

## Press release

### **Guidelines for successful organic action plan development and evaluation welcomed in Brussels**

**(Frick, July 9, 2008) The European Commission and EU member states welcome the new manual and toolbox for the development, implementation and evaluation of organic food and farming action plans.**

The new practical manual and evaluation toolbox designed to support the European and national action plans for organic food and farming were presented to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming in Brussels on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and discussed with the EU member state delegates and the European Commission's Organic Farming Unit.

Mme Mariane Monod, representative of the French Ministry of Agriculture, which is currently redeveloping its support for organic farming, said: "such an evaluation toolbox and support manual is very useful and will help us in the further process of designing and refining policy measures for Organic Food and Farming in France".

The manual and toolbox are the main outputs of the EU-funded ORGAP project, which was set up to help evaluate the EU action plan for organic food and farming. The manual was produced as a practical guide to inspire the people, organisations and institutions involved, or with an interest in the organic food and farming sector, to engage in the initiation, implementation, revision and renewal of regional, national, and European Organic Action Plans.

Otto Schmid from the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, who co-ordinated the project, said: "The project partnership has worked for three years, to understand the success factors involved in action plans, building on experiences gained in previous research, and from engagement with stakeholders involved in national action plans. The manual with its "Golden Rules" for the successful development, monitoring and evaluation of action plans represents a valuable

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resource for all those engaged in this type of work. We acknowledge very much the financial support of the European Commission under the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme for this project.”

The Organic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox (ORGAPET), which accompanies the manual and is also available on-line, provides an in-depth guide to the steps that need to be taken, and the issues that need to be addressed, in evaluation organic action plans. The toolbox proposes a range of indicators that can be used to cover the many different objectives of action plans, and considers how stakeholder involvement can be encouraged and evaluated.

Nic Lampkin from Aberystwyth University, who led the work on the development of the toolbox, said: “Policy evaluation is now well-established as a tool to ensure more effective policies and actions by governments. We have been able to link specific perspectives on organic food and farming and organic action plans to the policy evaluation frameworks used by the Commission and by EU member states, to create what we hope will prove a useful tool to aid development of better policies for organic food and farming in Europe.”

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### Contact

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### Order /Download the manual

This manual and the evaluation toolbox can be ordered from the FiBL shop at [www.fibl.org/english/shop/article/hb-1507-organic-action-plans.html](http://www.fibl.org/english/shop/article/hb-1507-organic-action-plans.html).

The toolbox and the manual can be downloaded from the project website: [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org).

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### Background / The ORGAP project

The European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming was launched by the European Commission in 2004. For details, see [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/plan/index_en.htm)

Many European countries have developed national or regional Organic Action Plans to promote and support organic agriculture. Details can be found on the ORGAP website: [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org).

The EU-funded ORGAP project, "European Action Plan of Organic Food and Farming - Development of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture" ([www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)) was started in 2005 and completed this year. The background research leading to the development of the manual and toolbox included reviews of the content and evaluations of national actions plans, workshops with stakeholders to identify relevant issues and indicators for evaluation, and the testing of the toolbox in the context of the EU organic action plan.

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### **Project partners**

The partners involved in the ORGAP project were:

- > Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Switzerland
- > Aberystwyth University, Institute of Rural Sciences, Wales
- > University of Hohenheim, Department of Farm Economics, Germany
- > University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Department of Political Science and Public Management, Denmark
- > Polytechnic University of Marche (DIIGA), Italy
- > IFOAM EU-Group, Brussels, Belgium
- > Institute for Sustainable Development, Slovenia
- > Research Institute of Agricultural Economics (VÚZE), Czech Republic
- > Agricultural and Rural Development Department, Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI), The Netherlands
- > Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica (SEAE), Spain

This press release on the internet

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