



Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change

AIMS and Objectives

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Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change
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Considering that

- a. Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing nations, governments, business and citizens over future decades;
- b. Climate change directly influences food production and will act as a multiplier of existing threats to food security and malnutrition;
- c. Smallholders in rural areas will be most vulnerable to this change;
- d. Agriculture is estimated to account for 10-12%¹ of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and is responsible for 47% and 58% of total anthropogenic emissions of CH₄ and N₂O, respectively²;
- e. The recent "Health Check of the CAP³" of the EU has identified climate change as one of the new challenges for agriculture;
- f. Organic agriculture aiming at producing food has a huge potential to mitigate climate change through soil carbon sequestration, reduced GHG emissions and sustainable use of natural resources⁴;
- g. This mitigation potential is system immanent to organic farming as are efficient resource use (water, nutrients), food security and ecosystem services;
- h. Climate change should influence consumer behaviour and climate-friendly practices must be adopted not only by farmers but also by food processors and retailers;
- i. There are still significant uncertainties around evaluation of GHG emissions and carbon sequestration related to natural processes;
- j. There is a potential for improvement within organic production and processing, organic food and organic supply chains;
- k. There is a comparative advantage in organic farming systems.

¹ Smith et al. (2007): Agriculture. In Climate Change (2007): Mitigation. Contribution of the Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

² Ibidem.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index_en.htm

⁴ use of organic and avoidance of chemical fertilizers; targeted fertilization; avoidance of bare fallows (cover crops, catch crops, green manure); use of composted organic matter; recycling of crop residues (mulching, including reduced tillage and avoidance of burning); crop rotations; use of trees and perennials; integrated animal and crop farms and reduced livestock numbers; improved grassland management and fodder supply; improved manure management; increased longevity of dairy animals;



THE PROPONENT ORGANISATIONS HAVE AGREED ON

the establishment of a Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change

The Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change (RTOACC) has as its aims to:

- Promote the potential of organic farming to mitigate climate change;
- Promote the potential of organic farming as a climate change adaptation strategy;
- Promote innovation, research, standard setting, awareness building about the advantage of organic farming systems;
- Initiate, support and facilitate the research on organic agriculture and climate change;
- Identify viable ways of adaptation to the impacts of climate change;
- Develop and implement services that support smallholders;
- Advise the international community on organic agriculture and climate change issues, with a view to initiate policy change to wider adoption and support of organic agriculture;
- Support the RTOACC member organisations as well as other governmental and non-governmental organisations in developing and fully implementing policies on climate change;
- Advise in the development of climate-related provisions in international standards;
- Initiate and support the development of a methodology to enable a reliable quantification and certification of GHG emissions and carbon sequestration at the various stages of the production process, and the identification of potential mitigation measures;
- Support management practices and standard development issues that look at improving organic standards from a climate change perspective.

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The Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change is a multi stakeholder initiative

The RTOACC implements transparent, fair and participatory governance. New members agree to support organic agriculture, the organic movement and its potential to mitigate climate change, in line with what is mentioned in the considerations and aims above. Members promote and communicate this commitment throughout their own organisation. As per 'Criteria of Collaboration and Admission', RTOACC shall be composed of two categories of members: Participating Members representing organisations and Observing Members (individuals) The RTOACC defines the process for admission and is open for new Participating Members from the following sectors

- Associations in the organic sector, standard-setting organisations and certification bodies operating in organic agriculture;
- Environmental organisations;
- Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs);
- Organisation involved in the management of the voluntary offset mechanisms and the CDM;
- Research organisations;
- Funding Organisations.

The RTOACC should aim to ensure the representation from the global south.



IN PARTICULAR, THE ROUND TABLE ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE SHALL

Art. 1 – Initiate and facilitate Research on organic agriculture and climate change

Therefore, the RTOACC will support

- basic and applied research on assessment and dissemination of state of the art knowledge on the mitigation and adaptation potential of Organic Agriculture;
- compilation of consistent data for organic agriculture as a basis for the assessment of the climate change impact of organic agriculture;
- identification of the research gaps in this context, supporting and commissioning research to fill those.

Art. 2 – Adopt, further develop and disseminate concepts and methodological frameworks for measuring GHG mitigation and carbon sequestration in organic agriculture

The RTOACC adopts, further develops and disseminates concepts and methodological frameworks for measuring and accounting the GHG mitigation and carbon sequestration in organic agriculture worldwide.

The positive effects of organic agriculture on climate change, once calculated through the adoption of proper tools, should be valorised within the existing offset voluntary or mandated initiatives. To do so, the Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change will identify the best partners to co-operate with.

Art. 3 – Provide information for improving awareness and technical knowledge on climate change

The RTOACC intends to develop information on organic agriculture and climate change i) to be addressed to the organic farming sector, policy makers, farmers and food retailers and ii) to support the RTOACC member organisations as well as other governmental and non-governmental organisations in developing and fully implementing policies on climate change.

The aim is to increase understanding of the potential implications of climate change and of the available opportunities for adopting measures and best practices to address the double challenge of reducing GHG emissions while at the same time adapting to projected impacts of climate change.

Art. 4 – The RTOACC provides support for advocacy concerning the advantage of organic farming in adaptation and mitigation regarding climate change.

The RTOACC intends to support the international community on organic agriculture and climate change issues, with a view to initiate policy change to wider adoption and support of organic agriculture.

Art. 5 – The RTOACC explores possibilities to develop organic standards to a higher level of climate performance.

The RTOACC intends to share results from its own and partner's work to the attention of concerned standard setters. The aim is to allow for organic standards to develop in a direction of better climate performance.



THE PROPONENT ORGANISATIONS

FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation, Italy

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements IFOAM, Germany

Environmental and Ethical Certification Institute ICEA, Italy

Soil Association, UK

KRAV Ekonomisk förening, Sweden

Organic Federation of Australia OFA, Australia

Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, Switzerland

International Centre for Research in Organic Farming Systems ICROFS, Denmark

Rodale Institute, USA