

95

Organic Agriculture Development

SWEDEN JULY 31 – AUGUST 25 2009,
IN THAILAND MARCH 4–17 2010

Invitation

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) offers, as part of its bilateral development assistance, Advanced International Training Programmes of strategic importance to the social and economic development in the participants' countries. The International Training Programmes are specially designed for persons qualified to participate in reform processes of strategic importance on different levels and holds a position in home organisation with mandate to run processes of change. This methodology is based on the assumption that your country wish to carry out changes and are willing to invest own resources to achieve these changes. In the long-term perspective the programmes shall contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity development in the participants' countries.

Training is focused on support to individual or team plans for change. The plan shall be well established in the participant's organisation and is a basic part of the programme concept.

In this brochure you will find information on the specific objectives for this particular programme, its content and structure, and how and when to apply. You will also find an application form.



Anders Nordström
Director General
Sida



Gunnar Rundgren
Chief Executive Office
Grolink

Organic agriculture has proven to be a useful tool in fighting poverty. Research shows that input costs decrease, while yields and incomes rise when converting from traditional low external input farming to organic agriculture. Increased productivity, diversity and conservation of natural resources combined with raised incomes and reduced risks for farmers contributes to improved food security.

Farmers' organizations have an important role to play in extension, training and technical assistance as organic agriculture is highly knowledge intensive and they are crucial in the establishment of control systems that reduce certification costs and ease marketing. Public-private partnerships and an integrated supply chain approach can play an important role in the development of the organic sector. The private sector should be the engine but governments are instrumental in providing enabling legal and institutional environments. Capacity building, research support and long-term political commitment by governments is seen as crucial for sustainable development of organic agriculture.

The training program Organic Agriculture Development aims at providing the skills and knowledge needed for organizations/key persons in the public and private sector working for organic agriculture sector development.

Programme Objectives

The general aim of the program is to create conditions for quantitative as well as qualitative development of organic agriculture in the countries covered by the program.

The objectives of the training are that participants will:

- Gain enough knowledge to become advocates for and active participants in the development of the organic sector in their home country
- Understand the importance of support institutions in the fields of marketing, extension, education and certification, as well as producers' organizations, for the development of organic agriculture
- Be able to actively take part in the development of such institutions
- Become familiar with the available resources and get a network of contacts
- Understand the market conditions for organic products
- Become familiar with development planning and project design
- Be able to plan and implement an organic agriculture development

project in the participant's home country, on a local, regional or national level.

Contents

The main components of the curriculum are:

Organic agriculture production

The concepts and principles of organic agriculture • Practical application of organic agriculture in Sweden, the EU and Asia • Overview of alternative production systems • Data and statistics on organic agriculture in the world • Fertility management – resource cycling, rotation, nutrient balances and pest control

Support structures

Structure of extension service in the EU • Conversion strategies & Case studies • Challenges in conversion and extension in Asia and the EU • Organizing the organic sector

Standards, Certification and Regulation

Standards, Inspection and Certification of organic agriculture • The relation between organic standards and EurepGap, SAI, GAP and ISO • International Norms, Regulations

and Accreditation • Setting up a local certification body

Inspection & certification initiatives in the participants' home countries

Preparing producers for certification • The certification process, re-certification & EU imports

Markets for organic products

The global organic market • Domestic market development • Export market development • Agricultural markets & development opportunities

Miscellaneous

Agricultural policy • Food security and sustainable development • Gender issues related to agriculture • Agriculture and HIV/Aids • Project design and planning tools

Programme Structure

The training consists of individual work, lectures, seminars, group works and study visits. During the course, each participant will work on a development plan for his/her own sector, region or country. The participants shall seek to implement their respective development plans in their home organisations/settings.

The development plan is a way to facilitate the participant's application of acquired knowledge as well as a tool to develop organic agriculture in the home country.

The program is designed for 25 participants to ensure a close working relationship between participants and lecturers. Participants are requested to contribute to the programme by active participation in discussions and group works, to enhance the exchange of ideas and increase the learning for all.

Date and place

The program is divided in four phases as below:

Phase 1 • Preparations for the training; participants collect information on the conditions for and development of organic agriculture in their home countries.

Phase 2 • July 31–August 25, 2009, in Sweden, with lectures, seminars, group works, individual work and study visits.

Phase 3 • Individual work, with feedback from course organisers.

Phase 4 • March 4–17, 2010 in Thailand, with lectures, seminars, group works, individual work and study visits.

Target region:

Asia

Target Group:

In 2009, the program is only open for candidates from Asian countries.

The program is intended for managers, or people in equivalently influential positions, in regional or national government institutions or in the private sector, including NGOs, working with various aspects of agricultural and rural development, such as policy making, regulations, support mechanisms and institutional development. The applicant should have a position which allows him/her to become a key actor and to play an influential role in the development of organic agriculture in the home country. Women are encouraged to apply.

Language requirements

Participants must be fluent in English as it is the language of instruction and communication during the training. Unless the applicant's mother tongue

is English, or English is the official language in the country, the applicant either needs a statement from the employer, stating that English is the applicant's working language, or a certificate proving that the applicant carried out higher academic education with English as the language of instruction. If none of these criteria are met, the applicant must attach an English language certificate stating the applicant's ability to write, speak and read in English, or have the top of page four in the application form filled in. The Swedish Embassy/Consulate does not carry out language tests but may be able to recommend appropriate language institutes for conducting tests.

Participation

Participants are expected to collect information and prepare some background material before coming to Sweden, to participate in all program activities throughout the training in Sweden, to carry out individual work in Phase 3 and to participate in all program activities for the full duration of the training in Thailand.

Due to the character of the programme, family members are not allowed to accompany participants to the programme.

Application process

Closing date for application is February 20, 2009.

Applications submitted after closing date will not be considered.

The application should be made using the special form attached and include a recent photograph as well as the required information and documents. Note that it is necessary to give a functioning e-mail address. Only complete applications will be regarded.

An English language test should be made with an official body in the home country of the applicant, unless the applicant can provide other documentation to support her/his ability according to the requirements on page 3 of the application form.

When necessary, the application should be approved by the official nominating authority in the country.

The application should be submitted to the nearest Swedish Embassy/Consulate. If there is no Swedish Embassy/Consulate in the applicant's country, the application should be submitted directly to Grolink. Selected applicants will be notified by e-mail or fax. Once accepted, the applicant must confirm participation. An invitation letter will be sent out, containing additional information on the programme and the practical arrangements.

The admission will be based on a number of selection criteria, including adequate educational background, practical experience and relevancy of the candidate's position. Consideration will also be given to gender balance and geographical distribution of participants. Selected applicants will be notified by e-mail or fax. Once accepted, the candidate must confirm his/her participation in all four phases of the program.

Cost of Participation

During the training periods in Sweden and Thailand, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will cover all costs for meals and accommodation, as well as all training costs, including lectures, literature, documentation and study visits. This does not include participants' personal expenses.

International travel costs to and from Sweden will not be covered by Sida and each participant must make his/her own international travel arrangements.

For the fourth phase of the training programme, Sida will cover the costs for the international travel to and from Thailand.

Accommodation

Participants will stay in single rooms in middle class hotels. Grolink will seek to see that participants' special dietary needs are met.

Visa

Participants are responsible for obtaining all visas necessary for their journey and training periods in Sweden and Thailand. The visas should be valid for the whole training period

and the visa offices usually require that the passport should be valid for three months longer than the entry visa. Inquires should be directed to the respective Swedish Embassy/Consulate, or other Schengen representation, as soon as possible after acceptance to the programme. Participants visiting other countries on their way to or from Sweden must ensure that correct visas are obtained before leaving the home country, especially for transit through countries outside the Schengen agreement.

The costs for obtaining visas are carried by the participant. For more information, this website offers Swedish visa information: <http://www.migrationsverket.se/english.jsp>

Insurance

All participants are covered by a group insurance during the training periods in Sweden and Thailand. This insurance includes costs for medical care in the event of acute illness or accident. Medical and dental check-ups are not included.

Background

Agriculture development

In the last century, agriculture was developed from more or less exten-

sive subsistence farming to highly intensive mechanised production. Today's agriculture relies heavily on the input of energy and the production has become dependent on chemical pesticides and fertilisers and a narrow range of breeds/varieties. With increasing pressure on farmland world-wide, we face problems such as soil erosion, leaching of minerals, salinisation, increasing pest problems and damage to humans and nature from chemical pesticides. Several recent reports also show that our food has become less nutritious. A shift from high-input and chemically intensive agriculture to a more sustainable form of agriculture is not only desirable, but necessary.

Organic Agriculture

Organic agriculture is a production system striving to work in line with natural ecosystems. It emphasizes local adaptation to climate and natural resources; it uses cover crops, crop rotations, inter-cropping and diversity instead of chemicals. New environmentally friendly production techniques, like biological pest control and thermal weeding, are used as a complement. Organic agriculture is practiced all over the world, both in industrialized and developing coun-

Contact information

Grolink
Torfolk
SE-684 95 Hölje
Sweden

Phone +46 563 723 45
Fax: +46 563 720 66

doa@grolink.se
www.grolink.se

tries, in commercial production and in subsistence farming, as well as in large and small scale production. The market for organic products increases by about ten percent per year and the total market currently exceeds USD 33 billion. According to recent surveys, there is organically certified production on 31 million hectares world wide. Of these, 6.5 million hectares are in the EU, amounting to 3.4 percent of the farm land. In Sweden, 19 percent of all farm land is organic. In many low-income countries, organic agriculture is developing rapidly both for export marketing and for local consumption. Organic agriculture is increasingly seen as a major component in sustainable rural development, and has proven to be relevant for food security.

What is the future demand?

Environmental awareness amongst consumers, producers and policy makers, is rapidly increasing and agriculture of the future will not only have to be sustainable but also provide food of high quality at affordable prices to growing populations. Organic agriculture tries to achieve this.

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



There is not one developed and one underdeveloped world.
There is only one world that is badly developed

Advanced training • Intelligence
Consultancy • Standards development
Project design • Certification development

Grolink
www.grolink.se



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Division for International Training Programmes
SE-105 25 Stockholm Sweden
Phone: +46 (0)8 698 50 00
Fax: +46 (0)8 698 56 15
sida@sida.se, www.sida.se