

# MOAN - Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting, Izmir, Turkey, 20-22 June 2007

## MEETING REPORT

### The meeting location & participants

The second MOAN meeting was held in Izmir, Turkey on June 20-22, 2007. It gathered nineteen (19) ministerial representatives of Mediterranean countries out of twenty-five (25) that had been invited as well as seven (7) invited speakers from EU and Mediterranean countries together with four (4) representatives of the IAMB-MOAN team (see Table 1).

**Table 1: MOAN member countries and participants to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

Maghreb		Middle East		Eastern countries		EU countries	
<b>Algeria</b>	N. Hadjeres	<b>Egypt</b>	T. Hafez	<b>Albania</b>	I. Tarelli, B. Stamo	<b>France</b>	V. Vion
<b>Morocco</b>	K. Bendriss	<b>Jordan</b>	M. Al-Natsheh	<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>		<b>Italy</b>	A. Manzo
<b>Tunisia</b>	S. Belkhiria	<b>Lebanon</b>	G. Chemaly	<b>Federation of B&amp;H Rep. Srpska</b>	I. Jerkic S. Samadrzic	<b>Malta</b>	R. Vella
		<b>Syria</b>	S. Makhoul	<b>Croatia</b>	D. Musulin	<b>Slovenia</b>	T. Džuban
		<b>Turkey</b>	M. Engiz B. Bozkurt	<b>Macedonia</b>	P. Nikolov		
				<b>Montenegro</b>	R. Damjanovic		
				<b>Serbia</b>	L. Acimovic		

**Invited Speakers: keynote speakers:** N. Lampkin, L. Llorens Abando, N. Scialabba  
**Case studies:** S. Belkhiria, M. Engiz, L. Guarrera, V. Vion

**Steering Committee:** U. Aksoy, M. Ben Kheder, L. Kenny

**IAMB-B staff:** M. Raeli, L. Al Bitar, P. Pugliese, C. Ciannamea

Unfortunately, at the last minute the representatives from Palestine and Libya, who had confirmed their participation, could not attend the meeting.

Contacts are currently in progress with Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain to encourage their participation in the next meetings and future initiatives.

### The theme and objectives of the meeting

Following the outcomes of the priority-setting exercise carried out in the first MOAN meeting - held in Bari, Italy in November 2006 - the second meeting focused on the **theme**: "*Organic data collection, analysis and dissemination in the Mediterranean: methodological issues and best practices*".

Four main **objectives** were fixed for the meeting and connected follow up activities :

- Review the current state-of-the-art of organic data collection and reporting in MOAN countries
- Exchange best practices in organic data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Identify common problems and challenges related to organic data collection and reporting
- Launch a long-term programme of activities and initiatives for the development of a shared framework for the collection and reporting of reliable data on the Mediterranean organic sector

## **The programme of the meeting**

The three-day programme of the meeting was structured as follows.

The **first day** (Wednesday, 20 June) consisted of two sessions:

In the *morning session*, after the welcome greetings of the organisers (Uygun Aksoy, Vice president of ETO, Maurizio Raeli, Deputy Director of IAMB and Bahattin Bozkurt, Deputy Director General, Turkish Ministry of Agriculture), Al Bitar (IAMB) introduced the scope and objectives of the MOAN, gave an overview of the main issues and constraints in organic data collection in the Mediterranean and presented the programme of the meeting. Lessons learnt from some international initiatives on organic data collection were reported by three invited speakers: Llorens Abando presented EUROSTAT activities on organic farming statistics in the EU; Nadia Scialabba, from FAO, talked about Organic-AIMS initiative; Nic Lampkin reported the major outcomes of EU-EISfOM (European Information System For Organic Markets) project and presented the newly established initiative ORGSTAT.

In the *afternoon session*, four case-studies on best practices in organic data collection and reporting from EU and non-EU countries - namely France-Agence BIO, Italy-SINAB, ministerial initiatives in Tunisia and Turkey - were illustrated. Afterwards, in a round table, each country representative briefly presented how organic data collection occurs in her/his country and reported about the ministerial position and commitment with regard to organic farming statistics.

As a result, a number of useful insights into the great diversity and the wide range of situations and initiatives in the field of organic data collection and reporting in the Mediterranean were offered to participants who also got a first preliminary idea of key differences as well as of common problems and needs. Methodological and organisational aspects that emerged in the presentations of the afternoon session were critically summarised and debated in a final plenary discussion.

The **second day** (Thursday, 21 June) was mainly devoted to debate on the development of a shared framework for collecting and reporting data of good quality on the Mediterranean organic sector. In the *morning session*, a recap on the main highlights of the first day sessions was initially presented by Patrizia Pugliese (IAMB). Then participants were invited to split into three groups and contribute to three successive rounds of group discussion organised following the world café approach. Each table of discussion was chaired by a member of the MOAN Steering Committee (referred as the table host) that had the task to animate the debate, note and summarise the debated issues. At each round, lasting approximately 30 min, all participants (except for the table host) changed table and companions. The three successive discussion rounds specifically focused on three sub-themes:

1. the main **ISSUES** and **VARIABLES** to be considered in organic data collection
2. the most relevant **SOURCES** of organic data
3. the institutional and organisational arrangements (the **SYSTEM**) to be put in place for an effective and consistent data collection and reporting

After the three rounds the main outcomes of the group discussion were presented by the three table hosts who were also asked to produce a written document reporting the salient ideas gathered from the exchange of thoughts and experience among participants in the group discussion session (Annexes 1-3).

In the *afternoon session* a plenary session was held aimed at discussing ideas and proposals for MOAN follow up activities in the field of organic data collection and reporting as well as arrangements for the next MOAN thematic meetings.

The second meeting day ended up with the official **constitution of the National Turkish Network** (see Annex 4), the first national sub-network to be established in the framework of MOAN. Similar initiatives are highly encouraged in all the member countries hosting the next MOAN meetings.

The **third day** (Friday, 22 June) was devoted to a fieldtrip which allowed participants to visit and learn about some interesting local organic initiatives.

## The meeting major outcomes and recommendations

### Upshots of the two-day working sessions

- The country presentations and the discussion sessions showed a highly diversified situation across the Mediterranean in the field of organic data collection and reporting. Some countries have a well developed system, other countries are now in the process of designing or testing their own system, others did not start addressing the issue yet. A different level of participation and commitment to international initiatives was also noted. Against this background further **assessment of each country conditions** and of individual and joint initiatives is required to: *i)* identify common problems and needs, *ii)* further foster the exchange of experience and the sharing of best practices, *iii)* **build on existing efforts and schemes** for future progress.
- In order to develop a shared framework for the collection and reporting of reliable data on the Mediterranean organic sector, a common long-term strategy is required, allowing for beginners, in need for a step by step support, as well as for countries with more advanced systems. Moreover, the adoption of a comprehensive and realistic approach in terms of issues to address, available sources to use and actors to mobilise is essential. Accurate consideration of the costs associated to data collection and of the verification mechanisms to put in place to improve the quality of collected data is also advisable.
- Most participants emphasised the need to start, as soon as possible, with the **identification and testing of a minimum common set of variables**, based on existing systems and initiatives and ensuring the comparability and compatibility of the data. Invited experts suggested to set up a **Task Force** to support this work. A first important step would be the development of a questionnaire for the collection of the selected variables.
- Equally important steps, as invited experts pointed out, are: *i)* the establishment of the **legal basis** for organic data collection and reporting; *ii)* the integration within the general national and international statistical system; *iii)* the **involvement of data providers** also through the creation of synergies, partnerships and win-win arrangements; *iv)* in more general terms, the **organisation and networking** of concerned actors.
- The relevance of and the need for **Mediterranean and sub-regional cooperation** initiatives was also emphasised.

### Follow up in the field of organic data collection & reporting in the Mediterranean

In order to progress in the achievement of the fixed objectives, **future commitments and tasks** for organisers and participants were discussed.

In particular,

**IAMB** will:

1. produce (and publish on MOAN website) the **report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting** (incl. the table hosts' reports);
2. finalise the **assessment of the state-of-the-art of organic data collection in MOAN countries** on the basis of a survey to be carried out in Sept-Oct 2007, in close cooperation with the country representatives. The **pilot testing of a questionnaire for organic data collection** will be associated to the survey. **The findings of the survey will be presented in the next MOAN meeting** to be held in Syria in January 2008 (see below).
3. manage the preliminary work for the setting up of a **Task Force** (including specific technical expertise) to support the design and implementation of MOAN activities in the field of organic data collection and reporting in the Mediterranean. The precise composition and detailed tasks of the Task Force will be finalised in the next MOAN meeting to be held in Syria in January 2008 (see below).

**MOAN members** will:

1. accurately and promptly contribute to:
  - the survey carried out by IAMB team for the **assessment of the state-of-the-art of organic data collection in MOAN countries**
  - the **pilot testing of the questionnaire for organic data collection**
2. make progress in: *i)* the establishment of the legal basis for organic data collection and reporting; *ii)* the integration within the general national and international statistical system; *iii)* the involvement of data providers also through the creation of synergies, partnerships and win-win arrangements; *iv)* in more general terms, the organisation and networking of concerned actors.

### **Next MOAN meetings: locations, themes and organisational arrangements**

From 16 to 20 June 2008, in Modena (IT), **IFOAM** will hold its **6<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress "Cultivate the Future"**.

**The MOAN will primarily contribute to the Congress through the organisation of a specific event on the theme "Public support policies for the development of organic agriculture in the Mediterranean" to which all MOAN member countries are invited to participate and to actively contribute.**

In particular, a four-step-path has been envisaged (and agreed on) with specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines:

1. elaboration and circulation to MOAN country representatives of the **Terms of Reference** for the production of a **country report** on "Public support policies for the development of organic agriculture" (**IAMB, 30 Sept 2007**)
2. submission of a **first draft of the country report** (**MOAN country representatives, 30 Nov 2007**)
3. presentation of and discussion on countries' experience and best practices in the Mediterranean in the field of "Public support policies for the development of organic agriculture". This will occur in the framework of a **preparatory intermediate meeting** to be held in **Syria by mid-January 2008**. During this meeting the programme and organisational arrangements related to the June 2008 MOAN event in Modena (IT) (in the framework of the IFOAM World Congress) will be finalised. (MOAN country representatives, MOAN Steering Committee and IAMB team).
4. participation and contribution to the **MOAN event** on the theme "Public support policies for the development of organic agriculture in the Mediterranean", in the

framework of **IFOAM 6<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress** *“Cultivate the Future”* to be held in **Modena (Italy) in June 2008** (MOAN country representatives, MOAN Steering Committee and IAMB team).

## **Annex 1: Group discussion outcomes**

### **Table host: Uygun Aksoy**

The report summarizes the replies of the MOAN representatives received during the three rounds of 'World Café' discussions. The replies were written, reconsidered and then prioritized. According to this procedure, the following appeared as results:

#### Round 1: Issues and Variables

##### Issues:

1. Legal basis for data collection especially those stated as requirement (e.g. EU) for production and processing
2. State support (subsidies...)
3. Handling of data (Processing of collected data)
4. Price
5. Trade data (export, import, domestic market..)
6. Data on certification bodies (number, code, logo )
7. Consumer trends

##### Variables:

1. Production (Conversion/Fully organic, surface area, number of operators (farmers & processors), type of crop, livestock (number, type etc.)
2. Certification bodies (Number of certificates issued, unissued, recertificates, imports, inputs..)
3. State support (Conversion, certification, collection of information, promotions, demo farms..)
4. Trade (Prices (farm gate, whole sale, retail), Export/Import, Consumers' willingness to pay premium)
5. Central data collection system (preferred properties online access, defined period for data collection). This variable is more for the development of the system.

#### Round 2: Sources

The group pointed out that there is a need to have national legislation that states what kind of data needs to be collected and the kind of data determines the source. In this respect, the group participants defined two types of sources as primary and secondary.

The data provided through the secondary sources are foreseen especially for doublechecking the accuracy of the data.

Primary data sources are reported as follows:

1. Inspection and certification bodies
2. Farmers', Exporters', Processors', Consumers' organizations
3. Customs
4. Other Ministerial data bases (e.g. support ...)

Secondary sources:

1. Official statistics (data on organic should be in accordance with other official statistics (e.g. terminology, definition etc.)
2. Civil Society (Farmer, Exporter, Processor, Consumer organizations, NGOs)
3. Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of agriculture
4. Ministry structures at village, town or provincial level
5. Projects, case studies
6. Municipalities

### Round 3: System

The group identified few aspects that are basically needed in developing the system as:

\* One competent authority, in case more than one (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and State Statistical Service) is authorized than the tasks must be well defined and separated. For example the tasks could be divided as data collection and quality control of data. There is a need to have a well defined system supported legally by regulations.

\* The group proposed two levels of system as:

- a) For those newly beginning (e.g. few farmers) a simple system for example an excel sheet
- b) For the countries who are already well advanced in organic farming (e.g. thousands of farmers), a rapid and easily accessed system

\* The third issue is related to the cost of operations. Both data collection and quality control of data has a cost. The cost is a factor that determines the roles within the system as who will do, how and how often will it be done? One way of reducing the cost is by developing partnerships for first hand data (e.g. market or consumer data can be collected by thesis or research at universities or research organizations). Quality control of data also requires links with experts which also means cost.

The flow chart of the system foresees the competent authority (Ministry of Agriculture) to develop the system based on inspection and certification for production and other Ministeries (e.g. trade, other official data bases) and experts for quality control of data.

## **Annex 2: Group discussion outcomes**

### **Table host: Mohamed Ben Kheder**

We had three rounds of group discussion characterized by thorough exchange of many ideas and finally we agreed to present the following aspects related to “data collection methodology and institutional organization”.

A general comprehensive approach should be adopted and a clear and precise objective related to the benefits of data collection should be presented.

#### Round 1: Issues and Variables

##### **1.1. Definition of variables**

The variables should be well defined in order to be understood correctly and in the same manner by everybody. Collected data should be classified by order of importance: primary/secondary, official/unofficial/estimated.

##### **1.2. Land area (Ha)**

Crops (annual and perennial) , pasture, wild species (trend)

- Certified
- In conversion

##### **1.3. Livestock (Number)**

- Species (trend)
- Methods of animal husbandry

##### **1.4. Products (Tons)**

Plant and animal productions will be presented as total (Tons) and as yield (Tons /ha) or kg /liters/animal).

##### **1.5. Operators (Number)**

- Producers
- Processors
- Importers
- Exporters

##### **1.6. Market**

- Domestic market (quantity and value)
- Export market (quantity and value)
- Product price (wholesalers, retailers)
- Trend
- Channels

##### **1.7. Codification** (traceability)

##### **1.8. Support and subsidies**

#### Round 2: Sources

All available sources should be used in order to have valuable and comparable data.

- Certification bodies
- National registers
- Agricultural census
- Farmers' registers
- Farmers' associations
- NGO's



- Union exporters
- Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce
- Customer services

### Round 3: System

The Eurostat and FAO systems were thoroughly discussed.

The participants agreed on the fact that the adopted system should be simple, efficient and compatible and should lead easily to comparable data.

Some participants proposed the idea of a MOAN format (forms, surveys tec...), issued from both Euro-Stat and FAO systems, to start with in order to be compatible later on with these systems.

The future adoption of one from the two previous systems by MOAN was also discussed.

## **Annex 3: Group discussion outcomes**

### **Table host: Lahcen Kenny**

The round table exchange touched on three points related to data collection within the MOAN countries: the main issues, the resources and the system. The salient ideas gathered are:

#### Round 1: Issues and Variables

An introductory question was asked to launch the discussion was as follow: what would be the main issues data collection should addresses and for what purposes. Members were also reminded to consider the national and regional interest in their thought. The main points agreed upon are:

- a. Improve and/or implement traceability in the organic sector
- b. Provide relevant data and analysis to politician al decision makers
- c. Provide a general picture for the market, prices and costs of the organic products;
- d. Input costs
- e. To design national and regional subsidy program
- f. Depict the percentage share of the processed vs raw products and wild picking versus the cultivated crops
- g. Meet the cconsumers needs at local and regional and international markets
- h. Strengthening the Mediterranean position at the world level through a collective effort in building a Mediterranean identity of the organic products
- i. Improve the cooperation between med countries
- j. Facilitate access to foreign investors and improve the business partnership
- k. Regional complementarities between the Mediterranean countries

#### Round 2: Sources

Three main sources for data collection were identified

1. The certification bodies;
2. The public and public bodies and;
3. The private sector.

A strong emphasis was put also on the necessity to elaborate a Win-to-win system in order to encourage the private sector for sharing the data with public institution particularly on cost and marketing issues. To make sure that data collection will embraces the whole chain, the participants expressed the concern of distinguishing three components in the system that will be elaborated: the farm level, the market level and the cost of inputs level.

#### Round 3: System

Regarding the systems itself, the main recommendations were:

1. Data collection should be carried out by an inter-ministerial body with representatives from all public and semi public institutions and this body should be under a legal framework;
2. At the regional level, data collection and processing (Mediterranean) should be undertaken by a task force to be created and run by the IAM Bari. The task force job would be to consult and analyses current experiences, elaborate a more appropriate questionnaire, perform data analysis and processing, collect feedback from MOAN members and deliver a yearly report on the situation of organic agriculture in the Mediterranean basin;
3. The system should set a list of minimum variables that has to be shared between countries;

4. the system should be compatible to international standards and if possible harmonized through codification systems;  
Data regarding the organic sector should be always presented and analyzed with reference to conventional data.

#### **Annex 4: The Turkish National Network**

This second MOAN meeting ended up with the launching of the Turkish national organic network formed of six (6) delegates representatives of:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, General director for agricultural production: Müfiz Enjiz
- The Bornova plant protection research Institute: Ozlem Altindisli
- The Provincial Director of Agriculture in Izmir: Kemal Yilmaz
- The ETO: Emel Oztruk
- The Edge University: Ahmet Altindisli
- The Inspection and Certification Bodies: Tamer Sever
- The Exporters Union: Ece