Lessons learnt from ORGAP project – planning, implementation and evaluation of Action Plans for Organic Food and Farming

Schmid O., Stolz H., Stolze M., Lampkin, N., Jeffreys, I., Dabbert, S., Eichert, C., Michelsen, J., Zanoli, R., Vairo, D., Gonzalvez, V.

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Introduction


> Half of the European Countries have in recent years elaborated and implemented such Action Plans. More information see [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)

> The European Commission released in June 2004 the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming (EU-OAP)

> In May 2005 the EU funded 3-year research project with the acronym ORGAP started.

> In the project 10 partners from 9 countries (CH, UK, DE, IT, DK, SI, CZ, NL, ES) participated, as well as IFOAM EU Regional group.
The ORGAP Project - methodology

- The overall objective of this project was to give scientific support to the implementation of the EU-OAP by the development of an evaluation toolbox (ORGAPET).

- ORGAPET was tested in eight countries, which had national Organic Action Plans.

- National organic action plans as well as the EU Organic Action Plan were analysed.

- With stakeholder workshops areas of synergies and of conflict between national and EU-OAP were identified.

- Finally a policy analysis and recommendations, including a practical OAP resource manual for the organic farming sector were made.
ORGAPET – The Organic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox on CD-Rom and on website
Why Organic Action Plans?

> For policy makers, the challenge is to support a multi-functional organic farming systems approach on national and European level, which meet the dual role of organic farming:

  > Organic land and farm management – providing public goods/benefits
  > Organic food market – responding directly to consumer demand

> Need to balance supply-push policies with more market-focused demand-pull policies – neither distort the market mechanisms nor the organic value perspective.

> An integrated approach is required and this has been more or less achieved through the formulation of Organic Action Plans.
Organic Action plans – tailored packages of policy measures

> Organic farming action plans normally include **targets for adoption** (typically 5-10% by 2000/2005 or 10-20% by 2010).

> They contain a **combination of specific measures** such as:
   a. Direct support through agri-environment/rural development programmes.
   b. Marketing and processing support.
   c. Producer information initiatives.
   d. Public procurement initiatives.
   e. Consumer education/promotion and
   f. infrastructure support.

> The **more elaborated plans contain evaluations** of the current situation and specific recommendations to address issues identified.
Overview of national and regional Organic Action Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General information</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>CZ</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>ENG</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>NL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bottom-up initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targets: OF-area % Target year:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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✓ = yes, (✓) = restricted, - = no
Organic action plans - differences

> Variation with regard to elaboration process, targets, objectives and emphasis of measures on certain areas – due to national/regional context.

> Large set of measures included in most action plans, however different levels and preciseness.

> OAPs of Andalusia, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Denmark broad portfolio of areas and measures.

> Dutch, Italian and English OAPs put main focus at market development and consumer information.

> German Federal Organic Farming Scheme: priority to consumer information/education as well as to the support of applied research for the organic sector.
Policy cycles to be considered in Organic Action Plans

> Policy development involves a series of linked phases or stages following a “policy cycle”.

> Although this is a theoretical model as all stages may be intermingled, an awareness of the policy cycle can help inform actors in the policy process as to where to direct their attention and efforts.

Key elements to consider for OAP policy design

> The **characteristics of the process** for setting the agenda of the policy making process, in particular the definition of the specific issues/problems leading to the policy initiative, if any.

> The **extent of prior policy initiatives** in support of organic food and farming (if any) should be taken into account - including the outcome of completed evaluations.

> The **findings of status-quo analysis** (if any) of the organic food and farming sector and their needs. => Precursor to the definition of objectives.

> **Summary of the programme content and relevant regulatory (legislative) framework** such as new EU Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007.
Key elements to consider for OAP policy formulation

> **Setting clear and specific object** which should be ‘SMART’ (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) but also take into account of the complex systems and multiple objectives inherent to the organic farming system. These should be differentiated in global objectives, sector level objectives and societal objectives.

> **Definition of the motivations and mechanisms** of the policy objectives and measures (the ‘programme theory’) and their relevance to solving the original problem.

> **An assessment of the relevant alternative** (complementary or exclusive) **policy options** to be implemented.
Key elements to consider for OAP policy formulation II

> An analysis of the conflicts and synergies (coherence) of possible policy measures and risk of failure, including due attention to the different stakeholders views (e.g. ethical value orientation versus purely market orientation) – results may imply adjustments of objectives and policy measures.

> Indicators should be chosen that are relevant to decision-makers. Developed by defining and clustering impact statements in a participatory process, closely linked to the goals and objectives of stakeholders. They need to be described and possibly quantified (depending from data availability and benefits gained from the data).

> Ensure that monitoring and evaluation issues are addressed appropriately from the outset and are fully integrated into programme planning and management.
Key elements to consider for OAP policy implementation

> **Definition of the institution(s) responsible** for the implementation of the Action Plan in terms of their **comprehension, willingness and capabilities** regarding the agreed policy objectives.

> **Allocation of a separate budget and staff resources** for the implementation of the Action Plan.

> **Understanding the specific administrative issues/constraints** which may affect implementation.

> **Finding solutions for public-private partnership** for effective implementation with all involved stakeholders.
Key elements to consider for OAP policy evaluation

> Use both a generally accepted evaluation standard but also develop specific indicators (standards) appropriate to the national Action Plan; ORGAPET provides a procedure for selection of indicators and examples.

> Clearly differentiate between facts and areas more open for interpretation through inclusion of stakeholders. Ensure sufficient data availability and resources for data collection.

> Review the main actors who were involved in decision making and implementation.

> Consider the situation that might have existed if the Action Plan or other policies had not been implemented (‘counterfactual’ analysis).

> Evaluate whether the Action Plan was relevant to the original problem, if no longer relevant - review the factors that have changed.
Particularities for stakeholder involvement in OAP’s I

- Three perspectives are relevant when identifying stakeholders that should be involved in developing Organic Action Plans.
  - the values of organic food and farming
  - the market perspective, and
  - the public goods perspective

- It is essential that politicians and policy makers find effective ways to engage with all of the relevant stakeholders, both inside and outside the sector to ensure that the priorities for development are clearly identified and that the policy measures can be effectively met.
Particularities for stakeholder involvement in OAP‘s II

> Involvement on a permanent or temporary/ad hoc basis.

> Stakeholder involvement thus demands careful preparations and sufficient time of consultation with stakeholders.

> Stakeholder involvement is successful if it uses several participatory methods and runs throughout all stages of the policy process.

> From the preliminary analysis of existing Organic Action Plans, in some cases involvement was limited to certain phases/stages of the process only, which was one of the causes for implementation problems.

Photo: UHO Stuttgart: Budget exercise with stakeholders – EU CEE-OFP, Brussels
Discussion and conclusions

> Organic action plans provide a mechanism for an integrated and balanced policy with strong link to the new Rural Development Plans with their potential for exploiting cross-axis synergies.

> While the EU Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming is focussed on the revision of the EU Reg. 2092/91 in the first place, there is the need for a new focus on mainstreaming Organic Farming in the EC.

> In the longer term, a new EU-OAP might be needed to deliver the key environmental and sustainability goals.

> On national level it would be desirable that in the future Organic Action Plans focus more on capacity building, more support for information campaigns for consumers and other actors and public-private partnerships in market driven approaches.
For further information:  www.orgap.org

> A resource manual for the organic food and farming sector is available.

> This manual includes a CD Rom with ORGAPET – the evaluation toolbox with checklists and many background documents.

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