ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: EU FOLLOW-UP TO RIO+20

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Your name (first and last name) * (compulsory) IFOAM EU Group

In which capacity are you participating in this consultation? * (compulsory)

- X on behalf of an organisation

If answering as an individual, please indicate the country where you reside* (compulsory)

If responding on behalf of an organization, please indicate below which type * (compulsory) and your interest representative ID number:

- national government
- regional government
- local government
- international body (other than EU institution)
- public research institution
- university
- NGO, civil society, environmental group, charity
- industrial interest group
- EU scientific project

Name: IFOAM EU Group
Interest representative ID number: 67128251296-84
Organization Represented: IFOAM EU Group
and main activities of your company/organization/association: **Organic food and farming NGO**
Location (country): **Brussels, Belgium**  
E-mail address: [info@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org)

Do you agree to the listing of the name of your organization in the report that the Commission will draw up on the results of this public consultation? (Tick the appropriate box)

☐ X YES
ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: EU FOLLOW-UP TO RIO+20

Background

The Rio+20 world summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in June this year. It followed from previous related UN summits, in Stockholm (1972), Rio de Janeiro (1992) and Johannesburg (2002). The aim of Rio+20 was to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, by assessing progress to date, identifying remaining gaps in the implementation of past commitments and addressing new and emerging challenges¹.

The Summit's focus was on two intertwined themes: "a Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "the institutional framework for sustainable development". After extensive negotiations a Rio+20 Outcome document was agreed upon, with a number of actions and commitments. Even though the outcome was less ambitious than what the EU had aimed for, Rio+20 does offer a number of important opportunities for follow-up at EU and international level.

The implications of Rio+20 outcomes for EU polices

The main outcomes of Rio can be described along five streams:

1. The inclusive Green economy, as an important tool to achieve sustainable development.

2. Action in priority areas, such as poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, water, sustainable energy, decent work for all, oceans and fisheries, and sustainable consumption and production.

3. Agreement to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Agreement to develop options on an effective Sustainable Development Financing Strategy.


Implementing these outcomes would lead to furthering sustainable development globally, for all countries (developed countries, emerging economies and developing countries). The outcomes also have implications for a range of EU policies such as economic, trade, environment, fisheries, energy, agriculture and employment and social policies. Within the EU Rio+20 offers the opportunity to review, revitalize, and re-orient a number of activities that the EU is already pursuing. An example of this is the inclusive Green economy, which is addressed in the EU by the Europe 2020 strategy² and by EU development policy.

¹ http://www.uncsd2012.org/
² http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
The aim of this public consultation

The European Union needs to prepare for follow-up actions and what next steps have to be taken. Follow-up by the EU level will constitute an important practical step in making sustainable development a reality in the years to come.

The objective of the present public consultation is to provide input to the European Commission for the development of specific actions and measures and for its proposals for EU positions. In particular, it will serve as input to a Communication from the Commission on Rio+20 follow-up, planned for the first half of 2013. The consultation is also a complement to the Public Consultation "Towards a post-2015 development framework".

The Commission widely engaged with civil society, including by undertaking a public consultation prior to Rio+20, and civil society also made important input during the conference itself. Related consultations include those which took place on the Resource Efficiency roadmap and the recently launched consultation on the 7th Environmental Action Plan. The present consultation seeks stakeholder's views on five main areas from the perspective of advancing sustainable development globally. A brief explanation of each is described below, followed by a set of questions. Please try to limit your responses to one page per area. In addition, in the final section there is the opportunity to voice your views on other topics not explicitly mentioned.

1. The Inclusive Green Economy

The Rio+20 Outcome document stated that the inclusive Green economy is an important tool for achieving sustainable development, that can be implemented in a number of different ways by countries in accordance with national priorities. The Green economy can contribute to sustainable growth, help create employment and decent work, contribute to eradicating poverty, while maintain a healthy environment. The document indicated that the implementation of Green economy policies can be a common undertaking by countries that wanted to do so.

Furthering the inclusive Green economy needs to be considered at three contexts:

1. action within the EU as a direct contribution to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy,
2. collaboration with developed countries and emerging economies, and
3. cooperation with developing countries, as part of development cooperation policy in particular as a means of eradicating poverty.

Likewise, a range of policy approaches are needed to stimulate the inclusive Green economy, and these may best apply in different ways in the above three contexts. Policies can include the removal of barriers or the creation of enabling conditions and may include:

- taxes and pricing systems
- improving the functioning of markets
- effective regulation

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• a favourable environment for trade
• phasing out policy distortions such as harmful subsidies
• encouraging innovation
• appropriate labour policies and decent job creation
• green skills development

The inclusive Green economy can also be promoted through the development and application of appropriate indicators that measure progress beyond GDP. It can also be encouraged through a range of public private partnerships with aim of advancing business engagement and performance along social and environmental dimensions, and encouraging investment. Corporate social responsibility and sustainable consumption and production are also important elements.

**Questions:**

1. *What policy tools do you think are the most effective and need to be put into place to stimulate the transformation to the inclusive Green economy within the EU? How should this complement the Europe 2020 strategy and/or its implementation?*

   **Answer (max 200 words):**

   For the food and farm sector, the following tools can effectively lead to a green economy:

   1. **Greening the Common Agricultural Policy:** all subsidies (1st and 2nd pillar) must undergo a check on environmental sustainability, only activities that contribute to the delivery of public goods and enhance the environment shall be supported under the future CAP, moreover the budget for measures that enhance sustainability in the 2nd pillar such as organic farming and agri-environment, as well as advisory services for more sustainability needs to be strengthened (see also position papers 2010 and 2012). Organic agriculture must not only improve environmental sustainability, but also prosperity in rural regions.

   2. **Paradigm shift in EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation with sustainability at the heart of Horizon 2020.** Policies such as the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agriculture must prioritize agro-ecological practices and systems such as organic farming, which can help to transition agriculture towards greater sustainability while supporting the economic development of sustainable farming. (see [http://agro-ecoinnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Agro-ecological-Innovation_recommendations_15Nov12.pdf](http://agro-ecoinnovation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Agro-ecological-Innovation_recommendations_15Nov12.pdf))

   3. **Food processing and marketing need best practice examples**, training, research, innovation and legal incentives to improve sustainability.

2. *What policy tools do you think are the most effective and need to be put into place to as part of the EUs interactions with developed countries, emerging economies, and with*

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developing countries? How should this complement EU external policies and their implementation?

Answer (max 200 words):

For the food and farming sector we consider the following as crucial in external relations:

- **Clear labelling rules also for imported products** regarding environmental production standards (especially production with/from/by GMOs); prohibition of products produced with practices that harm integrity of environment or people;

- **Training for operators by local experts in developing countries** to meet EU standards to improve market opportunities for export; including training on organic standards;

- **Support developing countries to enhance their local and domestic markets** and to **invest in sustainable adapted farm systems** by: promotion and innovation of organic and agro-ecological methods; allowing developing countries to protect their local smallholder farmers from cheap imports by adapted WTO rules.

- **Improved rules and credibility for certification of organic food imports**.

- **Greening EU development aid** – ensure that **support for projects are bound by criteria that help to fulfil Rio objectives**. In the area of food production organic farming should be prioritised as a key example to achieve environmental objectives and to increase productivity and make farmers less dependent on external inputs.

3. **What policies need to be put into place to further encourage and engage EU business and stakeholders?**

Answer (max 200 words):

The **polluter-pays principle** must apply for markets: e.g. producers of GMOs and pesticides must be made liable and responsible for the economic and environmental damage they cause to sustainable market operators such as organic farmers and food processors, as well as to the whole society (e.g. loss of biodiversity, water pollution, soil degradation...).

The **use of financial and market-based mechanisms** (taxation/pricing policies, differential VAT and other economic incentives on safe and environmental friendly products) as well as subsidies (e.g. CAP, see question 1) must lead to a situation where product costs also include the environmental costs that the production of this good causes. The market distortion that at the moment causes that less sustainable products are cheaper needs to phase out.

4. **What specific actions could be foreseen in this area? How could such actions contribute to growth and jobs?**

Answer (max 200 words):
- **Innovation and research in agro-ecological and organic farming, under Horizon 2020 and EIPs**, should be based upon both, participatory approaches including the farmer’s knowledge and research as well as sustainable food processing and local marketing / consumer-producer relationships;

- **Invest** in green public procurement and training, **sustainable food programmes** for **public canteens** such as the "House of Food" in Copenhagen which is working with many canteens to: 1. Convert them to organic food; 2. Encourage healthy and fresh cooking; 3. Reduce food waste and packaging waste;

- **Strengthen rural development programmes under the CAP** and use them to invest in development of sustainable farming, landscapes and prosperous rural economies to prevent land abandonment and further intensification as both would lead to further loss of biodiversity and degradation of fertile soils that are important for our future food security.

- **Establish programs and actions to restore the vision of the agricultural profession** among population and facilitate transparency about prices of agricultural products (conventional and organic).

### 2. Action in Priority Areas

The Rio+20 Outcome document contains a large number of actions in the section" Framework for action and follow-up". These will address in practice specific themes of the Green economy in the context of sustainable development:

- Poverty eradication
- Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture
- Water and sanitation
- Energy
- Sustainable tourism
- Sustainable transport and sustainable cities and human settlements
- Health and population
- Promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all, and social protection
- Oceans and seas
- Small island developing states
- Least developed countries and landlocked least developed countries
- Africa and regional efforts
- Disaster risk reduction
- Climate change
- Forests
- Biodiversity
- Desertification, land degradation and drought
- Mountains
- Chemicals and waste
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Mining
- Education
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
Following the request of the European Council\(^6\), the EU did propose goals and targets to advance the transition to the Green economy in key areas, which are essential for social and economic development.

**Questions:**

5. *Which key areas do you think are the most important and should be given the highest priority (for the EU/at global level)? Please give reasons for your choices.*

**Answer (max 200 words):**

IFOAM EU works on farming issues and promotes a holistic view on the environment, economy and society\(^7\). In the future society will depend on sustainable resource management and developing a smarter economy today. As food security is a major concern for the future of humanity, policy must incentivise the sustainable resource use including soil, water, biodiversity which are essential for food production.

Organic farming offers a long-term strategy for ensuring our long-term food security. Whereas intensive agriculture may in the short-term provide more food, it highly depends on cheap fossil fuels and energy intensive products such as synthetic fertilisers and pesticides which lead to the degradation of natural resources.

As external inputs such as phosphorus become scarcer and the cost of producing nitrogen increases new models of agriculture will be needed worldwide to transition towards full sustainability. Organic farmers as pioneers of low input farming based on closed nutrient cycles and limited use of external inputs need to be supported and promoted to meet future needs for healthy quality food. Organic farming on average scores significantly better on sustainability aspects such as soil, water, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and moreover increases farmer’s resilience to climate change and promotes local production and markets.

\(^6\) Conclusions of the European Council, 1-2 March 2012 (article 28), and Environment Council Conclusions, 12 March 2012 (articles 17, 18).

6. **Are there specific ways in which an area needs to be followed up (within the EU/at global level)? Should the EU promote and enter into partnerships for action and if so, in which area specifically? Are there specific barriers to implement actions in a given area? What could be done to overcome these barriers?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

The **European Innovation Partnership on agriculture** is a key policy measure to share and advance knowledge between farmers, researchers and stakeholders. Organic farming should play a crucial role as a source of agriculture innovation. See Press Release IFOAM EU Group: [http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group-new/media/2012/120229-PR-IFOAM-EU-on-EIP-agriculture.pdf](http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group-new/media/2012/120229-PR-IFOAM-EU-on-EIP-agriculture.pdf)

The EU should moreover invest in **rural-urban partnerships** that promote sustainable food systems, e.g. organic farming, local and seasonal consumption, nutrition, environmental and resilience benefits of local food crops and breeds, teaching consumers where food comes from, reduction of food waste, sustainable diets (see also answer to question 4)

**Partnerships with third countries**, in particular developing countries, should put sustainability and the support of sustainable resource use and fair treatment of economic operators including farmers and farm workers at the heart of partnerships. In particular, free trade agreements (FTAs) often have devastating effects on rural economies and smallholders in food production, this must change. There must be policy coherence that ensures that FTAs are not pushed forward at the expense of long-term sustainable development policy.

**IFOAM EU, in cooperation with our mother organisation IFOAM global, recommends discussing the potential of ‘partnerships for action’** as one mechanism for potentially collaborating with EU to help realize common goals on sustainable agriculture and the green economy. A scoping meeting to identify potential priorities, areas of commonality and opportunities for collaboration is highly recommended to help give momentum to their respective green economy initiatives post Rio.

7. **Do you think it is useful for the EU to develop targets to drive the inclusive Green economy? If so, what aspects do you think should be covered and how should economic, social and environmental aspects be addressed?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Targets such as the EU biodiversity targets 2020 and 2050 are important, but it is also important to implement policies to reach these targets and not to stop half way while ensuring that targets must be linked to well-funded policies (e.g. CAP, Horizon 2020 and development policy).

According to the policy area, targets may sometimes be better set on national level (e.g. organic action plans should set targets for organic farming area per member state, as farm and market structures vary strongly between member states), some targets might need regular revision (e.g. the target to reach 20% energy supply from renewable sources had and has to be adapted and specified as the increasing use of biofuels has devastating effects on biodiversity and food security). Targets already formulated in the EU 2020 strategy and various environmental policies (e.g. Nitrates, Sustainable Use of Pesticides and Water Framework Directives...) must be followed up ambitious actions; e.g. current CAP reform debate lacks the drive to increase long-term sustainability. Food and farming sector targets should include also:

- Organic farming area and organic products in public canteens per member state;
8. What additional tools and indicators for the measurement of progress should be applied?

Answer (max 200 words):

Parallel to pure economic indicators such as the gross domestic product, environmental and innovation and local population participation indicators which reflect the state of natural resources and the sustainability of their use in an economy (e.g. water, energy, phosphorous, nitrogen, land, biodiversity, ...) and social impacts (rural exodus, quality of the environment as human habitat, integration of migrants, health, work conditions, ...) must be further developed and put at the heart of the process.

3. Sustainable Development Goals

The Rio+20 Outcome document outlined key principles for developing SDGs. It is stated that the SDGs should reflect all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in a balanced way; and that they should be action-oriented, concise, easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, and that they should be guided by the Rio Outcome document. The Rio+20 Outcome document also states that the SDGs need to be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015, and that the process to establish SDGs needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes for the post-2015 development agenda.

It is important to underline the universal character of the SDGs. They must simultaneously respond to the need to have global goals for all countries and the need for a specific development focus.

The EU will have to set up a process to establish its position on the scope, nature and specifics of the SDGs. This should take into account the EU 2020 targets and those being further pursued under the resource efficiency flagship, as well as the proposals for priority areas and cross cutting themes made by the EU in the run up to Rio+20. It will also be important to ensure that goals should be consistent with internationally agreed goals, such as on biodiversity, climate and social aspects.

Questions:

9. In your opinion, what specific themes or topics should SDGs cover? In what way could the EU build on existing or proposed goals and targets?
**Answer (max 200 words):**

For the EU the SDG should cover the following specific themes or topics: green economy/green jobs (enhance sustainable employment, livelihood security and innovation); sustainable consumption (reduce waste, integrated water resource management, climate sustainability) and production (enhance sustainability in agriculture, 20% organic farming area by 2020, and renewable energies), and stakeholder participation.

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**10. What form and structure should SDGs have? How should economic, social, and environmental dimensions, as well as the inter-linkages between them be addressed?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

The EU should become a pioneer in the sustainable development agenda and should be more ambitious in setting **legally binding targets** to be reached within the EU, e.g. on biodiversity, water, etc. so that there are really strong incentives for success.

Economic, social and environmental dimensions should be addressed across targets. As societal and economic challenges as well as environmental challenges are complex and cannot be successfully addressed by sectoral policies alone, policy coordination must be strengthened. Cross-checks must prevent that one policy has harmful effects on another sustainability target (e.g. as in our answer to question 7 with the renewable energy target and the effect of increased biofuel use on biodiversity). Holistic approaches to address societal challenges must be promoted. The Commission initiative on sustainable consumption and production could e.g. lead to better coordination between different policy fields. Organic food and farming systems are a forerunner in establishing holistic sustainable practices and markets. Therefore, organic farming should be further extended.

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**11. How can it be best ensured that SDGs and their monitoring are science based?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

To ensure that SDGs are science based, a **scientific consultation board** should be established to support the SDG working group. The members of such a scientific consultation board must be able to work on cross-disciplinary themes. Therefore, the board should represent different scientific disciplines (and be interdisciplinary in composition) but more importantly the board should also reflect different schools of thought to ensure that the board’s contribution is not biased towards one specific school of thought. The scientific consultation board should: (i) provide the state-of-the art and scientific background; (ii) consider the interconnections between several goals including synergies, conflicts and trade-offs; (iii) contribute to the indicator development for monitoring the SDGs; (iv) suggest a SDG monitoring strategy / methodology.

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**12. How can one make sure that the SDGs will be relevant and will act as a stimulus to all countries (developed, emerging, developing)? How will they contribute to mobilizing action?**

...
Global Sustainable Development Goals should address **global problems** that are not limited to a country’s boundaries. The principle of **common but different responsibilities** (for Least Developing Countries) should be applied.

To mobilize action: **Commitment pledges** - the EU must take a pioneer role and make targets legally binding within the EU policy framework. All EU policies - e.g. Common Agricultural Policy - need to undergo a sustainability check.

### 13. In what way should the SDGs relate to stimulating the inclusive Green economy?

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Legally binding, potentially progressive targets can stimulate the green economy. Clear legal frames for environmental protection that apply for all EU area can hinder competition distortion that might apply if targets are differently implemented.

### 14. How do you see the relationship of SDGs to future goals following up on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are likely to be developed under the post 2015 development agenda?

**Answer (max 200 words):**

The SDG should foresee a transition period to ensure the implementation of some of the MDG under the post-2015 agenda.

### 4. Financing Strategy for sustainable development

The Rio+20 Outcome document underlined Means of Implementation as crucial to achieving sustainable development. It established an intergovernmental process under the UN General Assembly to produce options for a sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources and their effective use. Such a strategy should promote a single comprehensive approach to development financing, building on the Financing for Development agenda⁸ and promote an integrated approach to the various global financing processes, including Rio+20, climate change and biodiversity financing.

It is important that financing strategies for sustainable development should consider all possible sources to be mobilized by all types of stakeholders, including by national and international, public and private, financial and non-financial actions. This includes giving due attention to public and private financing schemes, innovative financing, taxation and pricing schemes, regulation, and to the barriers to foreign direct investment, as well as looking at the synergies and overlaps with other policy goals (development, climate change, biodiversity).

On external financing, the strategy should look beyond development aid. There is a need to recognize that the major emerging economies should no longer only be seen as recipients of aid even if they still require institutional and technological capacity building assistance. Relevant international and regional banks such (the IMF, World Bank and other Multilateral Development Banks, such as the EIB) should be involved. Also it should be noted that many of the financing and investment conditions are similar to those for fostering an inclusive Green economy.

Questions:

15. **What should be the main elements covered in financing strategies for sustainable development?** Could, for example, thematic strategies such as the Biodiversity Resource Mobilization Strategy⁹ be a useful starting point?

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Within the EU, existing funds such as the structural funds, regional funds, CAP, Horizon 2020, European Development Fund would be perfectly suited - if sufficiently greened - to advance sustainability.

16. **What are some of the most effective financing and resource mobilisation schemes to date, such as public or private schemes, micro-financing, climate change and biodiversity financing? How can they be scaled up?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

No opinion

17. **What are the most effective ways of encouraging investment?** Where possible, link your replies to questions on the inclusive Green economy.

**Answer (max 200 words):**

A certain predictability and reliability of the policy context is needed. Regarding subsidies, for example, farmers fear to invest in equipment related to the conversion to organic farming if it is not clear, if the support for organic farming will be maintained in the next years.

However, environmental standards must improve progressively in order to achieve sustainability, but investors need transparency and possibly additional knowledge to adapt to these standards.

18. **How should coherence, coordination and non-duplication of efforts be ensured with regard to the Financing for Development process and other relevant processes?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

⁹ [http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=11654](http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=11654)
The FAO Committee on World Food Security and or UNCTAD could play a role here to identify agriculture related financing across various national and international mechanisms such as FAO and UNFCCC and others.

5. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

An important theme of Rio+20 was on furthering the institutional framework for sustainable development. Rio decided to strengthen the functions of UNEP. Rio also decided to establish a High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. The EU will now have to consider how it can best contribute to implementing this outcome.

Questions:

19. What measures would you see best taken to ensure that the EU effectively contributes to the implementation of these outcomes?

Answer (max 200 words):

- Legally binding targets and the implementation of these targets in the relevant policies;

- Science and economic based indicators;

- National reports (biannual) from member states explaining what they are doing to move closer to the Rio+20 outcomes: such as it is the case under the Europe 2020 Strategy;

- Assessment carried out by the EU Commission.

20. Do you think the participation of civil society, social partners, and other stakeholders should be strengthened? If so, how internationally and within the EU?

Answer (max 200 words):

NGOs and civil society should be strengthened, as they are driving force in the making of policy frameworks that advance and implement sustainable development..

In the EU, NGOs should be involved in the policy process from the beginning. Access to EU project funding should be facilitated (bureaucratic burden, co-financing requirements) especially for small and local NGOs that want to engage in the local implementation of sustainability strategies.

At international level, IFOAM global is a major civil society actor in global agricultural policy which represents millions of organic farmers and many other important stakeholders and is therefore an action-orientated organization that has been leading the development of sustainable agriculture in Europe and globally for over 40 years. The EU arm of IFOAM global, the IFOAM EU Group has been actively involved in EU policy-making for past 10 years. Engagement with organizations such as IFOAM global and the IFOAM EU Group are critical to ensure civil
society’s voice is heard. This can help leverage and strength existing networks in a systematic and strategic manner to achieve common societal goals and outcomes.

NGOs collect, disseminate and analyze information; put into practice operational activities; advocate environmental justice and provide input to agenda setting and policy development. http://environment.research.yale.edu/documents/downloads/a-g/gemmill.pdf

Other issues

You may also outline your views on other issues related to the follow-up to Rio+20 that have not been mentioned above.

**On question 2:** Policy tools for green skills within the EU and within both emerging and developing economies is critical for the development of sustainable agriculture and addressing poverty and food insecurity amongst rural communities especially in the developing world. Development and provision of extension services adapted to their agricultural, economic and social context, is critical to tap the potential of communities and smallholder farmers to produce healthy food for their communities as well as for more distant markets.

Organic agriculture has the benefit of having low input costs as productivity and resilience is achieved largely through the effective and sustainable management of local natural resources but to achieve this effective training and on-going technical support is required preferably by investing in the development of local extension services.

IFOAM EU as European umbrella, in cooperation with its mother organisation IFOAM as the global umbrella organization for organic agriculture - is able to assist the EU through partnerships for action (see also response to question 6), or other relevant agreement, in identifying policy frameworks and developing policy tools for green skills (and markets) to make sustainable agriculture, food security and poverty eradication a key component of the EU’s green economy transformation strategy.

**On question 6:** During the Rio+20 process IFOAM global and the European Commission cooperated on topics related to sustainable agriculture with both bodies developing good working relationships and engaging in active dialogue during their respective Rio+20 events on agriculture. Rio+20 gave the international organic sector and the Commission very effective platforms for collaboration given the common agendas of facilitating the development of sustainable agriculture and the green economy at the global level – especially within developing countries. It is important that this collaboration continues and that potential common areas of collaboration beyond advocacy are identified. As outlined in the response to question 2, a key area essential for transforming agriculture in the context of the green economy is the urgent need to empower stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers and rural communities, with participatory advice and training in sustainable agriculture production and marketing. The lack of skills is a major impediment to addressing poverty, food insecurity, climate change and natural resource management throughout the developing world but also in Europe. IFOAM global has identified the urgent need to proactively bring affordable, resilient and productive organic practices and marketing systems to smallholders in the developing world in order to help address these challenges and made an official voluntary commitment at Rio+20 to collaborate with key stakeholders to do so: http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&menu=1348&nr=350
Thank you for your contribution!