

Working Group on Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact (WG01)

Towards Sustainable Banana Production

World Banana Forum

Summary of the First Meeting of WG01 in Antwerp/Belgium, July 28 & 29, 2010

This summary is based on the detailed minutes taken at the meeting and the exhibits used, which are available at the WG01 web-site:

<https://sites.google.com/site/wbftest/working-space-of-wg01>

In the WBF website you can also find a reference to the latest activities related to our work:

<http://www.fao.org/economic/worldbananaforum/wbf-working-groups/wg01/en/>

Objectives of the meeting

- Definition of Sustainable Banana Production
- State the issues
- Description of ideal situation per issue
- Identification of main problems; Gap between ideal and reality
- Ideas for pilot projects

Meeting organization and preparation

The meeting was planned and coordinated by members of the core group.

The scope of the Working Group: It had previously been agreed to limit the scope of the task to manageable proportions, by focussing

- on production-related issues up to and including the FOB stage
- on long-term issues affecting future generations

Furthermore, the WBF founding meeting had agreed to exclude trade policies and regulations from the WBF agenda and WG topics, since other organizations are charged with this task.

Over twenty contributions were received in advance, in response to our questionnaire.

A pre-meeting took place in Ecuador in the offices of Urocal, Machala, 16 July 2010. The report of this meeting was a valuable contribution to the event in Antwerp.

The Antwerp event was attended by 15 participants representing banana growing regions in Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Large companies and family farms, civil society organizations, research bodies, and governmental organizations participated (see List of Participants below).

During the opening session, a presentation was shown to introduce new participants to the World Banana Forum and WG01. The report on the Ecuador pre-meeting was discussed.

Definition of Sustainable Banana Production (SBP)

21 proposals were provided in advance. Of these, the great majority included social, environmental and economic elements. Participants took the view that at this stage it would be difficult to agree on a definition of SBP. The group would return to the topic at the end of the meeting and at subsequent meetings.

Key Issues concerning SBP

22 contributions were received, with issues divided into the categories of:

- People and Communities
- Farming and Production
- Environment
- Economics, Value and Business
- Other

A lively discussion reviewed and in some cases changed this classification. A new sub-section focusing explicitly on 'child labour and migrant workers' was created under the section 'People and communities' to highlight the importance of this issue.

Which issues fall under the scope of WG01?

- It was agreed that ALL issues listed under the sections on 'Farming & Production' and 'Environment' would be dealt with directly by WG01.
- Many issues listed under 'People and Communities' will be naturally addressed by WG03 (labour rights & workplace issues) and issues listed under 'Economics, Value and Business' will normally be dealt with by WG02 (fair distribution of value).
- Some social, economic and other issues, which do not fall into the scope of other working groups have been identified and will be included in the scope of this WG01.
- 'Alerts' will be sent to other working groups to ensure that certain issues are addressed.
- Since the tasks of WG01 and WG05 (Focusing on Agrochemical Use) are complementary, it was discussed that these WGs might merge or establish a mechanism of cooperation, depending on the development of WG05.
- Incentives for SBP: This generated a lively discussion - an important issue for the group to consider in the future.

Establishing priorities

The group selected the issues which merit the highest priority. The following list emerged without any ranking, from a review of the 'ideal situations' and 'gaps' provided by the contributors:

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| ➤ Research & Development | ➤ Resource Management |
| ➤ Training and Education | ○ Water |
| ➤ Cooperation / Multi-stakeholder participation | ○ Soil |
| ➤ Chemicals / Crop Protection Products | ○ Materials & Waste |
| ➤ Biodiversity and Ecosystems' Health | ○ Energy and emissions |
| ➤ Land Use | ➤ Best Practice |
| ➤ Diversification of Crops | ○ Environmental Management System |

These issues were further examined for their importance and feasibility, with the following scores (here ranked by importance using the meeting data), based on personal views and discussion at the meeting:

Issue	Importance	Feasibility
Resource Management	4.5	3.5
Best Practice	4.2	3.0
Chemicals / Crop Protection	4.1	3.0
Biodiversity and Ecosystems' Health	4.1	2.5
Training and Education	3.9	3.6
R&D	3.9	3.0
Cooperation / Multistakeholder Participation	3.5	3.0
Knowledge Management	3.3	3.5
Land Use	3.0	2.8
Diversification of Crops	2.8	2.7

This list will be a useful starting point for future meetings.

Defining SBP

Having reflected on the issues, the group returned to this topic and generated an expanded list of key concepts for consideration by future meetings. The discussion also highlighted an area without consensus: Should legal compliance be a key concept of SBP?

Next Steps, Decisions, Questions

- Discussion of pilot projects was postponed
- Sébastien Zanoletti of UGPBAN will join WG01's Core Group. Charles de Wulf will be Sébastien's alternate. Welcome both!
- A report to the WBF and the other WGs, in order to get feedback from a broader audience, especially from local producers and federations of producers.
- Can the WBF and this WG be linked to important events like the next ACORBAT conference?
- Should the list of priorities distinguish between means and goals?
- Concerning the WG's objective to 'compile and exchange information and knowledge', there are sources (e.g. CIRAD) and users (e.g. Farmcoop, Philippines) who could benefit from diffusion of good practice and research results. How to make this happen?
- Also, for the next meeting, the group agreed that it will be essential to have a special focus on 'best practices'. The group could organize an e-conference or send a questionnaire in advance of the next meeting, in order to identify sources of best practices.

Next meeting

- Sylvain and Sébastien volunteered to take the lead for the organization of event # 2. Iain and the Secretariat will provide support as well.
- The meeting will be timed close to the date (late November/early December) of the Steering Committee and Cross WG meeting to facilitate participation.

Conclusions:

- A very diverse group met to handle a complex subject.
- The discussions were discussed in a cordial atmosphere, always seeking to identify the common denominator, but not avoiding difficult topics.
- The objectives of the meeting were mostly (but not all) achieved, providing a useful starting point for the next stage.
- The contributions from so many knowledgeable people provided in advance were an important foundation we could build on.
- Our warmest thanks to our contributors, to Victor and the FAO secretariat, to those who met in Machala, and to all who came from near and far to meet in Antwerp!

GJ for the Core Group
Sept 16/2010

Members of the core group:

Jeroen Kroezen	(SOLIDARIDAD)
Sylvain Cuperlier	(DOLE), alternate Roberto Vega
George Jaksch	(CHIQUITA), alternate Francois Tasmowski
Inge Van den Bergh	(BIOVERSITY/PROMUSA)
Iain Farquhar	(BANANA LINK)
Karomo Brown	(WINFA)
Sébastien Zanoletti	(UGPBAN) – new member, alternate Charles de Wulf

Annex I

List of Participants in the meeting and pictures of the event:

Core Group:

Dr. Iain Farquhar, Bananalink
 George Jaksch, Chiquita
 Sylvain Cuperlier, Dole
 Francois Tasmowski, Chiquita (alternate)

Secretariat:

Victor Lopez, FAO

Others:

Luc Hellebuyck, President, Eucofel aisbl, Brussels
 Koronado Apuzen, Farm Coop, Philippines
 Charles de Wulf, Consultant, Brussels
 Thierry Lescot, CIRAD, France
 Jon Tugwell, Fyffes, UK
 Jorge Hernandez, UGAP, Canary Islands, Spain
 Paul Jeangille, Conseiller Technique Filière Bananière (U.E.), Cameroun
 Sébastien Zanoletti, Directeur Innovation et Développement Durable, UGPBAN, Guadeloupe & Martinique
 Diana Montero Melis, Policy Officer, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, European Commission
 Esther Dominguez Palarea, ASPROCAN (Canary Islands Growers' Association), Spain

Pictures:

The event in Antwerp was well attended. Thanks to everyone!