International Standard

ISO 18716

Professional farmer organization — Guidance

Organisation professionnelle agricole — Lignes directrices

First edition
2024-09

Reference number
ISO 18716:2024(en)

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Published in Switzerland

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*.

This first edition cancels and replaces ISO/IWA 29:2019, which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— the Introduction has been updated to further clarify the background and purpose of the document;

— Clause 1 has been extended to further elaborate on the farmer organizations the document is applicable to;

— Clause 3 has been updated;

— Clause 4 has been updated to further elaborate technical elements;

— Clause 5 has been incorporated into Clause 4;

— Annex A has been extended.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

Farmer organizations can play an important role in agricultural development and in farmers' well-being by, for example, enabling members to improve agricultural and environmental management practices, increase yields and productivity, access better markets, gain exposure to model farmers, access affordable financing, and engage with other key business partners. This can increase the creativity, innovation, socio-economic inclusion, effectiveness and profitability of farmer organizations and their stakeholders.

There are numerous stakeholders with an interest in the professionalization of farmer organizations, including, but not limited to, governments, financial institutions, value chain actors (e.g. suppliers, buyers, aggregators, transporters), business development service providers, international development and non-governmental organizations, and the farmers themselves. Each of these actors can have their own expectations, tools and approaches. For decades, this has led to fragmentation, redundancy and limited efficiency in the provision of services to and by farmer organizations. For example, it is not uncommon to find farmer organizations that have received the same training many times, and yet are unable to demonstrate the clear progress toward professionalization that can help them access more or better markets, financing and enhanced benefits for their members.

The purpose of this document is to establish common guidance and best practices that describe a professional farmer organization. The guidance can be used to develop more harmonized and efficient farmer organizations. This facilitates different stakeholders to more effectively align in their support for farmer organizations and for farmer organizations to demonstrate professionalism in a universally understood way. The guidance is based on the premise that the more professionally a farmer organization operates, the better it will engage with its stakeholders (e.g. members, clients, business partners) and the more likely it is to have better business opportunities and greater sustainability. Figure 1 illustrates how establishing common global guidance can lead to improved business performance.



Figure 1 — From common global guidance to improved business performance

Organizational development is a process of continuous learning and improvement. It is not expected that all farmer organizations must meet every criterion described in this document. Rather, this guidance is intended to build a common vision of professionalism that can be used as a tool to inform and support different actors, including farmer organizations and the business development service providers, investors, funders, partners and others that work with them, to increase the professionalism of farmer organizations, leading to improved performance and value for members.

The guidance may be applied in a range of ways, including, but not limited to:

— supporting farmer organization members and staff (where applicable) to supervise and hold their organization and leadership accountable, and guiding staff to execute their day-to-day responsibilities;

— building confidence of buyers, suppliers, investors and others doing business with farmer organizations;

— directing and harmonizing the expectations and actions of providers of training, assessment, advisory, and other organizational and business development services for better efficiency and effectiveness;

— aligning the vision and interventions of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, government, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, service providers, donors, investors and capacity builders in their efforts to professionalize farmer organizations;

— encouraging active engagement with broader stakeholders.

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Professional farmer organization — Guidance

1 Scope

This document gives guidance on the characteristics and best practices of a professional farmer organization.

This document is applicable to commercially oriented farmer organizations. It does not apply to purely socially oriented farmer organizations or individual farmers. It provides a common standard of professionalism for commercially oriented farmer organizations, which can serve as guidance to inform, harmonize, and complement existing and future organizational development and assessment processes.

This document is applicable to large and small farmer organizations, without regard to the number of members, volume of business, output or capital investment, nor to the specific crop or product. It can also be applicable, when adapted, for very small or nascent organizations, for specific or differentiated products or for markets with special requirements.

It does not address every capacity or aspect of professionalism that can be of importance to a specific customer or market, nor imply the need for uniformity in organizational type or structure.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
farmer organization
cooperative
cooperative union
producer organization
producer association
farm marketing association
formal voluntary entity formed by or with farmers for business and/or other purposes, which can take any legal form and which provides services/benefits for its members, including, but not limited to, production, irrigation, processing and marketing of agricultural products (e.g. crops, livestock, animal products, forest products, aquaculture products, other member products), development and operation of rural folk crafts and products, leisure agriculture and rural tourism resources

Note 1 to entry: Farmers include small scale farmers, people who lease the land they use for agricultural purposes and farm workers.

Note 2 to entry: Farmer organizations can be known by different names in different countries.

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