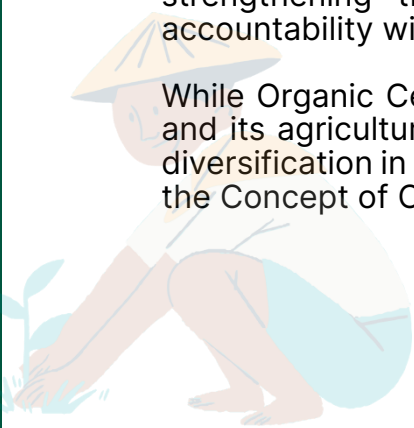
This concept excluded many producers who grow organically without being certified such as smallholder farmers particularly in economically less developed countries who play a critical role in providing nutritious food to much of the world's population.

The opportunity to participation in export markets based on these standards however has not been beneficial to its fullest for farmers and farmers cooperatives outside or regulated markets.

Recent changes in major markets like the USA and EU highlight these challenges, making it harder for smallholder farmers or farmer cooperatives outside of these markets to benefit from certification.

INOFO understands the news in changes within these regulation as strengthening the integrity of supply chains and combat fraud and lift accountability within the organic food industry.

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INOFO calls that the organic global movement including organic certification and markets - in whatever shape or form - to adapt to current farmer, consumer and environmental needs.

Organic Certification, whilst successful, now faces the need for diversification to meet evolving agricultural and food industry demands. INOFO supports the Organic 3.0 concept defined by IFOAM, which promotes truly sustainable systems in approved organic food and farming system.

INOFO affirms that certification remains a crucial market tool representing basic organic values and efforts under the IFOAM principles.

To fully utilize its potential, organic agriculture needs continuous growth and improvement, aiming for sustainability beyond niche activities and linear top-down certification schemes. Organic 3.0 shall provide a roadmap for innovative, inclusive, and impactful development from farm to consumer, focusing on local communities and enable farmers and farmer cooperatives to develop an environmentally sound but just agricultural community while uploading set criteria.

INOFO therefore calls for a portfolio developed by and available for our diverse agricultural and food global member community reflecting various concepts meeting the needs of our members and their environmental and social surroundings including but never limited to organic third-party certification, Participate guarantee system or other suitable concepts.

Additional INOFO urges local, regional and global policies to enable a world where organic does not need to come with certification, but non sustainable practices will be forced to disclose all costs and agricultural and food systems to not exclude environmental and social costs.

