ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN SOUTHERN COUNTRIES
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?
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THE EMERGENCE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC TRADE ALSO RAISES ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: ALTHOUGH THE ENVIRONMENT IS PROTECTED IN THE REGION OF PRODUCTION, DOESN’T TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS OVER SUCH LONG DISTANCES COUNTERBALANCE THIS BENEFIT ON THE GLOBAL SCALE?
Is the farming and commercialisation of organic products an opportunity for southern countries?

There are many arguments in favour of organic farming: higher incomes, labour-intensive employment, greater economic independence, the maintenance of biodiversity, health guarantees...

But there are also many challenges to creating an organic farming sector in the countries of the South.

For this movement to become a reliable alternative to the existing agricultural model, consumers must be convinced of its legitimacy, both in the South and in the North. Certification – through labelling – is key to providing a guarantee to consumers that the imported products do indeed originate from organic agriculture.

But certification comes at a cost. Do new markets compensate for that cost? And how to reconcile certification, which today is done by independent bodies, with the desire of many farmers’ organisations to have their own quality control systems recognized?

Organic certification very often leads to commercialisation in supermarkets. Are these an opportunity or a risk for the living conditions of producers in the South?

The emergence of international organic trade also raises environmental concerns: Although the environment is protected in the region of production, doesn’t transportation of goods over such long distances counterbalance this benefit on the global scale?

We will cover these issues with actors in the field, who are setting out signposts in favour of organic farming, which is a full-fledged partner of development.
SETTING

ORGANIC IN WORLD TRADE
One could say that organic products are peanuts by world trade standards. Generally, their market share is estimated at about 1%. In terms of the evolution of their market share, on the other hand, growth is impressive. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), sales of organic products increase by 5 billion dollars every year. They have doubled in 5 years, reaching a total of USD 46.1 billion (EUR 36 billion) in 2007. From 2005 to 2006, sales growth reached 17.5%. Estimates predict a minimum of 10% annual growth for the years to come.

This success does not seem to be threatened by the global financial and economic crisis that began in 2008, at least in industrialised countries. For instance, in Great Britain, sales of organic food products have continued to increase, with 1.7% growth in 2008. Today, the FAO estimates that organic produce has on average 2% market share in developed countries. Certain products are well below this average and can still grow strongly. This is namely the case for organic citrus juice which currently only represents 0.3% of the global citrus juice market.

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**Evolution of the number of hectares under organic farming in the world**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Millions of hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Share of organic consumption per inhabitant in 10 European countries**

- **Denmark**: 6.0
- **Austria**: 5.3
- **Switzerland**: 4.8
- **Sweden**: 4.3
- **Luxembourg**: 3.3
- **Germany**: 3.1
- **Netherlands**: 2.0
- **Belgium**: 1.9
- **France**: 1.2
- **Norway**: 1.0

Sources: www.organic-world.net
The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – IFOAM\(^5\) defines organic agriculture as “an agricultural production system that promotes environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibres, and excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilisers, pesticides, growth regulators, livestock feed additives and genetically modified organisms.”\(^6\)

To be labelled organic, a product has to respect precise specifications and is subjected to strict controls. No synthetic chemicals are tolerated; livestock feeds are free of antibiotics and GMOs are excluded from the chain.\(^7\) Special attention is paid to the well-being of animals and additives are limited in product processing. Instead of mineral fertilisers and pesticides, organic agriculture relies on organic fertilisers and on organic methods of pest control.

Usually the recognition of an organic product is achieved through labelling on the package. In Belgium, the Biogarantie\(^8\) label means that a product comes from organic agriculture and respects the specifications set by Bioforum, the platform of organic professionals and consumers. The Ecogarantie\(^9\) label is used for non-food products (housekeeping products etc.).

Specifications for organic agriculture have in general been drawn up by both national and international civil society organisations. The European Commission has adopted an official version of these: This is the (CE) n°834/2007 regulation, which is applicable as of 1 January 2009.\(^8\) However, it does not yet cover certain fields for which, in Belgium, the Biogarantie label is a forerunner, such as animal feeds, fibre or collective catering.

### The geographies of organic farming

Organic products also come primarily from industrialised countries, particularly European ones. Ten percent of arable land in Switzerland and Austria is under organic farming; many other countries have between 5 and 10% of land under organic farming (Portugal, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Slovenia, Denmark).

In Asia, South America and Africa less than 1% of arable land is dedicated to organic agriculture, with a few exceptions (1 to 5% of land in Tunisia, Uganda, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic).

On the other hand, in absolute terms, South America – with 6.4 million hectares of land under organic farming – is close behind Europe (7.8 million ha), which itself is far behind Oceania with 12.1 million ha.

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5 | [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)
6 | Kristen Lyons and David Burch (Griffith University, Australia), Socio-economic effects of organic agriculture in Africa, IFOAM 2007.
7 | European regulation does allow a certain minimum GMO trace amount of 0.9 % in order not to penalise producers who are victims of involuntary contamination from neighbouring GMO exploitations. Consumer and environmental organisations fear rather that this tolerance will be a stepping-stone for the dissemination and promotion of GMO crops.
WHAT ARE THE COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS FROM THE SOUTH?

In 2001, an international study estimated that counter-seasonal products from temperate zones as well as exotic fruit provided the best commercial prospects for organic horticultural exports from developing countries to Belgium. These are, for instance, fresh apples in March-April, and mangoes throughout most of the year (there are two mango seasons: from the end of November to March and from May to September).

There are no Belgian statistics on this topic, but an overview of the import authorisations for organic products for 2009 seems to confirm the trend announced in 2001. Mind, this is an indicative spot-check, and products imported to Belgium are not necessarily destined for the Belgian market!

South America mainly submits authorisation requests for bananas, coffee, cocoa, and to a lesser degree, cane sugar and fruit pulp. Wine from Chile is the main product competing with European products. Most exports come from Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Honduras, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic.

Rice, tea and essential oils are the main exports from Asia (Pakistan, India, China). As for Africa, it exports exotic and fresh fruits, dehydrated vegetables, coffee and essential oils. However, it makes far fewer requests than South America. There are also some competing products such as onions, etc.
THE FAO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME

The FAO Organic Agriculture Programme was launched in 1999. Its long-term objective is to enhance the food security and environmental integrity of member countries. To achieve this, it supports capacity development of member countries in each of the steps of the organic agriculture value chain, from production, via processing, to commercialisation. This inter-departmental working group is finding it difficult to create a global database on organic agriculture and product commercialisation because large international institutions shy away from organic agriculture and trade.

However, awareness about organic farming is increasing on a global scale. The work of IAASTD\textsuperscript{11} is an example in point. This group of 400 international experts assessed agricultural knowledge, science and techniques around the world. In their report, which was published in 2008, they state that to sustainably fight against hunger and the negative effects of climate change, agricultural knowledge has to be increased and strengthened in the direction of agro-ecological sciences. In addition, the report does not consider GMOs, in the present state of affairs, a sustainable solution to these problems. Because of this stance, the major GMO enterprises quit the discussion forum.

BIOTRade PROGRAMME OF UNCTAD

Even before human intervention, nature provides uncountable “organic” resources, which can be used to produce natural dyes or medicinal oils and extracts, and also form a CO\textsubscript{2} absorption buffer (tropical forests) or offer opportunities for eco-tourism (exceptional landscape, wildlife and plants). Many developing countries are endowed with such rich and highly diverse biological resources. In 1996, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) launched the BioTrade initiative. Considering natural biological resources as a potential for industrial and commercial development, the programme aims at promoting investment in this field. To that end, it supports the efforts of developing countries to strengthen their expertise, disseminate information and work out BioTrade programmes per country. It has three leading principles: Conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biodiversity. Globally, this market is estimated at USD 65 billion.

\textsuperscript{11} International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Sciences and Technology for Development (IAASTD) – www.agassessment.org
The first formal initiatives to commercialise organic products emerged in the 1960s. The products sold are bought from farmers who have signed an integration agreement. Their goal is to raise the awareness of the general public about the dangers of “modern” agriculture and its synthetic chemicals.

In 1972, Nature & Progrès from France and other associations in Europe, create the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, IFOAM. Today this federation has 750 member organisations in 108 countries.

The same year, Nature & Progrès France drew up the first organic agriculture specifications. But only in 1986 does the association succeed in having specifications, as well as its controlling plan, approved by public authorities. The European Union officially recognizes and defines organic agriculture and from that time onward it is the independent bodies approved by the public authorities that must perform the controls. The certification bodies begin to develop at this time.

Organic products from developing countries benefit from the success of fair trade products. Today, Oxfam-Magasins du monde and the Max Havelaar label “supply” between 30 and 40% of certified organic fair trade products.

An international FAO study about large retailers notes that in Belgium “Delhaize was the first retailer to sell organic products, starting in 1989 after which Colruyt and GB (today owned by the French retailer Carrefour) followed in 1991. These supermarkets required that organic products be (at least) of the same quality as non-organic products and they refused products that looked inferior. Moreover, organic products had to taste as good as (or even better than) conventional products”. First native organic products, and later imported ones, have gained mass consumption market access. Large retailers have improved the image of organic products, while organic farmers have found far more outlets.

For the pioneers at Nature & Progrès the whole thing is adrift though. The industrialisation of organic farming, especially of organic imports, goes hand in hand with third-party control and certification. But, for the association, these have high costs tied to the services provided and not to the volume of products sold by the producers or importers. In the North as well as in the South, the cost of this labelling and these controls discourages the smallest exploitations and, especially, the diversity of crops they grow. However, Nature & Progrès does admit that organic agriculture experienced strong growth at the end of the 1990s thanks to this evolution.

Cooperatives are usually found upstream from the organic import business. The grouping of producers is a strategy used to face the pitfalls of certification through an independent third party organisation. Another strategy consists in allowing external control over a percentage of the producers’ activity along with internal control set up and performed by the producers themselves.

In 2008, supermarkets sold almost 2/3 of organic products in Belgium, followed by specialized shops (over 1/4).

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ORGANIC, ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT?
ORGANIC, ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT?

From an economic point of view, trade in organic products is an opportunity for development for farmers and farming in the South. Since the demand for quality products exists among consumers in the North, even in times of crisis, it provides the farmers of southern countries with an opportunity to diversify their production and improve their income. So, they can invest, send their children to school and contribute to the building of (collective) community infrastructure.

A study carried out in the mid-2000s in Brazil, showed that the price paid to organic coffee farmers was 35% above the conventional coffee price, on average. However, the prices of organic coffee vary in the same way that conventional coffee does. In the event of a strong drop in world prices, organic farmers are a little better off compared to others, provided their production costs have not increased disproportionately in comparison to their higher profit margin. Indeed, whereas some farmers, who have switched to organic, have succeeded in reducing their production costs to 80% of what they were before under conventional agriculture, others see their costs increase to 135%, namely because of the greater manual labour involved.

A transition to organic farming therefore enables producers to improve their daily lives to a certain degree, but it does not shelter them from strong fluctuations in the international markets. Moreover, during the transition (of 12 to 24 months), they do not yet benefit from certification; they cannot yet sell at organic prices but often have to bear additional costs. Therefore, they are very vulnerable during the transition, which is a time of investment. That is why small and medium farms usually prefer to be fair trade certified first, before becoming organic.

The following graph shows the financial advantage of organic coffee compared to conventional coffee, and even more so, the sustainable economic advantage of fair trade and organic coffee, on the basis of the experience of a Peruvian cooperative.

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Set during periods of low market prices, the minimum guaranteed price has been on average 68% above the fluctuating price of the conventional market. Thanks to this stability producers do not have to look for complementary employment elsewhere. © Max Havelaar
If the production and sale of organic products are a step towards local processing and packaging, actors in southern countries will be able to take an even larger share of the added value. For instance, on the entire (fair and/or organic) Alter Eco product line (France), more than 20% of the sales price, on average, returns to the country of origin. Without local processing, only 6 to 8% of the price of conventional products and 12-13% of raw materials meeting Max Havelaar standards would go to local actors. The gradual development of true local production chains therefore becomes an endogenous development factor.

From a commercial point of view, organic production, in agriculture, is still synonymous with the absence of chemical inputs (fertiliser and pesticides) and of GMOs. That way, organic farmers become independent of the agri-food businesses, which produce and commercialise these inputs.

By combining the creation of added value in their own country and achieving independence from agri-business multinationals, organic agriculture and organic trade contribute to the food sovereignty of the communities and the countries concerned. Local actors gain more control over agricultural policies and practices in their countries at the expense of multinational and third country influence. From a social point of view, understanding organic certification criteria requires that farmers become literate. This is part of the mission of many NGOs and farmer organisations that are active in developing the organic sector. Once they are trained, farmers in the South are better equipped to process information but also to bring over their point of view and defend their interests, in a cooperative, for instance.

Employment is another social aspect. Usually, organic farming is more demanding with respect to manual labour. Without pesticides, more mechanical work is required, which cannot always be done by machines, as for instance in weeding. The manual labour needed for organic farming means more work for more people. Another side effect is that organic farming may be an answer to the rural exodus.

From an environmental point of view, by improving soil quality and favouring biodiversity, organic agriculture maintains and develops a natural heritage, which improves the quality of life of farmers and which may also become a resource for the development of other activities such as sustainable tourism.
Developing the local market

The local market is of particular interest for small farmers’ organisations. To get a share of the organic profits, these organisations develop their own, less expensive, participatory certification systems (see below). They also associate to create value chains that enable them to access the local market.

The existence of a middle class in large cities is a pre-condition for a potential demand for organic products to actually emerge. This happens more often in Latin America than in Africa as illustrated by the project Super Ecologicos in Bolivia.

Super Ecologicos, a developing organic sales network

In order to market the organic production of small producers, the Association of Organic Producers Organisations in Bolivia (AOPEB) launched its Super Ecologicos (SE) project in 2004. The objective was to create an organic market by opening up and supplying sales points in the large cities of the country. The project was conducted in partnership with the Belgian NGO SOS Faim. It was co-financed until 2008 by the European Union and its launch was supported by the Walloon Region.

The results are encouraging. At the time the new funding agreement for 2009-2010 was being negotiated, four sales points were operational, three of them in La Paz, the administrative capital, and one in Cochabamba. Four other stores had to be temporarily closed, due to management difficulties. Further expansion is planned as the project progresses. More than 3,000 organic products, packaged and/or processed in the country, are being commercialised. The breakeven point should be reached in 2010 while AOPEB is setting up a commercial structure – probably a private limited liability business in which AOPEB will remain the majority owner – to house the activities of Super Ecologicos.

Given the success of the operation, AOPEB also relies on non-member producers, which further fosters organic agriculture. A commercialisation fund has been created in order to quickly pay the farmers’ organisations that supply the SE sales points. Joint financial assistance for 2009-2010 from SOS Faim and the Belgian cooperation (DGDC) is mainly allocated to building this fund.

Following the SE project, other independent initiatives have emerged. Organic farming seems to be popular. However, not all of these new actors are following the specifications drawn up by AOPEB so carefully. AOPEB is now struggling for the effective implementation of the law promoting and regulating ecological agriculture, which was passed in 2006. This law creates a national reference certification framework, which would make it possible to distinguish between different types of commitment towards organic farming.

An important aspect of this is to make operational the recognition of existing participative certification systems that AOPEB is introducing to SE suppliers. Without this, although all of their products are organic, only about 20% will carry an organic or AOPEB label.

But it is also the competition from new operators and the expansion of the organic market that is pushing Super Ecologicos to be more and more commercially efficient.
From fair trade to organic

Many coffee producers survived the beginning of the millennium, thanks to the transition to both fair and organic trade. As coffee prices collapsed on the exchanges, these producers benefited from the minimum price (which is one of the principles of fair trade), which was two to three times higher than the price on the traditional market. In Peru, for instance, when coffee prices plummeted to USD 47 for a bag of 50 kg of Arabica in 2004, fair trade still guaranteed the Huadquina farmers a price of USD 126. With the conversion to organic farming, that price rose to USD 141.

Even though fair trade aims exclusively at sustainable economic development for producers, through its specifications, it also focuses on the health of producers, their quality of life and the impact of the activities on the environment. However, its field of action is broad and includes the small-scale and industrial manufacture of clothes and many other objects too.

When applied to agricultural production, fair trade sooner or later leads to questions about organic farming, although this is not necessarily self-evident. For Johan Declercq, products manager and producers’ liaison for Max Havelaar Belgium, the fair trade premium that is granted to farmers’ organisations does not necessarily have to be invested in organic farming. It provides an opportunity to do so, if the community or the cooperative wishes so and decides to do it.

Fair trade is the only certification system that integrates production costs (and, therefore, the costs of transition to organic farming) in the minimum price granted to producers. This may, in part, explain the success of fair trade as a motor for the development of organic farming.

Organic certification systems do not guarantee a cost price that covers production costs. There is not a major problem as long as organic sales prices, which are usually above the conventional price, remain sufficiently high. But organic products remain vulnerable to extreme fluctuations in raw materials prices. For instance, in 2001, with prices at USD 60 or 70 per bag, the organic coffee price did not cover the production costs of organic farmers in Costa Rica, which was estimated at USD 80-85 per bag.

In the Oxfam Fairtrade product line (which is fair trade labelled) the share of products that were labeled organic was 38% in 2009. As a share of foodstuffs turnover, organic products represented 28% in 2008. Today, about 45% of Max Havelaar labelled products are certified organic.

The share of organic products is due to increase in both systems over the coming years. An international objective of 50% has been set for 2013 within the FLO international platform to which Max Havelaar Belgium belongs. This objective will probably be exceeded by then in the Belgian market.
ORGANIC, ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT?

Premiums for organic products

Fair trade as advocated by Max Havelaar relies on 2 main principles: The guaranteed minimum price and the premium. The minimum price for a product is set by FLO-International. The guaranteed minimum price provides producers with a decent income and avoids the instability of price fluctuations on the international raw materials markets.

As for the fair trade premium, it is granted to contribute to the development of producer communities. On one hand, by giving farmer organisations the means to process and export products so they can improve their business skills and get more of the added value. On the other, by stimulating the democratic management of their organisations as the use of the premium must be discussed and agreed upon by a general assembly of producers. This premium amounts to 10 to 15% of the minimum production price for the concerned product.

In addition to the fair trade premium, FLO-International has developed an organic premium, which is calculated on the basis of the difference in exploitation costs between conventional agriculture and organic agriculture. For a given product, an average for that difference is calculated on the basis of a representative international sample of exploitations. The premium is only acquired after the transition to organic agriculture is made. It is a kind of reward for the investments agreed upon and covers the additional costs of organic agriculture (more labour, in particular) over the long term.

Fair trade therefore contributes to the development of organic agriculture in two ways. On one hand, the guaranteed minimum price is higher if producers work following organic specifications. On the other, an organic premium is paid to individual farmers who agree to invest in the transition to organic agriculture.

However, in certain regions, the fair trade premium for development does not cover the loss of income suffered during transition. In such cases support funding is needed.

THE TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OPENS UP TO ORGANIC

In 2009, the Trade for Development Centre succeeded the Fair Trade Centre, which, since 2005, had been the fair trade programme of BTC, the Belgian development agency. The mission of the Centre is now broader and includes sustainable trade and aid for trade.

This change corresponds to the new strategy chosen by Belgium on the complementarity between trade, aid and development. It relies namely on the emergence of a series of sustainable trade initiatives such as the Rainforest Alliance and FSC labels (certification of responsible and sustainable forest management and exploitation). By taking into account environmental costs and certain social costs of production, these labels can positively influence producers and their communities.

Although the Trade for Development Centre is not unfamiliar with organic trade, for its linkage with Fair Trade, it is now able take organic trade into account to its full extent.

ORGANIC, ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT?

The mission of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is to internationally advocate the recognition and development of the organic movement. Through its activities, it aims at implementing sustainable agriculture systems based on the principles of organic agriculture.

Several different views have appeared within the federation. The latest relates to food sovereignty and participatory guarantee systems (PGS). In order to reduce costs related to control by third parties, PGS manages control of the compliance with organic standards through producers, their organisations and consumers [see II.4. “An alternative: Participatory guarantee systems”].

To strengthen their visibility and increase their say on these themes inside IFOAM, a number of member organisations created the Intercontinental Federation of organic farmer organisations (INOFO) in 2008.

INOFO members chose a clear target: The power monopoly of private certifications. Moisés Quispe Quispe, the executive manager of ANPE (Peru), got elected as its first president by campaigning on this theme.

According to him, the aim is not to replace the guarantee system with an independent body. The challenge is rather to gain recognition for participatory guarantee systems at the country level, not simply for their relevance and economic efficiency but especially “on the basis of social and cultural principles, as a way of life”. A whole philosophy of farm community development underlies this ambition.

Today a permanent PGS forum is working on the INOFO initiative. Its objective: Get the participatory guarantee recognized as a system equal to control by a third party organisation and to, therefore, enable farmer groups to sell their products on local markets.

> PRODUCER GROUPS

There are many arguments in favour of grouping organic producers: They can share investment costs – such as an organic certification request –, reduce costs through economies of scale, ensure product promotion or develop a distribution network.

For local organisations (cooperatives and others) association makes it easier to be heard by public authorities and to take a stronger position towards the other economic operators in the system. Collective dynamics enable capacity development among farmers through training, literacy classes, etc.

A NETWORK IN DEFENCE OF A CERTAIN IDEA OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

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The ANPE example

The National Association of Ecological Producers (ANPE) of Peru brings together 12,000 individual (or farmer family) members. Twenty-two regional associations bring together the basic organisations. Created in 1998, it now works on five axes. Production and food sovereignty are at the core of activities. ANPE offers training programmes to improve the agro-ecological management of land by farmer groups. It also supports the creation of local and regional “production committees” that develop commercialisation activities at organic markets and fairs. Through ANPE, member organisations are part of active networks on issues such as food sovereignty and the development of traditional and local know-how.

ANPE is a strong believer in participatory guarantee systems (PGS). It supports groups that want to implement such a system and it acts as an alternative certification instance. As part of its communication and advocacy activities, it defends the effectiveness of PGS before the Peruvian authorities as well as its value as a way of certifying organic agriculture.

The promotion of organic agriculture also requires social progress. In its strategic plan for 2009-2013, ANPE pays special attention to the position of women and youth. They have to be effectively integrated in the decision-making instances of the groups that make up the movement.

ANPE advocacy operates on two levels. At the local level, ANPE supports organisations in their contacts and discussions with local and regional authorities as part of local development processes. At the national level, it participates in fellow initiatives such as the GMO-free Peru platform and the national organic agriculture platform.
> A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE?

Is the internationalisation of trade in contradiction with ecological concerns, which were at the basis of organic agriculture? Clearly, the standardization of products, and the ensuing loss of biodiversity, is often the result of strictly commercial thinking. Clearly, globalisation means an approach via proximity and networks, a token of responsibility-generating social self-control, is giving way in part to task specialisation and the fragmentation of responsibilities. Clearly, transporting fruit and vegetables over thousands of miles seems obviously contradictory at a time of growing awareness about the causes of climate change.

However, whichever criterion is considered, the answer to the initial question remains tricky:

Healthy and living soils

By switching from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture, farmers restore the capacity of the land to self-regulate its fertility and do away with chemical inputs (pesticides and fertilisers). Associated crops, which protect each other, and crop rotation, which used to be practiced to better take into account local soil conditions, are some of the practices that contribute to restoring soil quality and the environment.

It is also a way of rediscovering ancient techniques, although they may need to be matched with contemporary requirements and adapted. One Peruvian farmer put it this way, “Organic production is good for health, and it allows us to win back soil that was damaged by chemical fertilisers. It also allows the production of healthy food for the family and for consumers. It is the way of producing from our ancestors, which had been lost.”

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Integration in the community

Organic agriculture requires natural fertilisers: plant fertilisers, if crop rotation allows it, but also compost. When farms or farmer groups do not produce enough organic waste to improve their soil in a closed circuit, farmers sometimes rely on other local operators.

For instance, in the state of Sao Paulo, in southern Brazil, a fruit cooperative built composting units to recycle agro-industrial and urban organic waste into compost.

Following repeated protests related to orange price drops in Brazil, the Cooperative of united farmers (Coagrosol) of Itapolis was created in 2000. It first brought together 30 farmers who wanted to go fair trade; today, it has 120 members, about twenty of which are certified organic.

To enlarge the land surface under organic farming, the cooperative needs to be supplied with compost. Difficult to find sufficient organic material in that region, Coagrosol decided to create its own supply channel.

The cooperative built composting units to treat urban and agro-industrial waste collected in the region. It was a way to establish economic relations with other actors (local communities, agri-food businesses) of the region while turning waste into added value. Contracts were concluded with the municipality of Taquaritinga as well as with Via Necta Agrobusiness. The first mainly supplies pruning waste and waste from public space maintenance; the latter supplies the composting centres with fruit pulp and peels processed at its plants.


By increasing its organic production capacity, Coagrosol helps its members to strengthen their economic model. Small and medium-size enterprises cannot compete with large capital-intensive enterprises unless they benefit from the prices and relative stability offered by the organic value chain.

In 2008, the Fair Trade Centre (now called the Trade for Development Centre – see “Trade for Development Centre opens up to organic farming”) granted EUR 35,000 to support the launch of the first composting centre. The sum, used to rent the land, to prepare the grounds and to pay the salary of the coordinator and of staff for the centre, was intended to help launch the activity, which should soon become profitable and economically independent.
An asset against the effects of global warming

Another positive effect of organic agriculture is its contribution to the fight against the greenhouse effect, which it does in several ways. The agro-economist Lionel Delvaux highlights four.

First, there is less energy consumption and less greenhouse gas production. Rather than using nitrogenous fertilisers – which requires one and a half times its own weight in petrol to be produced – organic agriculture uses leguminosae which fix nitrogen from the air in a natural way. It also produces less nitrous oxide, which is related to over-fertilisation. And finally, it also stores more organic material in the soil.

Next, the capacity of organic agriculture to harness and transform solar energy is greater than that of conventional agriculture, especially in the countries of the South. It produces more kcal per hectare, which, globally is also a form of energy saving.

Third, organic agriculture strengthens the capacity of ecosystems to adapt to climate changes.

Finally, it better conserves biodiversity, which is strongly threatened by global warming.

Trading organic products sounds good but is it not contradictory to import products that are supposed to preserve the environment by plane or boat? In other words, what is the ecological footprint of the organic products trade?

A famous example is roses from Kenya. According to an English study, even though roses from Kenya are transported by plane, they emit up to 5 times less CO$_2$ than their Dutch competitors. In the Netherlands, roses are grown in heated greenhouses, in artificial light, with a lot of pesticides and chemical inputs, unlike roses from Kenya.

Other studies show that it is the distribution system for consumer products in industrialised countries, with its multiple actors, which is primarily responsible for generating substantial greenhouse gas emissions. And not so much intercontinental transport.

Still, little by little, CO$_2$ emissions labels are appearing on products. Whereas organic agriculture specifications do not take into account this dimension, there are initiatives emerging on the part of the control and certification bodies.

In an almost identical way to fair trade, which is used more and more as a launching pad for the transition to organic agriculture, the organic sector is promoting corporate social responsibility. This enables it to take into account the issue of CO$_2$ pollution in particular.

Thus, for instance, the long-distance transport of counter-seasonal products is excluded (except case-by-case derogation) in the new standards proposed in February 2007 by ECOCERT. It is a criterion that takes into account "a very negative carbon balance with little social advantage - namely for perishable goods with a high water content". This label, called "EFT", which stands for "Ecocert fair trade in the spirit of solidarity and responsibility", can only be awarded to operators that are certified organic.

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23 | “L’agriculture bio peut assurer notre résilience !”, in Défis Sud, no 84, August-September 2008.
24 | The ecological footprint, as developed by WWF, helps in assessing the number of hectares of land needed to compensate for the quantity of CO$_2$ emitted by an activity. The larger the footprint, the less the activity is ecologically sustainable.
25 | Based on Max Havelaar: www.maxhavelaar.be/node/759
26 | Criteria of the “fair, social, responsible trade” standards, version of 29 October 2007, p. 9.
27 | http://www.ecocert.com/-ESR-.html
ORGANIC FROM THE SOUTH, ORGANIC FROM THE NORTH?

A label is the visible part of an organic product for the consumer. It is also the best link with the producer (or processor) and reflects the respect of organic specifications all along the value chain. It is the indispensable link of trust, a fortiori when several thousands of miles separate producers from consumers. CRIOC estimates that 6 out of 10 organic produce consumers in Belgium identify organic foodstuffs through the presence of a label.

Over the last ten years, organic labels and their certification systems have progressively been integrated in country legislation. But how can one ensure, for instance, that a product that is labelled organic in Costa Rica or in Senegal corresponds to the reference standards in Europe?

In 2003, an interdisciplinary international team started to work on harmonising and making organic agriculture standards equivalent. The initiative was carried jointly by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). It aimed at promoting the expansion of organic agriculture by exploring ways to reduce constraints to organic trade, the many private and public standards among other things. This led to the publication of a guide called “Equitool” to evaluate the equivalence of standards and technical rules with regards to the organic origin of products. Thanks to the procedures it provides, it is possible to establish equivalence between an organic standard in one region of the world and another relevant standard.

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There are three main types of “labels”: Official labels, collective private labels and individual private brands.

First are the **official labels**, integrated and recognized by country legislation (or by a group of countries). They are controlled by independent and usually approved bodies and are voluntary. For organic products in Europe, the organic agriculture label is used. There is no official label at the Belgian level; France has the AB label (Agriculture Biologique), which is relatively well-known to Belgian consumers.

Next are the **collective private labels**. These labels are often created by NGOs, organic advocacy groups or professional associations and in general they are quite well-known among consumers. Like the official labels they are voluntary and controlled by independent third parties. In Belgium, this is the Biogarantie© label, which has been run and managed by the Bioforum platform since 2008. This forum brings together not just professional associations of producers and processors but also civil society and consumer organisations. These labels are controlled by independent bodies.

The Nature & Progrès Belgium logo stands for the adherence of the producer to the Charter of the organisation and advocates integrated organic agriculture in short supply chains. It is not governed by independent control bodies.

**Private individual brands** are created by a manufacturer or distributor. Most large retailers have their own brand, like “Bio-Time” for Colruyt or “Bio” for Delhaize or also “Bio Le bien-être de la nature” for Carrefour. These are real brands and certification bodies control exclusive attribution to products that are actually certified organic.

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Two international standards

There are two organic agriculture standards at the international level.

One is public and emanates from the Codex Alimentarius Commission\(^{30}\). Created in 1963 by FAO and the World Health Organisation (WHO), this Commission brings together delegations from most countries of the world. It sets food standards to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade.

The other international standard is a private initiative. It is the IFOAM\(^{31}\) Basic Standards.

The international group that studied standards equivalence considered the coexistence of these two standards useful insofar that their application and governance mode differ significantly, whereas basically they are quite similar. It urged these two standards to work together more closely.

Countries, professional organisations and NGOs remain free to elaborate their own standards, so there is a real need for a tool that can assess equivalence between these standards.

Europe’s choice

For most organic imports control is on a case-by-case basis. The importer submits a file to a controlling instance approved by the member country to which the product is being imported. After study, the file is forwarded with an assessment to the public authorities in charge of providing the import authorisation (in Belgium the regional authorities are in charge). This is a first type of procedure, also known as the “derogation system”.

A new European regulation has been in effect since 1 January 2009. Basically, it sets two procedures for the import of organic products from outside the Community. Both are based on the principle of equivalence of labels and controlling systems from outside Europe with the European label. This principle allows for a certain flexibility in order to take into account regional and local particularities.

For a list of countries\(^{32}\), which may vary, the Commission now recognizes the equivalence of the certification and organic agriculture controlling systems. This 2\(^{nd}\) procedure is known as the “Country list”. Importers of organic products from these countries – Costa Rica among others – have no particular steps to take to have their products recognized by European authorities and member states to obtain an import authorisation. However, their products are subject to specific controls once they have been imported to the European territory.

For products from other countries, a 3\(^{rd}\) procedure, known as the “list of CBs” applies: The European Commission draws up a list of controlling and certification bodies that it approves. Regardless of the area they operate in, any of these organisations can apply. To get access to the European market, organic products from countries that are not on the “country list” will have to have their certification approved by one of the approved instances. This system will progressively replace the case-by-case assessment of individual import files (the “derogation” system).

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\(^{30}\) [http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/360/CXG_032f.pdf](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/360/CXG_032f.pdf)

\(^{31}\) They are not available for free. They can be ordered through: [http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/norms.html](http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/norms.html)

\(^{32}\) In October 2009 the list included: Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, India, Israel and New Zealand.
IS THE ORGANIC LABEL AN “OPEN SESAME” FOR THE EUROPEAN MARKET?

Blaise Hommelen is the manager of Certysis (formerly Ecocert Belgium) one of the two approved certifying bodies for organic agri-food in Belgium; the other one is Bliki-Integra. He conducts some evaluations himself, namely in West Africa.

Will the new European regulations change anything for organic producers in developing countries?

The answer is tricky. If the European Commission cancels the first procedure (import authorisation by national authorities on a case-by-case basis) certain exporters may get blocked. A farmers’ organisation that wants to export a new product to Europe that is not yet covered by a certification body (CB) approved by the Commission (3rd procedure) would have to wait until it obtained approval. On the other hand, once a CB is recognized for a country and a product, importers and exporters of that product from that country will save a lot of time. However, not everything is easy in the 1st procedure either: Import authorisations at the member state level are sometimes easy, sometimes hard to get.

A concrete example of the flexibility allowed by the equivalence principle implemented by the Commission?

The main element is having internal controls by farmer groups recognized. In some very special cases there is also the possibility of justifying the use of natural substances such as an insecticide, for instance; or of “technological agents” (like anti-foam) entering the composition of foods made from organic products.

Can farmer organisations continue to develop internal control systems?

The new European regulation, in its search for equivalence, accepts that a “peer review” be integrated in a guarantee system. The control by a third-party body then applies to a percentage of cultivated land, not to all land. This enables the farmers’ organisations to reduce controlling costs and assumes that they have competent and well-trained staff locally. The CB policy is also very important from this point of view. Therefore, Certibionet, the professional international association to which Certisys belongs, promotes working with local inspectors by emphasising the transfer of competences. This also reduces control costs when compared to sending third-country inspectors.

Is the European Union more or less open to organic imports?

The European policy in this matter has neither brakes nor quota. Europe is rather obligated to encourage the opening of its market. US policy is more restrictive, for instance, as it requires complete conformity with its own standards. But it nevertheless accepts internal peer control.

If we invert the point of view, we must emphasise that the organic value chain enables certain products to find a market, notably among European consumers. Fresh mangoes from Burkina Faso, for instance, are too expensive for export to the conventional market, considering the country’s isolation. Once these mangoes are certified organic, their cost price, including transport, will no longer be an obstacle to profit.
Coexistence of labels: which ones should be preferred?

In the case of organic products, the European label has become compulsory, but only for products from Europe. It will remain optional for imports.

The label is first and foremost a commercial argument that enables the identification of the specificity of a product. On the Belgian market, a label from Uruguay on its own has little chance of gaining consumer confidence. Combining it with the European label is a different story.

On the other hand, the Biogarantie© label is identified so easily by Belgian consumers that it is probably preferable, from a commercial point of view, to put it on products beside the European label. It is also an important tool in local development policies and dynamics with regards to local products. Moreover, national organic labels sometimes cover products that European regulation have ignored so far (like fabrics), or have been less strict about (like certain cured meats).

The coexistence of labels is therefore desirable. That is why the new European regulations explicitly stipulate that its label will not be exclusive. The same goes for Belgium where, for many years, controlled individual private brands have been combined with the collective private Biogarantie© reference label.

But the European label is free and this forces the national labels to reposition themselves. To obtain the Biogarantie© label, Belgian operators must register with a professional organic union and pay fees. In Belgium, discussions are ongoing on the Bioforum platform about reducing costs for actors who apply for the Biogarantie© label.
Organic certification enables producers to access the markets of “developed countries”, but also increasingly the middle-class urban markets of “developing countries. Organic certification also enables making a profit from crops that require certain unfavourable climatic or geographical conditions, whether for the local or the international market. The yields of a coffee farm located in full sunlight that uses chemical inputs will always be higher than the yields of an organic farm located in a shady area. But the higher prices that the latter obtains will enable it to be profitable in certain cases. Considering the isolation of the country, fresh mangoes from Burkina Faso would not be profitable – due to transportation costs – if they had not been labelled organic.

The importance of certification is such that, in 2008, a group of international and interdisciplinary experts published a tool for farmers from developing countries, which lists a set of minimum performance requirements for organic certification bodies: IROCB (International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies)33.

But all of this comes at a cost. For instance, for coffee, it is generally estimated that the additional cost of the transition to organic is up to USD 3-5 per 50 kg bag of beans. During transition, which lasts between two and three years, producers see their yields drop without benefiting from an immediate financial return, as their production is not yet certified organic. Moreover, controls and certification by an independent body are relatively expensive. Some even claim that it pushes producers to cut down on biodiversity. To reduce costs, farmers tend to cultivate more of the crop that is certified organic, to the detriment of crop diversity.

Participatory guarantee systems

Participatory guarantee systems are control mechanisms internal to producer networks, processors and distributors, which also involve consumers. They rely on far-reaching transparency between the members of the network, as well as on the continuous evolution of practices through learning and mutual adjustments. This system was used from the 1960s until the 1980s, in other words, before the arrival of labels, to ensure compliance with organic agriculture specifications.

While third-party certification seems essential when the distance between producers and consumers is great (it remains a preferred tool for commercialisation on international markets), participatory guarantee systems seem better adapted to short supply chains.

Some countries, particularly in Latin America, have integrated PGSs in their official organic sector regulation. This is the case for Brazil, Chile, Bolivia and Costa Rica.

Regulations in the United States, Japan and the European Union, for their part, have integrated the use of internal control systems (ICS) for products coming from emerging countries.

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33 IROCB is the result of research work done under the aegis of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).
Internal control systems

Internal control systems developed during the 1980s. At the time, certification bodies (CBs) operating on an international scale sent agents to control the operators in export countries. This cost too much and many adjustments were made in the field until the IFOAM platform harmonised and formalised the ICS concept in the first decade of the millennium.

In the ICS framework, the annual control of the members of a group is delegated to a body identified within the certified operator. This can be a producers’ cooperative, for example. This is exclusively a peer review, and consumers are not involved. The certification body mainly verifies the quality of work and the documentation of the internal control systems implemented and only re-inspects a sampling of individual farms. The certificate is granted collectively to the group and the federation body becomes the owner of what is known as the group certification. In Europe, a large share of imports (coffee, tea, bananas, chocolate, etc.) comes from operations that use an internal control system.

Pilot projects conducted between 2005 and 2008 under the aegis of IFOAM showed that PGSs and ICSs might be as effective as certification by a third party.
Soriba Diakité is an agro-economics engineer. He is a former BTC (Belgian development agency) scholarship holder and, until 2009, coordinated the implementation and dissemination of a hybrid certification system on behalf of a farmers’ organisation, the Federation of the “Guireyaawés” (“Those who want to move forward”), in Koro. This organisation is active in the Mopti region in Mali and works to promote organic sesame, which is mainly for export.

How is the external control conducted and what is controlled?

At the beginning of a campaign, we send a provisional list of the number of hectares and the producers concerned to the Belgian controlling instance Certysis and they send us a quotation. Once the contract is signed, Certysis sends an inspector, who checks in the field whether things correspond with our preliminary descriptions. Later in the season, another agent is sent to validate the information of the evaluation report and to take samples.

At harvest time work is organised in zones. A storage warehouse is built for the sesame bags in a central village in each of the zones. Traceability is ensured thanks to a coding system. Each producer’s code is attached to their 50 kg bags.

What does the internal control consist of?

We work with a team of five technicians who ensure close follow-up of the local producers. In May, before sowing, we register the producers who commit to respecting organic standards. In each village, we train farmers who act as a liaison between the federation and the local producers. During the production campaign, we visit each field at least twice. We add 15 new villages every year and there will be 75 in 2010.

What are the main difficulties that you encounter?

Internal control tasks are difficult considering the rate of illiteracy, which forces us to use specialized technicians. We include literacy classes in our approach, as well as technical training sessions in organic production, training on management tools and training in accounting for the cooperatives and the member producers. However, without the grants from our partner LWR [an American NGO, editor’s note], external certification would be very expensive for these farmers’ organisations.
A value chain under control

Organic products are far more controlled than conventional products. On top of controls related to general foodstuffs regulations – which are the responsibility of the Belgian Food Agency (AFSCA/FAVV) – organic products are subject to sector-specific controls34.

In Belgium, the Regions decree the standards to be respected by the controlling and certification bodies for organic agriculture products.

In retail, the certification body checks that the retailer has indeed bought his products from a certified organic importer. A new in-depth control takes places when the imported product changes packaging or changes in kind: in case it is incorporated in a composed product, for instance.

In case of offence or fraud (rare), there is a scale of sanctions established by the regional authorities that the certification bodies have to apply. Usually, offences are administrative issues that can be easily resolved. In this case, three categories of progressively more strict “remarks” can be addressed to the operator: simple, needs improvement and needs improvement under commitment in writing. Not following up on a remark by the deadline set will systematically lead to a warning. An in-depth control will be ordered in the wake of this warning, the cost of which must be paid by the operator under investigation. In case of obvious fraud, the sanction can result in the declassification of a lot, a parcel or even a product for a given period of time. The heaviest sanction results in an operator being forbidden from commercialising any organic products for a given period of time.

Organic standards: protectionism in disguise?

Certain actors, such as the association Nature & Progrès, find that official organic standards or standards designed by industrial actors do not go far enough. The mere fact that they apply to products that are transported over long distances to be sold is in contradiction with their philosphy which aims at developing short supply chains between producers and consumers and at a relocalisation of agriculture.

The United States, which has among the lowest percentage of arable land under organic agriculture, require that products be in conformity with their regulations for organic imports to its territory. Is this a coincidence or is there a clear desire to protect an internal market that still has few organic suppliers?

It is quite surprising that, in international trade circles, any kind of environmental clause was for a long time considered a possible obstacle to market liberalisation. International changes have gradually pushed the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to deal with the issue. Since 2001, when the WTO’s Committee on Trade and Environment was asked to pay attention to the issue, a doctrine has gradually emerged. It seeks a balance between commercial requirements and environmental requirements, a balance that could contribute to the fight against poverty in the world. If environmental requirements can be used as an excuse for protectionnism the answer is not to weaken environmental standards, but to help exporters meet them35.

ORGANIC, ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT?

FROM THE HILLS TO YOUR CUP, THE ROAD TRAVELLED BY COFFEE FROM ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

[Step 16]
The consumer enjoys his/her cup of coffee of organic origin
He/she is sure to have contributed to the preservation of the environment

[Step 15]
The distributor sells its coffee packs under its organic brand name; to do so, it is subject to control.
The distributor can use a logo, such as the European organic agriculture logo or the Bio garantie® logo, which guarantees to consumers that the product is of organic origin

[Step 14]
The coffee-roasting house sells its coffee packs to a distributor (supermarkets for instance)

[Step 13]
The importer sells his green coffee to a coffee-roasting house
The processing of the coffee and its packaging are subjected to control

[Step 12]
The importer’s business is controlled by an independent body:
import certificate, agreement between purchase and sales invoices, labelling

[Step 11]
The organic coffee lot is shipped to Europe by boat

[Step 10]
On the basis of this import authorisation, the controlling body of the importer draws up lot certificates to enable customs clearance for each lot of coffee as an organic product

[Step 9]
The public authority determines equivalence, which leads to an import authorisation for organic coffee, or not

[Step 8]
If the coffee is from another country, the importer must compile an equivalence file to be submitted to the public authority
(in Belgium, the Regions)

[Step 7]
Importer
If the coffee is from one of the countries on the list drawn up by the European Commission, See Step 11

[Step 6]
Exporting coffee
> Either by an intermediary (who can try to negotiate prices)
> Or by the farmers’ cooperative itself
This activity is subject to control

[Step 5]
Harvest: In some cases, drying and depulping by the group or with the regional cooperative, (subject to the same controls as the crops)

[Step 4]
Coffee, grown under organic agriculture, is submitted to control

[Step 3]
"Organic agriculture” certification of the farm (or of the association in the case of a collective initiative) by an independent body (if the specifications are met)

[Step 2]
Implementation, by the cooperative or the farmers’ group, of an internal control system within the framework of village production

Transition (2 to 3 years):
Practicing controlled organic agriculture before accessing organic trade.
Big investment:
Possibility of already selling crops through organic trade or support of a NGO, or bilateral aid...
ORGANIC AGRICULTURE, BY ITSELF, HOWEVER CANNOT STRUCTURALLY REORIENT THE ECONOMIC MODEL, WHICH RELIES ON PRICES SET BY MARKET FORCES. THE DEBATE ABOUT THE GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICE, ONE OF FAIR TRADE’S PRINCIPLES, REMAINS RELEVANT.
CONCLUSION

At the economic level, the transition to organic agriculture provides a development opportunity for producers in southern countries. This is clear for coffee producers, who sell their crop for an average 35% above the price of conventional producers, improve their profit margins and are less affected by international market price fluctuations.

Going organic usually means investing in a differentiated niche product that provides added value in comparison to the same product grown under conventional practices.

Supporting and promoting the commercialisation of organic products from southern countries is therefore a way to support their development through environmentally friendly agriculture. By developing certification by independent bodies, a factor of trust between producers and far-away consumers, the actors of the sector have made their way into the supermarkets. Although certain traditional organic agriculture associations are challenging this, this opening up of western markets provides outlets for southern farmers which help them achieve higher profitability.

Organic agriculture, by itself, however cannot structurally reorient the economic model, which relies on prices set by market forces. The debate about the guaranteed minimum price, one of fair trade’s principles, remains relevant. Many groups of small-and medium-scale producers in the south make the right choice by first choosing fair trade before deciding to invest their profits in the transition to organic farming.

To be truly a part of sustainable development, trade in organic products from the south must also integrate economic and social requirements. Recently, under the triple pressure of southern farmers, northern consumers and certification bodies, new bridges are being built between actors. Certifications that combine fair trade and organic agriculture requirements are emerging.

Another change crosscuts the certification procedures. Under pressure from farmers’ organisation platforms, the independent bodies have developed procedures that incorporate guarantee systems set up by producers themselves, which are in general cheaper. As for the participatory guarantee systems, which also involve consumers, they provide a challenge for the development of organic trade sectors in the countries of the south themselves. This development relies on the emergence of a viable middle class. But that is another story altogether.


**LINKS**

> Site of the federation of organic food chain organisations in Belgium: www.bioforum.be

> The site of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements: www.ifoam.org

> Certification bodies in Belgium:
  - www.certysis.eu
  - www.integra-bvba.be

> International association of the organisations of control and certification in organic agriculture: www.certibionet.org

> Import authorisations in the European Union, by country and by product:

> United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization: www.fao.org

**DOCUMENTS**

> Framework agreement (EC) n° 834/2007 and its implementation regulation (EC) n° 1235/2008 of 8 December 2008, as regards the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries.
The Trade for Development Centre is a programme of BTC (Belgian development agency) to promote Fair Trade, sustainable Trade and Aid for Trade.

This Centre has three main missions:

> **centre of expertise**

It is the centre of expertise on Aid for Trade, Fair Trade and sustainable Trade.

It collects, analyses and edits information (opinion polls among consumers, market studies...).

It coaches a working group of the “Business for Development” platform, which supports the private sector.

> **support to producers**

The Trade for Development Centre supports producers’ organisations. It supports marginalized producers, micro and small enterprises as well as social economy projects that are embedded in Fair Trade or sustainable Trade.

Strengthening of organisational, technical and productive capacities.

Transmission of relevant information (about the markets, existing certifications...).

> **raising awareness**

The Centre sets up campaigns and develops awareness-raising tools for consumers, economic actors and Belgian authorities.
BUILDING A FAIR WORLD