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Professional farmer organization — Guidelines

Organisation professionnelle agricole — Lignes directrices

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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 documents 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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Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

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.

International Workshop Agreement IWA 29 was approved at a workshop hosted by the Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), in association with the Agribusiness Market Ecosystem Alliance (AMEA), held in Delft, Netherlands, in November 2018.

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

The purpose of this document is to establish common guidelines for professional farmer organizations, in order to improve business performance. This document provides guidelines on improving the capabilities of professional farmer organizations in different areas and thereby their level of professionalism in general. More professional farmer organizations are more likely to have better business opportunities and to perform better for their members and staff, within markets and to have greater sustainability.

Figure 1 illustrates how establishing common global guidelines can lead to improved business performance.

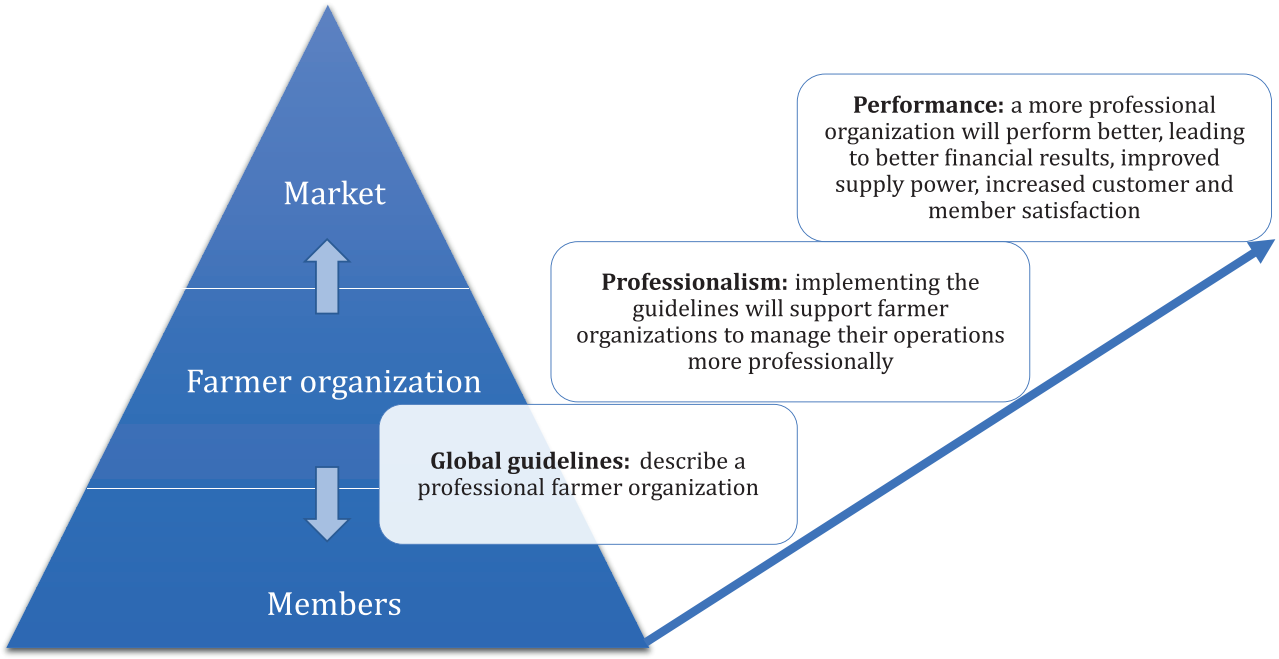

Figure 1 — From common global guidelines to improved business performance

This document is intended to:

— provide guidelines to improve the professionalism of farmer organizations, leading to improved performance and access to finance and markets;

— support members and staff of professional farmer organizations to supervise and hold their organization and leadership accountable;

— increase the understanding and confidence of buyers, suppliers, investors and others doing business with professional farmer organizations;

— give direction to the actions of providers of training, assessment, advisory and other organizational and business development services;

— align the vision and interventions of stakeholders in their effort to professionalize farmer organizations;

— encourage active engagement with broader stakeholders.

This document supports the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focussing on the following specific goals:

— 1. No Poverty;

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— 2. Zero Hunger;

— 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth;

— 12. Responsible Consumption and Production;

— 17. Partnerships for the Goals.

This document is not intended to replace or compete with existing or future certification standards, address every capacity or aspect of professionalism that can be of importance to a specific customer or market, or imply the need for uniformity in organizational type or structure.

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Professional farmer organization — Guidelines

1 Scope

This document provides guidelines for the characteristics of a professional farmer organization. It is intended to be relevant for large and small professional farmer organizations, without regard to the specific crop or product. The implementation and interpretation of this document can be adapted for very small or nascent organizations, for specific or differentiated products, or for markets with special requirements.

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 terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

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

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

3.1
farmer organization
formal voluntary entity formed by 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, processing and marketing of crops, livestock and animal products, forest products, fish and aquaculture products

Note 1 to entry: Farmers include landless farmworkers.

3.2
general assembly meeting
meeting of a representation of the members or all the members of an organization, as indicated in its *bylaws* (3.12)

3.3
board
group of people mandated to assume legal responsibility to manage and/or oversee the organization

3.4
supervisory committee
committee normally composed of three members elected by the *general assembly meeting* (3.2) to act as an internal control mechanism on the *board* (3.3) of directors and management, which can assume an advisory role towards the board and which protects the interest of the members

Note 1 to entry: In some countries, the supervisory committee is more financially oriented.

Note 2 to entry: A supervisory committee is sometimes referred to as a supervisory council, a control committee, an audit committee or a supervisory board.

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3.5
quorum
minimum number or percentage of people required to be present in the meeting for votes or decisions to be taken

3.6
special meeting
meeting that happens at any given moment to deal with urgencies and that is not planned

Note 1 to entry: A special meeting is sometimes referred to as an extraordinary meeting.

3.7
member business
business transactions between a farmer and his/her *farmer organization* (3.1)

3.8
member business ratio
ratio that measures *member business* (3.7) done with the organization

3.9
member equity accounts
means to administer capital and resources invested by the members of a professional *farmer organization* (3.1)

3.10
general manager
person who acts in an official capacity to manage the day-to-day business of the organization, financial management and to carry out the organization's policies

Note 1 to entry: The manager reports to the *board* (3.3).

3.11
officer
person appointed, elected or nominated by the *board* (3.3) of directors or membership of the professional *farmer organization* (3.1) [depending on the organization's *bylaws* (3.12)], who acts in an official capacity to oversee and/or manage the day-to-day business of the organization and to carry out the organization's policies

EXAMPLE President; director; secretary; treasurer.

3.12
bylaws
rules documenting how the organization is governed and how the collective action of members is regulated

Note 1 to entry: Bylaws are sometimes referred to as a constitution or a membership agreement.

4 Key performance areas and characteristics of a professional farmer organization

Professional farmer organizations should demonstrate the characteristics described in this document, which are organized by key performance areas. These characteristics are intended to be specific to the level of performance expected, but expansive enough to apply to many forms of professional farmer organizations in varying value chains and operating environments.

5 Organization purpose and governance practices

A mission or purpose statement of the professional farmer organization should be documented. This is used to provide guidelines for organizational planning, priorities and decision-making.

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