The East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS).

A tool to overcome constraints and increase trade in organic product from East Africa

By:
Musa. K. Muwanga

Chief Executive Officer,
National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU)
Summary

- Current Status of the Organic sector in Africa
- Challenges/Opportunities
- The Process and development of the EAOPS
Current Status of the Organic sector in Uganda

- Organic Agriculture (OA) is among the fastest growing subsectors in Africa
- There has been increasing interest and involvement from the private sector mainly as a result of unfolding market opportunities in International markets.
  - Suitability and compatibility to smallholder farming systems
    - Closer to and utilizes most traditional farming practices
    - Relatively low risk, given production and resource constraints
    - Low market entry barriers compared to conventional fruits and vegetable exports
  - Increasing global demand for organic products and associated premium prices, contributing to improved household incomes in the rural communities
Taking an example of a country like Uganda

- Over 200,000 certified organic farmers participating in export chains
- 250,000 ha of certified land
- 44 certified export companies
- Volume of exports growing at an average of 55% in the past 2 years
- Value of exports stood at Euros 30 Million by end of July 2010
Challenges/opportunities

- Demand from the market in excess of supply (for some products up to 10 times)
- Increasing demand for value added organic products (dried fruits, Pulp, Juices, textiles, coffee, spices, nuts, semi processed vegetables)
- Most companies engaged in export are SME, with limited capital to invest in up-scaling
- Processing infrastructure and quality systems (cool chain) inadequate to match the volume of demand coming from the market
Promotion and Branding efforts of African organic products insufficient

Volumes up-scaling possible, but requires investment in organization of farmers into groups/association, and achieving groups certification

Certification process and costs is still a limiting factor for many qualifying smallholder farmers (current major market standards; EU, USA are in many areas not compatible to local realities)
Access to Investment and trade finance is still one of the biggest obstacle for most SME export companies and cooperatives

Funding Research into Organic friendly technologies to boost organic production is still limited
Critical Issues for Further Development of the sector

- Strengthen the institutional capacity for the Organic movements to lead and coordinate all actors along the entire chain
- Direct interventions to bottlenecks along entire organic value chains (Value chain approach), with focus to both the export and local/regional markets
- Strategic focus on research into organic and environmentally friendly technologies and solutions
- Speedy establishment of the organic policy support framework for further growth in organic production and trade within Africa. (The AU has taken the
Process and Development

- Process of development of the EAOPS was a public-private partnership
- Process started with the establishment of the a Regional Standard Technical Working Group (RSTWG) Composed of a cross-section of stakeholders
  - 5 representatives from the Government National Bureau of Standards (NBSs) Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda Rwanda and Burundi.
  - 3 from certification bodies,
  - 3 from National Organic Agricultural Movements (NOAMs)
  - 1 from the East African Business Council
  - Facilitators from IFOAM and UNCTAD
- Intensive consultation process
The Regional Standards Technical Working Group – the facilitators of the East African Organic Standard
Scope

- Standards covers;
  - General requirements for all organic production
  - Crop production
  - Animal husbandry
  - Bee-keeping
  - Wild collection
  - Handling, storage and processing
  - Labelling
  - Lists for inputs in agriculture and food processing
Process

- Process Started with Establishment of the RSTWG-September 2005
- Followed by developing a Framework of the standard.
- 1\textsuperscript{st} RSTWG meeting - Oct 05 to compare stds
- Drafting Standards commenced- inputs from 2\textsuperscript{nd} RSTWG meeting in March 06
- National consultative meetings were conducted throughout the 5 east african countries for comments in May 06
- 3rd RSTWG meeting in May to comment on the 1st Draft.
- Wider Stakeholders consultation undertaken on 2nd Draft
- National consultative meetings were again conducted throughout the east african countries in September 2006
- “Field Testing” was carried out from Nov 27 - Dec 1 2006
- Comparison with International stds (Codex & IFOAM)
- “International” Forum Dec 2006
- 4th RSTWG in December 2006 produced 3rd DRAFT
- Final technical work by email, submitted to the secretariat for the East African Standards (which is the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) 15 January 2007
- KEBS submitted Standard document to the Committee responsible for standards in the East African Community (EASTSC)
- The EASTSC approved the document in February
- The EAC Council approved the standard in April 2007 and was immediately Gazetted as an East African Community Standard: EAS 456:2007
Next Stages

- Development of the Inspection and certification system - work has been started through the OSEA project
- New Areas to be introduced e.g. Sustainable fisheries, Aquaculture etc,
- Equivalence discussions with other standards in the major markets for East African Organic products (mainly EU, USA)
Thank you for your attention

mkmuwanga@nogamu.org.ug
www.nogamu.org.ug