



Global Organic Market Access
a project of FAO, IFOAM and UNCTAD

REPORT
Meeting of the Working Group
for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade for Asia

9-10 December 2010
Mumbai, India

The first meeting of the Working Group for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade for Asia was held in Mumbai, India on 9-10 December 2010. The meeting was attended by 19 members from the public and private sectors in 15 countries/regions, and several observers. The aim of this meeting was to achieve progress on elements of the framework for cooperation.

Opening Session

At the opening of the meeting, participants heard welcoming remarks from the GOMA Steering Committee and from the meeting sponsors, the Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Development Authority (APEDA) and International Center for Competence on Organic Agriculture (ICCOA). The Steering Committee reported on its work on the Asia initiative since the workshop in May, 2010. This included commissioning and overseeing preparation of technical studies, preparing a proposal for technical, protocol and funding requirements for the regional standards, and planning of this Working Group meeting.

Mapping the Framework for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade

The Steering Committee presented a mapping concept for the framework for cooperation, listing main elements for recognition among countries, which are: standards for organic production and processing, requirements for organic certification, and control (terminology later changed to “supervision”) of certification. A fourth element of the framework, cooperation on certification and accreditation, was presented as also facilitating trade and influencing recognition among the countries. It was noted that the cooperation framework will facilitate regional trade and also enable the Asia Region¹ to negotiate as a block for recognition with other major importing countries and regions such as the US and European Union. The mapping presentation depicted possible pathways toward recognition in the areas of standards and certification requirements. For standards, potential pathways include adoption of a common regional standard by countries (harmonization) and also equivalence of standards, which can be facilitated by various instruments including using the common regional standard as reference for equivalence, and/or the EquiTool, particularly its Annex Two on main objectives and related requirements for organic standards². For equivalence of performance requirements for certification, options include reference to ISO Guide 65 only, ISO Guide 65 plus organic sector requirements, or reference to an organic-appropriate norm based on ISO Guide 65 and also including common organic sector requirements³. Regarding the element, supervision, it was acknowledged that GOMA and its predecessor project, ITF, has not worked in detail on this topic, but that the Working Group should consider whether or not to include it in the framework.

¹ The scope of the regional framework is East, South-East and South Asia

² The Annex is under development by GOMA

³ International Requirements for Organic Certification (IROCB) is main example of this option.

Terms of Reference for the Asia Working Group

Working Group members reviewed and suggested revisions to a draft Terms of Reference for the Group. It was suggested to address the supervision element of the framework by adding a statement on identifying an appropriate system for supervision, or equivalence thereof, in the region. The group also discussed and decided to include in the Terms of Reference, an objective to develop a proposal for a MLA for the cooperation framework on organic labeling and trade in the region, starting at first with willing parties and open to others in the future. It was also agreed to change the end date of the timeline from February to May 2012.

Harmonization of Standards

The draft EquiTool Annex 2 (revision) “Main Objectives and Related Requirements for Organic Standards” (hereafter called “Annex” was introduced to the meeting participants, including rationale for why this document was chosen as the baseline for the comparison of organic standards in a study that was commissioned to support the development of an Asian regional organic standard.

“Study and Recommendations for Developing Regional Organic Standards in Asia” was then presented by its author, Vitoon Panyakul. The assignment and process for the study were explained, including that English-language versions of ten of the twelve organic standards designated for the study were obtained and included in the comparison. These are China (PRC), India, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan (province) and Thailand. English-language standards of Vietnam and Laos were not available in the timeframe of the study. The study also included a comparison of Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for Organically Produced Foods (CAC GL/32) with the Annex.

The study analyzed the overall alignment with the Annex and commonality among the standards. Alignment refers to whether or not the standards address the points of the Annex. Commonality indicates similarity among the standards in addressing or not, the points of the Annex. The study found 64% alignment of points in the ten standards with the Annex and 75% commonality among the standards relative to the points in the Annex. Examining the similarity of the set of commonality points to points in the Annex, the study indicated an 85% correlation. Correlations for both similarity and commonality were high for sections 3,5,6 and 10 of the Annex. Some additional requirements of Asian standards (beyond the Annex requirements) were noted.

Assigned to formulate recommendations for revision of the Annex based on the comparative exercise, the consultant made the following recommendations:

- Reduce the number of objectives for each section.
- Reformulate those objectives that are written more on the level of principles and provide some rationale for objectives.
- Remove or revise prescriptive requirements.
- Consider if requirements have verifiable indicators.
- Reorganize the document in the traditional way of organizing organic standards.

The final section of the study presented the following recommendations for the process and criteria for drafting an Asian regional organic standard.

Step One: Clarify the scope of the standards

It was recommended to focus at first on crop, wild-harvest, processing, handling and labeling, not to take up additional points, and to design the process to ensure participation of interested countries and their stakeholders.

Step Two: Review and Develop a Regional Version of the EquiTool Annex

The findings of the study, especially alignment and commonality of the standards with the EquiTool Annex should be taken into account. It appears from the study that additional objectives and requirements are not needed.

Step Three: Prepare the Draft Standard

Consider referencing the general structure of one of the International Standards, preferably the IFOAM Basic Standards v.2005. Use the revised Annex to formulate base text. Refer to the revised Annex and include its objectives and basic requirements. Plan and consult the draft along the lines of process indicated in the ISEAL Code of Good Practice on Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

Discussion and Decisions: It was noted that although the comparative exercise was prepared by just one person, other uses of the EquiTool for comparative work could include assessment by multiple parties. It was also suggested to ensure that objectives are verifiable. A debate about whether or not to include livestock in the scope took place. Rationale to include livestock included reasoning that animals are integral on farms even if livestock products are not generally traded. Rationale against included that even though there are some livestock standards in the Region, they have very little basis in actual practice in the region, and also that livestock products are generally not traded internationally. The name for the common standards was discussed. The Working Group decided to call it Asian Regional Organic Standards (AROS).

The Working Group discussed the objective for the AROS, concluding that it should be indicated in a general way as follows: “The objective is to have a set of objectives-based regional standards conducive to inter and intra-national regional trade.” The proposal to prepare two drafts for consultation and a final draft was supported. It is agreed that a standards writing expert will prepare the drafts to be reviewed and further developed by a Standards Drafting Group. The Working Group will approve the final draft. The Drafting Group will be comprised of at least five government members (including those from India, Philippines, Malaysia who made commitments during the meeting) and several private sector representatives. The Drafting Group will meet in person twice (see Drafting Group Terms of Reference for additional details).

The Working Group discussed options for owning the final AROS. Suggested options included ASEAN and ownership within an MLA structure among the participating countries. The Steering Committee offered to investigate the options by consulting some experts.

The Working Group received an brief updated on the process for development by Certification Alliance (CertAll) of a common organic standard among its members. This process is supported by GOMA.

Equivalence of Standards

The Steering Committee noted that the equivalence option using EquiTool could be very useful for developing recognition of standards in the framework, especially in the interim until the AROS is finalized. With that in mind, the Working Group was asked to provide comment on the draft EquiTool, since no written comment had come in from Asia during the recent consultation period. General feedback from the Working Group was that they had no reservations about using the EquiTool for equivalence. It was suggested to develop even more guidance within the EquiTool about using it for assessments.

GOMA’s list of questions for the EquiTool consultation was presented to the Working Group and the following feedback was given:

Organization: A traditional organization should be followed, along the lines of the IFOAM Basic Standards. There could be flexibility for developing variations of the Annex with additional scopes.

List of Main Objectives: It was suggested that the relevant scope of applications e.g. crops, livestock, processing, labeling could be annotated for each objective. Otherwise the group did not object to these objectives.

Detailed Requirements: A concern was expressed about allowing for requirements e.g. co-formulants that are covered in other regulations. It was pointed out that in the case of co-formulants, this could be an issue under supervision of certification and not in the standards. GOMA agreed to take this matter into consideration in the next draft.

The Working Group was invited to provide written comments to the GOMA Project Manager according to an extended deadline of 17 December. The Steering Committee noted a planned collaboration and harmonization process with IFOAM, which is preparing a very similar document within its Organic Guarantee System, to be used for establishing a family of equivalent government and private standards. It is hoped that GOMA and IFOAM collaboration will result in a harmonized draft document in February 2011.

Update on Philippines-Indonesia Equivalence Discussions

It had been planned to use IFOAM Basic Standards as the basis for comparison. However, a template based on the draft EquiTool Annex has been prepared and could be considered as the assessment tool. The Steering Committee encouraged use of the draft Annex and feedback to GOMA on the results and recommendations for the Annex. Indonesia is planning to invite Philippines for an in-person meeting in late January.

Harmonization and Equivalence of Conformity Assessment

Conformity assessment is addressed by two elements in the mapping of the Framework for Cooperation. These elements are Requirements for Organic Certification and Supervision (originally called controls) by governments. Requirements for Certification is the topic of a paper commissioned by GOMA. Supervision was taken up in a presentation from the Steering Committee to the Working Group on the scenario and way forward for recognition of conformity assessment. This presentation integrated requirements for organic certification and government supervision of certification.

Requirements for Organic Certification

A draft paper, "Comparative Study on Requirements for Organic Certification" was presented by the author, Ms. Ravdeep Kaur. The study consists of two main parts, which are a comparison of ISO Guide 65 and the International Requirements for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB), and a comparison of the requirements for organic certification in eight Asian countries/provinces that regulate organic labeling. The approach and methodology for these studies were presented. Regarding the comparison of requirements for organic certification, the author explained that she encountered difficulty to identify all of the relevant requirements, especially sector-specific requirements, from the regulatory texts for organic agriculture (e.g some requirements are contained in operating manuals or in other regulations). This resulted in an adjustment of methodology toward asking selected certification bodies in the countries to identify the sector-specific requirements to which they are supervised by the governments.

ISO Guide 65 and IROCB Comparison

This study finds that although IROCB and ISO Guide 65 (hereafter called Guide 65) differ in structure and style, IROCB addresses all but one of the topics in Guide 65, namely, complaints to suppliers. Some topics in Guide 65 are addressed by IROCB in less prescriptive detail, for example, requirements for the quality system. Taking this into consideration, it was found that only 5 of the total Guide 65 requirements are not

similarly addressed in IROCB whereas 38 are similarly addressed. IROCB covers eight additional sector-specific requirements, namely:

- Chain of custody
- Acceptance of prior certification
- Inspection protocol
- Particular requirements to address high risk situations
- Requirements for group certification
- Dealing with non-conformities
- Exceptions to certification requirements
- Frequency of inspections

In summary, IROCB and ISO Guide 65 exhibit a high degree of similarity in addressing the general structural aspects and organization of management systems. ISO 65 is more prescriptive in several topics. IROCB expands upon these requirements to address particular aspects in certifying organic production and processing.

Comparison of Countries' Organic Certification Requirements

The study of requirements for organic certification in eight regulating countries finds that Guide 65 is a significant base for all these countries, although many of them do not require formal accreditation to Guide 65. All the regulatory systems have additional requirements specific to organic certification, although these differ among the countries. Most additional requirements are identical or similar to those found in IROCB. However, not all the additional requirements are reflected in IROCB.

The study concludes by presenting options for the way forward to establishing the reference for recognition among countries of their requirements for organic certification. Questions to be addressed include the following: whether Guide 65 in its entirety is a necessary aspect for determining equivalence, what additional sector-specific requirements should be taken into account, and whether IROCB constitutes an appropriate adaptation of Guide 65 for the organic sector and can be designated as the common basis for equivalence of requirements for organic certification in the Asia framework for cooperation.

Discussion: It was noted that some of the results of the comparison of additional requirements in the country regulations may not be correct due to flaws in the questions and answers with the certification bodies. Also, Philippines noted that outdated regulatory documents had been referenced, and it requested revision according to the current document. There was also a request to further develop the section "Accreditation/Registration/Designation of CBs to clearly indicate which countries require formal accreditation to Guide 65, as indicated by issuance of a formal certificate. It was questioned whether some of the "additional requirements" are instead further specification of the points in Guide 65, e.g qualifications of auditors/inspectors.

Way Forward for Recognition of Conformity Assessment

The Steering Committee presented options for recognition of both requirements for organic certification and government supervision of conformity assessment. Options for both of these divide into harmonization and equivalence approaches. Regarding requirements for organic certification, it was proposed that recognition is best accomplished either through identifying or developing one common requirement that is applied in all regulating countries (harmonization), or by judging the equivalence among the requirements through a common instrument. Regarding supervision, it was proposed that recognition is best accomplished either through a system of joint regional accreditation based on ISO Standard 17011 or by multi-lateral equivalence of supervision, also based on ISO Standard 17011 and implemented through a peer review process.

Discussion on Requirements for Organic Certification: It was observed that at an earlier time, harmonized requirements would be “low-hanging fruit” and easier for the entry of newly regulating countries, but at this stage many countries have well-developed “own” requirements. Consensus was that equivalence should be the approach. Consideration was then given to what should be the common reference for judging the equivalence, either ISO Guide 65 (possibly with regional modifications) plus organic requirements or IROCB (possibly with regional modifications). By strong consensus, IROCB was chosen as the reference to use in the framework for cooperation.

Discussion of Supervision of Organic Certification: The Working Group agreed that it is not practical to develop a common supervision scheme for countries and that equivalence among the schemes, based on a peer review process is the best option. The peer review process could be either among the negotiating parties or by third parties, and this should be further explored. The Working Group then discussed whether it is appropriate to use ISO Standard 17011 as the agreed reference instrument. One person pointed out that that Standard 17011 presumes supervision of compliance with ISO Guide 65, and that in organic regulatory schemes this is not always the case. However, consensus on Standard 17011 emerged. Several participants urged that the framework include space for variances from this approach, which could be more feasible and appropriate for emerging regulatory systems (these include international accreditation or cooperation on accreditation using the accreditation/approval system of a neighboring country as reviewer or direct supervisor). Consensus then emerged on a model for equivalence of supervision using peer review and based on ISO Standard 17011, including flexible approaches for emerging regulatory systems.

Proposal for Task Force: It was proposed to establish within this GOMA Asia initiative, a task force of accreditation/approval bodies and certification bodies to consider these results and develop a specific recommendation for equivalence of conformity assessment in the framework for cooperation. Interest in serving on this task force was expressed by India (APEDA), Philippines (MOA), Laos (LaoCert), Bhutan and Malaysia (MOA). Indonesia (BSN) will check with MOA in the country. It was proposed that a “terms of reference” should be written for this task force and circulated to the Working Group for discussion at the next meeting. It is envisioned that the terms of reference would contain a simple set of considerations and request a modest set of recommendations.

Way Forward

Protocol and Terms of Reference

The Steering Committee presented a new document, “Protocol for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade in Asia”, which is based on the draft technical, protocol and funding requirements for regional standards, presented earlier in the meeting, and also includes the draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group and Drafting Group. The Steering Committee noted that this document is based both on the prior document and on developments from the first day of this Mumbai meeting, and that it can be further revised to take into consideration further developments by the Working Group.

The Working Group made several substantive and editorial revisions and amendments to the documents and identified the composition of the Drafting Group.

Other Next Steps

The following action-items were also noted in the Working Group:

- If invited, GOMA will offer technical assistance to Indonesia and Philippines for using EquiTool and IROCB in their equivalence dialogue. (Subsequent to the meeting this assistance was requested).
- Efforts should be made to harmonize the development process and content of AROS with the harmonized standard of the Certification Alliance.

- The two studies prepared for this meeting will be finished and provided.
- A regional task force on conformity assessment will be established after a “terms of reference” is approved at the next Working Group meeting.

Multi-lateral Agreement (MLA)

The Steering Committee distributed a draft model MLA as food-for-thought. The general reaction of the Working Group was positive. It was noted that the private sector should be involved in the process for this MLA and that the future development of the model should provide for sustainability of the structure of the MLA. The current draft MLA will be distributed to the Working Group via email.

Mumbai, 10 December 2010

Protocol for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade in Asia

Introduction

Participants to the GOMA Workshop on Harmonization and Equivalence for Organic Agriculture, held in May 2010 in Shanghai (China), agreed that a harmonized organic standard for organic production and processing should be developed for Asia, with GOMA support. The Shanghai participants also recommended that a working group be established to manage the work, and that a protocol be developed for implementing activities, including funding support and modalities for the technical dossier (draft standards) covering organic production, processing and labeling. It was decided that the next GOMA Asia meeting, to be held in Mumbai (India) in December 2010, would further develop the concept and details of a framework for cooperation on organic labeling and trade in Asia.

The Shanghai meeting concluded that the objectives of the Asia Regional Organic Standard would seek to:

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

The Asia Regional Organic Standard would be:

- **Inclusive** of all or most countries in the East, South-East and South Asia Region⁴;
- Based on **common** regional requirements.
- Developed through a highly **participative** process, although in-country consultation is foreseen as being determined and funded by the participating governments.

The Shanghai workshop requested GOMA to assist in laying the basis for this work by undertaking comparative studies on production/processing/labeling standards, as well as on requirements for organic certification in the Region. Such comparative studies would be the basis for the development of the technical standards dossier and the framework for cooperation. 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 two studies were commissioned in early September 2010 and presented to, and discussed by, the Asia Working Group in Mumbai in December 2010.

At its September 2010 meeting, the GOMA 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 the protocol (process, timeline and other formalities) and funding platform proposal for the regional standards prior to work on the drafting of the technical dossier - hereafter called the Asia Regional Organic Standard (AROS). The protocol should include also the terms of reference for the Asia Working Group and Drafting Group entrusted to develop the AROS. The following terms of reference were discussed and agreed upon in the Mumbai meeting, December 2010.

⁴ Including a coalition of willing participants from: Bhutan, China, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Terms of Reference

Working Group for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade in Asia

The Working Group for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade in Asia (hereafter referred to as Working Group) will develop a framework for cooperation on organic labeling and trade, including standards, requirements for organic certification, supervision of certification, and cooperation on certification and accreditation. The framework for cooperation will focus on opportunities to facilitate trade and reduce or avoid barriers to organic trade within Asia. This voluntary Working Group, drawn from the Asia Region, will consist of individuals from public and private sectors working in their personal or official capacity.

Objectives of the Working Group

The objective of the Working Group is to develop a comprehensive framework for cooperation in the Region on organic labeling and trade. The framework will take into consideration opportunities for harmonization, equivalency and other forms of cooperation. More specifically the Working Group will:

- (i) Develop a proposal for a multi-lateral agreement for the framework for cooperation on organic labeling and trade.
- (ii) Develop an Asia Regional Organic Standard (AROS) through a public-private consultative process, based on international norms and regional requirements. The Working Group will request a Drafting Group to develop AROS based on international norms and regional requirements, and according to specific terms of reference (as specified below).
- (iii) Encourage recognition of equivalent organic systems, and initiate multi-lateral and/or bilateral discussions on equivalency of standards and certification systems, using namely EquiTool and IROCB. The working group will also seek to identify an appropriate system for recognizing equivalent supervision of certification in the Region.
- (iv) Identify opportunities and promote further cooperation among accreditation and certification bodies. Certification bodies (CBs) have recommended that sub-contracting and re-certification be recognized as good practices for CB-to-CB collaboration.

Composition of the Working Group

The Working Group will ideally consist of:

- One individual or representative from government and one from the private sector from each of the following countries/provinces/administrative regions, which currently regulate a system of organic standards and conformity assessment: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand.
- One individual, from either the private or government sector, from those countries/provinces/administrative regions that do not currently regulate the system of organic standards and conformity assessment, including: Bhutan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Period and Modalities of Work

The Working Group is expected to work from December 2010 to May 2012, including review of drafts, in-country consultations and in-person meetings. Financial and technical support for the Working Group will be provided by the GOMA project to the extent allowed by its own resources, including, funding of meetings and technical studies.

Terms of Reference

Drafting Group for Asia Regional Organic Standards

The Drafting Group for Asia Regional Organic Standards (hereafter referred to as Drafting Group) will develop the Asia Regional Organic Standards (AROS) under the supervision of the Working Group on Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade for Asia. It will develop AROS through public/private partnerships. It will ensure that AROS references at least the organic 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.

AROS objectives, scope and structure

The objective of AROS is to have a set of baseline, objectives-based, regionally applicable standards conducive to inter- and intra-regional trade of organic products. AROS may be adopted or adapted by countries in the Region who wish to use it as a national standard.

AROS will initially develop standards for crops, wild-harvested products, beekeeping, processing and labeling. Livestock and aquaculture will be phased in during a second stage, as these are not currently the focus of trade in the Region.

AROS will include the EquiTool Annex 2 objectives according to the traditional structure for organic standards.

Composition of the Drafting Group

The Drafting Group will be ideally composed of a core of about 12 dedicated individuals, including: one government person from each regulated country (minimum five); other government persons expressing interest to participate; one person from Certification Alliance; and three organic agriculture practitioners (i.e. farmers' representative, producer and processor). Based on indications of intent received in Shanghai and Mumbai, the Drafting Group will be composed of:

- Regulated countries: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand
- Non-regulated countries: Bhutan, Laos
- Civil Society: Certification Alliance (Dr. Chayaporn Wattansiri), Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement (Mr. Thilak Kariyawasam), Mr. Pablito Villegas (producer), Ms. Selina Gan (processor)

Working Modalities

Drafting Group meetings will be facilitated by a member of the GOMA Steering Committee. The Drafting Group will be assisted by a professional standards developer, who will prepare the working documents and coordinate with relevant parties. The standards developer, under supervision of the Steering Committee and with Drafting Group guidance, will also outreach to country authorities not currently participating in the Working Group (e.g. Japan, Korea) but that need to be consulted in this process.

The development of AROS will proceed as follows: a) preparation of working documents by the standards developer b) Drafting Group drafts through two in-person meetings c) public consultations (with and beyond the Working Group) and d) final clearance by the Working Group.

GOMA will invite written consultations using Asian contacts on its stakeholder list. The Working Group members will coordinate stakeholders' feedback in their respective countries, including translation to and from the native language. GOMA can support some translation work. Working Group members will feedback consultations outcomes on the AROS drafts to the Drafting Group.

Timeline for the preparation of the AROS

December – Feb, 2011	Standards writing expert prepares first working document of AROS
9-11 March, 2011	Meeting of Drafting Group in Manila, Philippines on 1 st draft
March - May, 2011	Consultation of the first draft standards
28-30 June, 2011	Meeting of Drafting Group, Hanoi, Vietnam, on 2 nd draft
July – Sept. 2011	Consultation of the second draft standard
26-27 September 2011	Review of draft by Working Group, Seoul, Korea
November, 2011	Drafting Group to develop the 3 rd and final draft (conference call or in-person meeting)
13-14 February, 2012	Approval and launch of AROS by the Working Group at GOMA Conference in Nuremberg, Germany

Uptake by Asian Governments and ownership

Working Group members from governments should propose the requirements and process for AROS to be a reference for equivalence in their government schemes. The Working Group will discuss in September 2011 options for the ownership of AROS. To this end, GOMA will assist exploring opportunities within ASEAN and other inter-governmental bodies.

ANNEX TWO Asian Multilateral Agreement on Organic Labeling and Trade

Draft for comments only
8 December 2010

Sharing the common objective of creating the largest organic agriculture market in the world, we the undersigned agree to facilitate the free flow of organic agriculture products among us.

In the spirit of mutual respect and trust, we agree to

- 1) recognize the national organic production and processing standards of the countries listed in annex 1.
- 2) recognize the conformity assessment system (accreditation/approval of certification bodies and the certification) of the countries listed in annex 2.

Each country listed in annex 1 commits to inform the others of any changes in their production and processing standards.

Each country listed in annex 2 commits to informing the others of the list of certification bodies approved for organic certification in its territories.

The lists of duly approved certification bodies shall be combined to form the Asian Organic Certification Body Register.

Certification bodies in non-regulated markets (non annex 2 countries) accredited by the International Organic Accreditation Organization will be included in the Registry. Other certification bodies in these markets can apply for inclusion in the Registry through any of the annex 2 countries. These CBs can certify to the Asian Organic Standards (when agreed) or to any of the national standards listed in annex 1. CBs in unregulated markets can also be subcontracted to carry out inspections (and certification) for CBs in the Registry. Accountability for the work of the subcontracted CBs will lie with the CB contracting them.

We agree to form the Asian Organic Agriculture Council, with one representative from each of our countries. The Council will meet physically or virtually at least once a year. The Council is entrusted with maintaining the lists in annexes 1 and 2 and the Registry. Upon a vote of two thirds of the Council, a country listed in annex 1 or 2 can be deleted from the list.

The Council may appoint an Expert Panel to assist it in its work.

The chairmanship of the Council shall rotate annually among the parties. The chair shall have the responsibility of convening the annual Council meeting, making logistical arrangements and providing meeting facilities. Each party shall cover its own travel costs. (The chair shall further provide the secretariat for the Council.)

The Asian organic private sector shall also have seats on (or be invited as observers to) on the Council.

Complaints regarding the organic integrity of products in this system should be addressed to the Government focal point in each country where the product is marketed. The country then brings the matter to the attention of the focal point in the country of origin of the products. Each undersigned country agrees to investigate any allegation and give a response to its partner country in a timely manner (i.e. within six months)

The Council can make any amendments to this agreement subject to a two thirds vote.

Applications for inclusion in this agreement shall be submitted to the Council and accepted upon consent of two thirds of parties. The Chair may assign one party (or any two parties) or the Expert Panel to take the lead on initial assessment of the applicant and to make a recommendation for consideration of the Council.

Imports of organic agriculture products from countries outside this agreement shall be approved for circulation as organic within this regional market by the Council based upon the principle of equivalence. The tools developed by the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence (the Equitool and IROCB) can be useful in this determination.

Annex 1: List of recognized production and processing standards

Annex 2: List of recognized conformity assessment systems

Scope:

Reference norms

Production and processing: Equitool annex

Requirements for certification bodies: IROCB

Requirements for accreditation/supervision of certification bodies: ISO 17011?

ANNEX THREE

Meeting AGENDA

GOMA Asia Working Group 9-10 December 2010 Mumbai, India

8 December (Wednesday)

16:00 Briefing for Working Group participants who were not in Shanghai

9 December (Thursday)

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Welcome from the Global Organic Market Access project (GOMA), the Agriculture and Processed Foods Export Development Authority (APEDA), and International Competence Center for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA)- Introductions- Review of Agenda- Report from Steering Committee (decisions since Shanghai) |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | Mapping the Framework for Cooperation on Organic Labeling and Trade in Asia (presented by the GOMA Steering Committee) |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Harmonization of Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation and clarification of the draft EquiTool Annex on Objectives and Main Requirements of Organic Standards- Presentation and clarification on Certification Alliance Harmonized Standard development |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00 – 15:30 | Harmonized Standards (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation and clarification of Comparative Study on Asian Organic Standards- Presentation of Proposal for the Asia Regional Standard: (Clarification of objectives for use of the standard, Objectives of organic production/processing in Asia, Drafting Group, protocol/process, timeline and funding requirements) |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | Coffee-Tea Break |
| 16:00 – 17:00 | Asia Regional Standards: Discussion and Decisions |

19:00 Dinner hosted by sponsoring organizations

10 December (Friday)

- 09:00 – 10:00 Equivalence of Standards:
- Discussion/feedback on draft EquiTool Annex on Objectives and Main Requirements of Organic Standards
 - Updates on equivalence initiatives, e. g. China-Thailand, Indonesia-Philippines
 - Other prospects for equivalence initiatives in the framework for cooperation.
- 10:00 – 10:30 Strategic Discussion: Standards equivalence in framework for cooperation: using minimum regional standards or equivalence assessment, e.g. EquiTool.
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/Tea Break
- 11:00 – 12:30 Harmonization and Equivalence of Certification Requirements
- Presentation of Comparative Study of Certification Requirements for Asia.
 - Discussion and Decisions
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:30 Other Key Elements of Cooperation Framework
- Presentation: Government Controls and Implementation of Organic Regulations
 - Discussion and Decisions
 - Presentation: Cooperation benefitting non-regulated countries
 - Discussion and Decisions
- 15:30 – 16:00 Coffee/Tea Break
- 16:00 – 17:00 Putting it all Together
- Memorandum of Understanding for 2011
 - Review of Decisions, Next Steps and Timeline
- 17:00 Adjourn



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ANNEX FOUR Participants List

GOMA Asia Working Group meeting

9-10 December 2010, Mumbai

Country/Territory	Name	Title	Organization
Bhutan	Kesang Tshomo	Coordinator	Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture
Cambodia	Andrew McNaughton	Chairman of the Board	Cambodian Organic Agriculture Association (COAA)
China	Jibing Zhang	Deputy Director	Organic Food Development and Certification Center
Hong Kong	Jonathan Wong	Director	Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre
India	P.V.S.M Gouri	Advisor	Agricultural and Processed Foods Product Export Development Authority (APEDA)
India	Manoj Menon	Director	International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA)
India	Miguel Braganza	Additional Director at the Central Secretariat in Mapusa-GOA	Organic Farming Association of India (OFAI)
Indonesia	Agung Prawato	Director	Biocert
Indonesia	Suprpto	Head of Center for Standard Application System	National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (BSN)
Italy	Lorenzo Peris	Observer	ICEA-Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification
Japan	Toshiaki Takahashi	Certification staff	Japan Organic & Natural Foods Association
Laos	Thatsaka Saphangthong	Head of Standard Division	Ministry of Agriculture(MoA)
Laos	Thavisith Bounyasouk	Co-representative	Laos Certification Body Department of Agriculture
Malaysia	Puan Norma Othman	Director--Crop Quality Control Division	Department of Agriculture

Malaysia	Selina Gan	Board member	Organic Alliance Malaysia (OAM)
Nepal	Basanta Ranabhat	Chair person	Organic Certification Nepal (OCN)
Philippines	Gilberto Layese	Director	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, Department of Agriculture
Philippines	Pablito Villegas	Convenor for Asia, ASEAN, and the Philippines	Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations(INOFO)
South Korea	Jaegeun Chang	Researcher	Korea Food Research Institute
Sri Lanka	Thilak Kariyawasam	President	Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement (SRICert)
Thailand	Wanlop Pichpongsa	Secretary General	Thai Organic Trader Association
Thailand	Vitton Panyakul	Chair	Cert Alliance
Thailand	Chayaporn Wattanisiri	Chair of Executive Board	Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand (ACT)
Vietnam	Le Thanh Hoa	Deputy Director	International Cooperation Department – Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Steering committee/staff/consultant		
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