



**DRAFT**

**Discussion Paper**

**Technical, Protocol and Funding Requirements  
for Development of the Asia<sup>1</sup> Regional Standards**

**prepared by the GOMA Steering Committee**

**Background**

In May 2010 participants at the GOMA Workshop on Harmonization and Equivalence for Organic Agriculture, held in Shanghai, agreed that a harmonized organic standard for organic production and processing should be developed, with support by GOMA. Participants concluded that the objectives of this standard would be to:

- \* Promote regional cooperation and exchange of information and enhance private and public sector dialogues;
- \* Facilitate intra and inter-regional market access of organic products in the Asian region;
- \* Promote the global recognition of the regional standards as long-term goal.

A small group organized during the Shanghai workshop recommended to the workshop that “a technical working group should be formed to manage the work, and that eventual outputs of the group would include a protocol of the technical working group, a platform for discussing funding support, and the technical dossier (draft standards) covering organic production, processing and labeling. The small group recommended that the draft of the technical dossier could be developed and presented to the meeting in December, 2010 of the GOMA Asia Working Group, which was authorized by the workshop participants. The purpose of the Working Group is to further develop the concept and details of a framework for cooperation on organic labeling and trade in Asia.

During discussion of the group’s recommendations the vision for this standard was further refined. It would be inclusive of all or most countries in the regions, and based on common regional requirements. In addition to the uses proposed by the small group, the standard could be adopted or adapted as a national standard, particularly by countries that have not yet developed and promulgated their own standard. Regarding protocol, the standard should be developed through a highly inclusive process, although in-country consultation is foreseen as being determined and funded by the participating governments.

At the conclusion of the meeting, when discussing “next steps” it was agreed that a sub-working group should be formed to identify the technical, protocol and funding requirements for the regional standard to be presented to the Working Group meeting in December. However, it was also requested that comparative studies on production/processing/labeling standards and on certification requirements in the region should be prepared as a basis for the development of the technical standards dossier and other planning for the framework for

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<sup>1</sup> In this context the term “Asia “ refers to a coalition of willing participants from East, South-East and South Asia.

cooperation. The GOMA Steering Committee agreed to prepare the technical studies noting that the recommended timeframe for the work of the subgroup could be affected by the timeline for the technical studies.

In July 2010 the GOMA Steering Committee prepared terms of reference for the two technical studies and invited tenders from experts for preparing the studies. The studies were commissioned in early September 2010. At its September 2010 meeting the Steering Committee reviewed the decisions and recommendations of the Shanghai workshop and concluded that it should be the role of the Asia Working Group to further develop protocol (process, timeline and other formalities) and funding platform proposal for regional standards prior to work on the drafting of the technical dossier (hereafter called the "Asia Organic Standard"). The protocol to be decided should include terms of reference for the group that will draft the Asia Organic Standard.

### **Terms of Reference for the Asia Organic Standards Drafting Group**

The Working Group is asked to agree on the following premises and to review the Terms of Reference (Annex One) of this Discussion paper.

#### **Premises**

- The group will work to the objectives decided by the Working Group for the Asia Organic Standard.
- The development of the draft standard should be based on an inclusive public/private partnership
- The Asia Regional Standard shall reference at least the standards of those countries in the region that are participating in the Working Group, and may take into consideration the production/processing standards of other countries in the region.

#### **Composition of Asia Standards Drafting Group**

##### Shanghai Proposal (from small group discussion)

Countries currently participating: Philippines, India, China, Thailand, Bhutan,

Countries not currently participating: S. Korea, Japan.

Private Sector: Two persons, not yet identified

##### Steering Committee Recommendation

Countries: One government person from each regulated country (minimum five) and others expressing interest, including, so far, Philippines, India, China, Thailand, Bhutan.

Private Sector: One person from CertAlliance, 2 producers and one processor (or persons with similar practical knowledge).

#### **Process/Protocol/Timeline**

The Steering Committee recommends the following process and timeline

December- January, 2011	Standards writing expert prepares first draft of standard
February, 2011	Meeting of Drafting Group in Philippines to finalize 1 <sup>st</sup> draft
March - May, 2011	Consultation of the first draft standard
June, 2011	Meeting of Drafting Group to develop 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft
July – Sept. 2011	Consultation of the second draft standard

September 2011	Review by Working Group at September 2011 meeting,
November, 2011	Drafting Group to develop final draft (conference call or in-person meeting)
February, 2012	Approval of final draft by Working Group, Nuremberg, Germany

#### **Consultation Process:**

- GOMA invites written consultation using Asian contacts on its stakeholder list.
  - Working Group members coordinate stakeholder feedback in home countries, including translation to and from the native language. GOMA can support some translation work.
- Working group members feed back consultation results to the Drafting Group.

#### **Uptake by Asian Governments**

Working Group members from governments should propose the requirements and process for this standard to be a reference for equivalence in their government schemes.

#### **Ownership**

The GOMA Asia Working Group discusses options for the ownership of the standard at its meeting in December 2010, and appoints a sub-group to develop a final proposal which is consulted with the Working Group. Proposal is reviewed and approved by the Working Group in.

## ANNEX ONE

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### Terms of Reference Asia Organic Standards Drafting Group

#### Background

In May 2010, participants at the GOMA Workshop on Harmonization and Equivalence for Organic Agriculture in Asia<sup>2</sup> agreed to create a Working Group to develop a framework for cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade for Asia. The cooperation will focus on opportunities to facilitate trade and reduce or avoid barriers within Asia. The voluntary Working Group, drawn from the region, consists of individuals from private and public sectors working in their personal capacity.

One of the main objectives of the Working Group is to develop a regional organic standard through a public-private consultative process. This "Asian Organic Standard,"<sup>3</sup> with a scope of production, processing and labeling, will be based on core international norms and regional common requirements. The objective of the standard is to have a set of baseline, objectives-based, regionally applicable standards for the purpose of assessing equivalence. The standard may also be adopted or adapted by countries in the Region who wish to use it as a national standard.

The development of the Asian Regional Standard will be facilitated by a Drafting Group assisted by a standards-writing expert.

#### Duties of the Drafting Group

The Drafting Group will:

- prepare 2 consultation draft and a final draft of the Asia Organic Standards under the auspices of the GOMA Asia Working Group.

**Composition of the Drafting Group** The Drafting Group shall be composed of a group of stakeholders from the Region, including at least five government competent authorities, and at least four individuals from the private organic sector including organic producers/processors and standards-setting or certification/inspection bodies. The size of the Task Force shall be a minimum of nine persons, and may include up to 15 persons depending on technical needs and available funding.

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#### Appointment of the Standards Drafting Group

The initial appointments are made by the GOMA Asia Working Group, and additional appointments may be made by the GOMA Steering Committee, based on new indications of interest from governments, especially in case of filling in gaps.

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<sup>2</sup> The terms "Asia" and "the Region" refer in this context to the geopolitical scope of East, SouthEast and South Asia

<sup>3</sup> Working title of the document

**Term(s) and Commitments of the Drafting Group members**

The Drafting Group shall prepare at least two drafts of an Asia Organic Standard for Production and Processing, taking into account the technical comparative study prepared by GOMA and the requirements in the Codex Alimentarius Organic Guidelines and the IFOAM Basic Standards v. 2005. The Drafting Group will work over the period of time from January 2011 to December 2011. Members of the drafting group should be able to commit to attending at least two in-person meetings and to participating in several conference calls and periodic email discussions. Members should also be able to commit to reading and analyzing feedback from consultations.

**Support**

Financial and technical support for the Drafting Group will be provided by the Global Organic Market Access project to the extent allowed by its own resources. Main support will include funding of meetings and technical studies, administrative support and standards development expert.