



**DEVELOPMENT OF A
REGIONAL ORGANIC
AGRICULTURE STANDARD
IN EAST AFRICA 2005-2007**



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**Launching the East African
Organic Standard and Mark**
May 28th to 1st June 2007, Blue Pearl Hotel,
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
ACRONYMS AND TERMS USED	5
ACRONYMS	5
TERMS	5
SCOPE OF THIS REPORT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
BACKGROUND	7
ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA	7
STATUS OF ORGANIC STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION IN EAST AFRICA 2005	9
WHY A REGIONAL STANDARD?	10
DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD IN EAST AFRICA	11
THE STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	11
THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC PRODUCTS STANDARD	14
DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROTOCOLS	
FOR THE VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS	15
DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS	15
DEVELOPING CONSUMER AWARENESS	16
CONSUMER SURVEY	16
EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC MARK	17
DEVELOPMENT OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE EAOPS AND THE EAOM	19
REGIONAL EVENTS	20
ORGANIC STANDARD FORUM 13 DECEMBER 2006, NAIROBI, KENYA	20
EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC CONFERENCE, 28 MAY TO 1 JUNE 2007, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA	20
RELATED ACTIVITIES AND IMPACTS	22
IMPLEMENTATION	23
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	23
CHALLENGES	23
CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNING POINTS	24
ANNEX 1: KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC PRODUCTS STANDARD	26
ANNEX 2: CONTACTS	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East African Community encompasses Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda with a combined population of 120 million, a land area of 1.85 million square kilometres and a combined gross domestic product of \$41 billion.

The stakeholders in East Africa developed a regional organic standard in the period 2005 to 2007. This was facilitated by the IFOAM project Regional Cooperation for Organic Standards and Certification Capacity in East Africa (OSEA) and the UNEP/UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) project Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa.

The East African Organic Products Standard was adopted by the East African Community as an East African standard, which means it became publicly recognized in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. In addition, the National Organic Agriculture Movements of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda established a common organic mark to be used on organic products in the region. Other accomplishments were:

- the development of a joint inspection protocol for verification of compliance with the standard
- concept development for Participatory Guarantee Systems as an alternative way of conformity assessment
- production of information tools and materials and training of media

Both the mark and the standards were launched in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by the prime minister of Tanzania at the East African Organic Conference in May 2007. The launch was attended by more than 250 people, including the Swedish ambassador, the minister of agriculture of Tanzania and the minister of trade of Uganda. The OSEA project has been a real success both in its actual accomplishments and in the general boost it has provided to the sector. It has provided a good foundation for the future development of the organic markets locally, regionally and internationally. It has also provided the organic sector in East Africa with a common platform for international negotiations and recognition. Further, a working regional collaboration has developed on the governmental level, in the form of the East African Community, and between the national organic agriculture movements around market development and the management of the East African Organic Mark. A dialogue has also been established between the government and the private sector on policy.

The experiences in East Africa can provide interesting learning points for other parts of the world. The whole process has been development-oriented. The standard and the mark are mainly seen as market-development activities to further the organic sector. Key words have been facilitation, not control; and inclusion, not exclusion. The consultations about the standards were extensive at all stages of the process, which made the final products both better and more acceptable to all.

ACRONYMS AND TERMS USED

ACRONYMS

CBTF	Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development
EAC	East African Community
EAOM	East African Organic Mark
EAOPS	EAS 456, East African Organic Products Standard
EPOPA	Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa
ICS	internal control systems (see explanation below)
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
ITC	International Trade Center, Geneva
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KOAN	Kenya Organic Agriculture Network
NOAM	National Organic Agriculture Movement (KOAN, NOGAMU and TOAM in the context of this report)
NOGAMU	National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda
OSEA	Organic Standards in East Africa
PGS	participatory guarantee system (see explanation below)
RSTWG	Regional Standards Technical Working Group
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOAM	Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement

TERMS

Group certification and internal control systems: Group certification is a concept developed over the last 10 to 15 years to allow producers to organize themselves in groups with an internal control system, which is then subject to certification by an external body.

Participatory guarantee systems: Participatory guarantee systems (PGS) are systems for certification that emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers. Participatory guarantee systems share a common goal with third-party certification systems in providing a credible guarantee for consumers seeking organic produce. The difference is in approach. As the name suggests, direct participation of farmers and even consumers in the certification process is not only encouraged but may be required. Active participation on the part of the stakeholders results in greater empowerment but also greater responsibility.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What is described here is mainly the accomplishment of the stakeholders in East Africa, in particular the national organic agriculture movements and a number of committed persons from NGOs, business and government.

The development of the regional organic standard was coached by the OSEA project and the CBTF project and both shall have equal credit for the accomplishment. There are also other projects supporting organic in East Africa, particularly the EPOPA programme supported by Sida and the support to various organic projects by Hivos. Without the work already done by them, the project would hardly have been successful.

This report has been written to share experiences with others. It therefore lacks the kind of detail (e.g., details in finances and activities) that is normal for a project report. It is also structured in a more reader-friendly way than project reports normally are. A detailed project report is available on request. It also means that some activities are reported that were not a specific part of the OSEA project but were important for the development.

More information about the project, the complete standards and other documents can be found at <http://www.ifoam.org/partners/projects/osea.html>.

BACKGROUND

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA

The East African Community (EAC) encompasses Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, with a combined population of 120 million, a land area of 1.85 million square kilometres, and a combined gross domestic product of \$41 billion.

In East Africa the development of the organic sector has been an activity mainly driven by the private sector, commercial exporters (particularly in Uganda) and NGOs (especially in Kenya).

Production

The numbers of certified producers and farmland under organic agriculture are increasing:

Kenya	Farmers: 35,000	Farms: 181,500 ha	Companies: 18
Uganda	Farmers: 60,000	Farms: 250,000 ha	Companies: 34
Tanzania	Farmers: 55,000	Farms: 85,000 ha	Companies: 31

In Rwanda there is a handful of organic projects and in Burundi one or two.

More operators are investing in organic agriculture, and the products lines are expanding.

Training and Extension

In Kenya there are around 30 NGOs providing training in organic agriculture. Some of them (e.g., the Kenya Institute for Organic Farming [KIOF]) have already existed for 20 years. There are also a number of NGOs engaged in training in Uganda and Tanzania. Lately, universities have shown some interest:

- Sokoine University, Tanzania has a course in organic agriculture.
- There is a summer school with Makerere University, Uganda.
- Uganda Martyrs University has an organic-agriculture degree course.

Extension work has to a very large extent been done by NGOs and (export) companies. The public extension service has not really been involved in organic agriculture.

Research

There has been very little organic research in the region. Sokoine University has just embarked on a 20-year trial with FIBL (Switzerland). ICIPE in Kenya does applied research for pest control, based on organic-agriculture principles.

Policy

Governments paid little attention to the sector with a few exceptions. For example, the Uganda Export Promotion Board has identified organic products as strategic products and the Uganda Coffee Development Authority has set a target that 10 percent of Ugandan coffee should be organic. However, in recent years, some policy developments have taken place:

- Uganda has opted for a specific policy for organic agriculture. The draft is at an advanced stage.
- In Tanzania, organic agriculture has been included in the National Agriculture Policy which is on review for public comment. It is planned to mainstream organic agriculture in other agriculture policies such as the livestock policy.
- Kenya opted to mainstream organic agriculture in its Nutrition/Agriculture Policy. Later it will be included in other relevant policies. It is also possible that a specific organic policy will be developed.

Market

Most organic products from East Africa are aiming at the export market. Most exports are made by an exporting company that contracts out-growers. But there are a few cooperatives exporting (e.g., KCU and KNCU in Tanzania) as well as a few plantations (tea plantations in Tanzania and Kenya). Among the products for the export market are the following:

- bark cloth
- cashew nuts
- cocoa
- coffee beans
- dried fruits
- essential oils
- fish (sustainable wild fish)
- fresh fruits (bananas, pineapple, passion fruit)
- herbal teas
- herbs
- honey
- instant coffee
- juices
- peanuts
- sesame
- shea nuts
- spices
- vanilla
- vegetables (green beans, etc.)

The main market is the European Union, but exports are also made to the United States as well as to closer markets in the Gulf and South Africa. A few products, such as dried fruits and canned pineapples, are processed.

The East African market for organic products is relatively small but fast-growing. Some supermarkets and green groceries are stocking organic products. There are a few dedicated organic shops and direct marketing schemes (box schemes and farmers' markets) and sales to restaurants, hotels, wholesalers and retailers. Most of the initiatives to develop local/national markets are NGO-supported growers' groups, private companies and businesses, cooperatives, and organized producer groups. Sales are mainly fresh produce. Among the processed products are honey, teas, jams, milk products, dried fruits, mushrooms and oils. Self-claim is the normal form for assurance about the organic quality, but PGS systems and third-party certification also exist.

Certification

There are two organic-certification bodies in Kenya: AfriCert and EnCert. UgoCert is based in Uganda and TanCert in Tanzania. EnCert has a clear focus on certification for the domestic market, while AfriCert is ISO 65 accredited for EurepGap. TanCert and UgoCert are both in the process of accreditation to ISO 65 and the IFOAM norms. TanCert has agreements with IMO and bio.inspecta and UgoCert with IMO and Ceres. Both have been supported by the EPOPA programme, but support is now phasing out and will cease in mid 2008. Certification is also offered by Europe-based certification bodies such as IMO, Ceres, EcoCert, BCS, Soil Association and bio.inspecta.

Apart from third-party certification, the national organic agriculture movements, often in cooperation with NGOs, are implementing guarantee schemes for smallholders along the lines of participatory guarantee systems (PGS).

STATUS OF ORGANIC STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION IN EAST AFRICA 2005

Uganda and Tanzania had already developed private-sector national standards for organic in a nationwide and participatory process. In Kenya, the Kenya Organic Agriculture Network had taken up standards development. The Kenya Bureau of Standards had also got engaged and produced a draft organic standard. In Tanzania the Bureau of Standards had set up a technical committee. In both Uganda and Tanzania, the Bureau of Standards participated in the initiatives of the private sector.

Within the Sida¹ funded EPOPA² programme, cooperation between organic bodies in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania had emerged. The activities were

- a big seminar in Arusha December 2003
- several joint inspection training sessions
- three regional meetings of a working group consisting of two reps from each country
- assistance in the standard development phase
- joint training in certification procedures of certification managers and other staff

On the basis of the background above, IFOAM and the national organic-agriculture movements (NOAMs) of Kenya (KOAN), Tanzania (TOAM) and Uganda (NOGAMU) agreed to propose a regional development programme for organic standards and certification cooperation: the

¹ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

² Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa

Organic Standards in East Africa (OSEA) project. In December 2005 Sida, the Swedish international development cooperation agency, agreed to support the initiative.

IFOAM has in its activities and engagement a strong focus on Africa, making it natural for IFOAM to play a coordinating role in these activities. The development of local organic certification and regional standards fits into the strategic plan of IFOAM, developed by African stakeholders during 2005. The partner organizations are also IFOAM members.

The OSEA Project

The project was designed as follows.

Overall Objective

To improve the income and livelihood of rural communities in East Africa.

Purpose of the Project

To improve the income and livelihood of rural communities in East Africa through facilitation of trade in organic products by means of a regional standard and regional certification cooperation.

Results of the Project

1. A draft standard is developed through stakeholder consultations and by field testing by the end of 2006.
2. Joint protocols for the verification of compliance with standards are developed.
3. A governance structure for the East Africa Organic Standards is established.
4. An East Africa Organic Standard is adopted by early 2007.
5. The East African Organic Standard is approved by IFOAM.
6. Consumers in the East African countries have been informed about the standards and are increased their understanding of organic agriculture

(Extract from OSEA Project document)

WHY A REGIONAL STANDARD?

The following are the main reasons for a regional standard (as opposed to national ones):

1. resource use: combining resources is more efficient than letting each country do it by itself
2. foster cooperation between countries: this leads to better understanding, less conflicts and a better business climate
3. possibilities for regional trade: a common standard and similar or identical conformity assessment procedures limit the problems with technical barriers for trade
4. negotiations with other governments for equivalence/recognition: it is easier for a group of countries to join forces in negotiating with e.g., the European Union than for each one to do it by itself. It is also easier to get acceptance for adaptations of the standards if a group of countries argues for them.
5. Coordinating input for Codex Alimentarius and IFOAM. As in the point above, a group of countries is more likely to be more influential and successful than a country acting alone.

DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD IN EAST AFRICA

In the context of a project of the UNEP/UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF), “Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa,” initiated in mid 2005, there was a component to facilitate the development of an East African Organic Standard. Building on the agreements already made by the organic stakeholders and including the national standards bodies, the project convened the Regional Standards Technical Working Group (RSTWG), for its first meeting in Kampala on 25 October 2005.

Soon thereafter, IFOAM got approval from Sida for the OSEA project. CBTF and IFOAM decided to join forces to most effectively support the development of the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS). The two projects complemented each other well. The CBTF project had initiated the work and established an appropriate regional structure, and had through its UN status good access to governments. The OSEA project brought additional resources to conduct national consultations, field-testing of the standard, and the development of a joint inspection protocol and consumer education. Furthermore, it had the support of networks in the private sector. The consultants engaged by IFOAM had much experience in the organic sector in East Africa.

THE STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of the standard was based on

- the already existing private sector and public standards in East Africa
- the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for Organic Production, CAC/GL 32
- the IFOAM Basic Standards
- intensive consultations in the countries, both nationally and regionally
- field testing of the standard

The process was open and transparent and actively engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, in particular in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. As Rwanda and Burundi were not EAC members at the time of the start of the activities and the project design phase and the organic sector in those countries was not so well developed, it was not possible to have intensive consultations in the two countries. However, their representatives in the RSTWG consulted within their own networks.

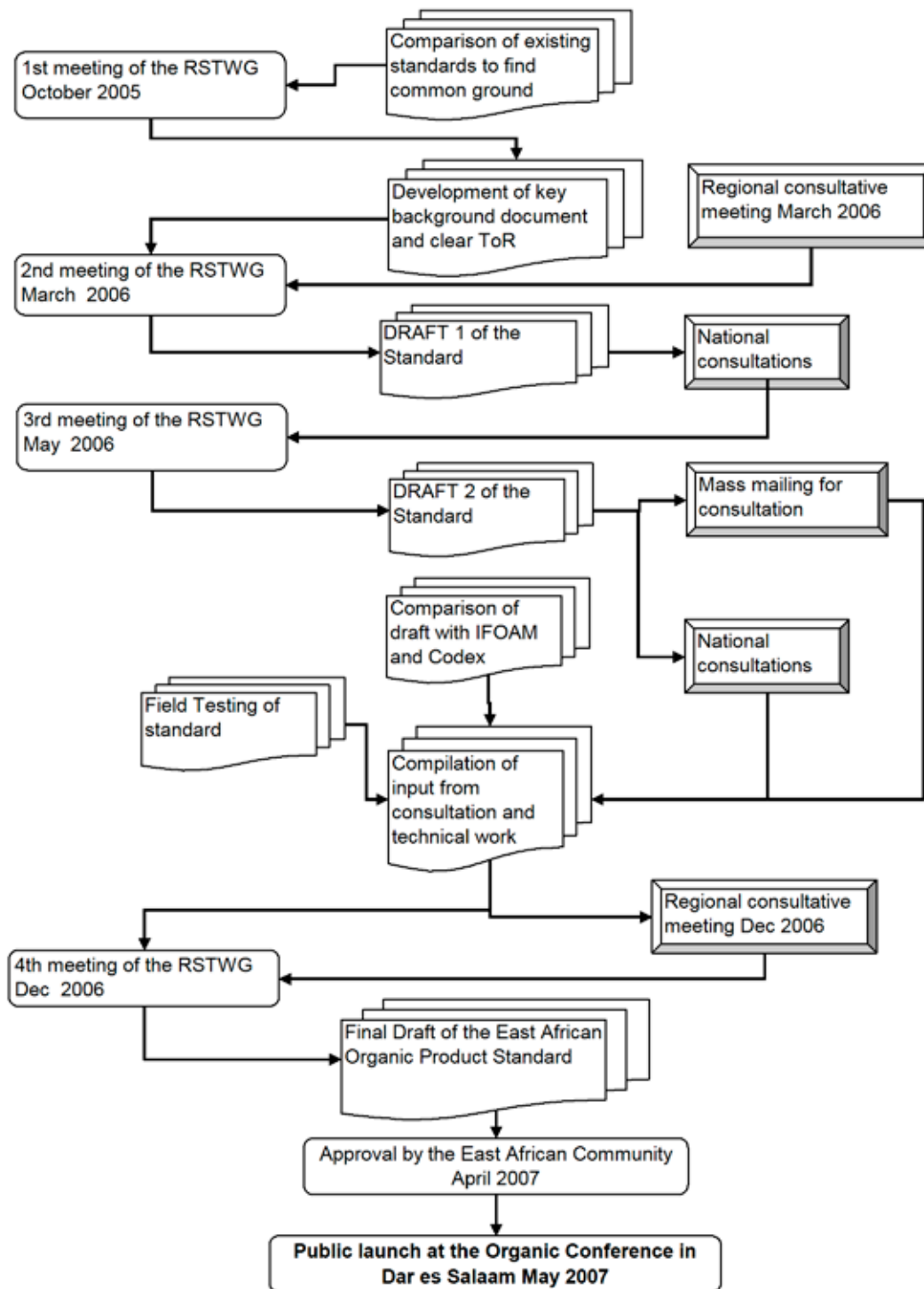
The RSTWG met four times between October 2005 and December 2006. Much work was carried out before and after RSTWG meetings to make the meetings productive and to move the process forward.

3 The CBTF project's focus is the development of increased awareness and appropriate policies for organic agriculture through the process of national integrated assessments in the three countries as well as background studies and regional workshops and cooperation.

More information at <http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/>

4 The working name of the standard was East African Organic Standard, while the final name became the East African Organic Products Standard, a change insisted upon by the bureaus of standards.

Main flow in the development of the East African Organic Product Standard
for details see annex 1



The Regional Standards Technical Working Group (RSTWG)

The RSTWG was a regional public-private sector working group charged with drafting the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS). RSTWG members were representatives of the national bureaus of standards, the national organic movements, the organic certifying bodies of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, and the East African Business Council. It was co-chaired by a representative of UNCTAD and of IFOAM.

Field Testing

The EAOPS was tested in the field by a group of organic inspectors, between 26 November and 1 December in Uganda, to check how it worked in reality and to identify what was not working. The field testing also identified gaps in the EAOPS and checked whether it was possible to verify the standards. In total seven farms and two processors were visited. All relevant standards were gone through at each place. The outcome was that in general the EAOPS functions well in the field but the group also gave several proposals for improvement and recommendations to take away a few standards. The group felt that the field testing was a very useful exercise and that all new standards should be tested in that way.

Comparison with the IFOAM Basic Standards and Codex Alimentarius

A consultant made a report on the compliance of the EAOPS with the IFOAM Basic Standards and with the Codex Alimentarius organic guidelines. Most of the EAOPS is in full compliance with these standards. For some issues, the extent to which the EAOPS complies is a question of interpretation. For a few standards (e.g., the conversion period), the EAOPS doesn't comply.

Consultations

The standard consultation process was comprehensive and participatory. Two national consultation meetings were organized in each country. In addition, the standard was consulted at two regional meetings (Arusha, March 2006 and Nairobi, December 2006). There were also personal meetings held with ministries of agriculture, national bureaus of standards and the EAC. The draft standards were also sent out to a mailing list of around 800 persons. The NOAMs and others distributed the draft even further.

Final Adoption

In April 2007 the EAOPS was adopted by the EAC as the East African Standard (EAS) 456. Through the adoption by the EAC it automatically becomes the official standard for the partner states, and existing public national standards are withdrawn. The private-sector standards (by KOAN, TanCert, NOGAMU and UgoCert) are also expected to be withdrawn, except for standards that cover areas not yet within the scope of the EAOPS (e.g., fisheries and aquaculture).

Future Governance

The EAC has its governance structure for standards and its procedures for revision, so there is a governance structure in place. One concern is that the EAC process lacks funding and the EAC has a secretariat that is not very strong. Its normal standards-revision procedure is not as inclusive as the process undergone for the EAOPS. The RSTWG is not a permanent group, but was dissolved when the EAOPS was approved. However it, or something similar, can be pulled together when the need arises.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC PRODUCTS STANDARD

The EAOPS is, for the time being, a voluntary standard, which means that there is no specific regulation that prohibits producers from claiming a product to be organic even if it is produced under requirements other than those that are in the standard. Producers wishing to claim that they follow the standard can do so even if they are not certified.

The East African Organic Products Standard has been written for organic production in East Africa and has been adapted to conditions in East Africa. The purpose is to have a single organic standard for organic agriculture production under East African conditions.

This East African Organic Products Standard has been based on organic standards currently in place in the region as well as the IFOAM Basic Standards and the Codex Alimentarius guidelines for the production, processing, labelling and marketing of organically produced foods.

The East African Organic Products Standard can be used for self-assessment by producers, declarations of conformity in the marketplace, certification by certification bodies in the region, and other kinds of verification. If the standard is used for third-party certification, inspection and certification should be carried out in accordance with international norms, such as ISO Guide 65 or the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria. If adherence to the standard is verified through other mechanisms, those mechanisms shall adhere to the principles of competency, integrity and transparency.

The standard is intended for the development of organic production and trade in East Africa. The standards can be a platform for a common label for organic products in East Africa and for developing consumer trust. The standard also formulates standpoints which can be used in international negotiations on standards. Furthermore, it can be a basis for equivalence agreements with other countries and regions.

The East African Organic Products Standard has been written in a way to make it easy for the reader and user to access and understand. Because of the need for organic agriculture to be adapted to local conditions, the standard is not overly prescriptive. The standard covers plant production, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, wild production and processing, and products therefrom, regardless of their final use. In the future, other areas will be incorporated as the need arises (Introduction to EAS 456).

The stakeholders believe that at this point it is best to have a voluntary standard which gives the sector a joint definition and the possibility of communicating with the consumers on a common platform. Introducing mandatory organic regulations, such as the EU Regulation for organic, was not seen as a priority. Such rules, built on mandatory requirements for certification, might stifle the sector rather than make it prosper. Through credible verification, a joint mark (see below) and aggressive marketing, the standard will become de facto accepted by all parties.

Currently the standard covers plant production, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, wild production and processing. It is envisioned that the standard will be expanded to other relevant areas, such as aquaculture.

DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROTOCOLS FOR THE VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS

A workshop was held in Arusha, April 2007 with inspectors from UgoCert, TanCert, AfriCert, EnCert and IMO. The meeting was intended to design common inspection forms and instructions for their use based on the EAOPS. The purpose was to provide simple tools, but also by using the same forms convergence of the certification procedures is promoted. A consultant worked with the results of the workshop and finalized the forms relating to farm production. This was done in November 2007, so they come into use at the end of the project.

DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS

Linked to the OSEA project, the NOAMs have been developing alternative systems for verification based on the concept of participatory guarantee systems. IFOAM commissioned a study on this, and a workshop was held in Arusha in April 2007. It is apparent that for the local and regional market, there is a need to continue developing these systems.

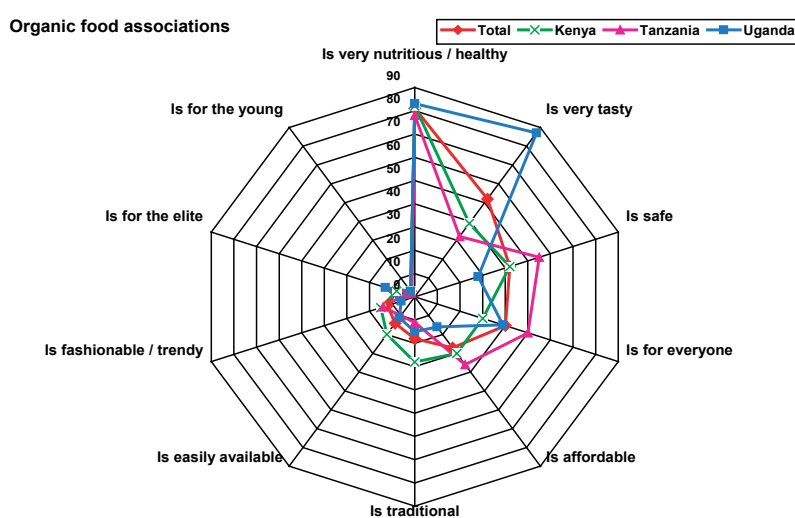
DEVELOPING CONSUMER AWARENESS

CONSUMER SURVEY

A team at KOAN was selected to do the consumer survey in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The results were ready in early December 2006 and were presented to the regional Organic Forum in Nairobi. The purpose of the survey was twofold: to get baseline data for consumer awareness and attitudes to organic products, and to identify the strategies for increasing the awareness.

The survey of 600 consumers in the major cities of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda showed that many don't know or are not sure about what organic is. Even most of those who say they do know what organic is were not fully conversant with what organic entails. The following were the responses to the question "What do you understand by the term organic foods?"

- don't know or are not sure what it means (38 per cent)
- natural foods (26 per cent)
- foods without chemicals (17 per cent)
- foods not sprayed with pesticides (9 per cent)
- traditional or indigenous foods (8 per cent)
- foods grown with manure (6 per cent)
- herbal foods (3 per cent)
- healthful, nutritious foods (3 per cent)



The majority of those who are unaware belong to the lower socio-economic classes. Ugandan respondents scored highest in awareness. It shows that the awareness creation in Uganda is bearing fruit. This also corresponds to the number of respondents who have heard or seen advertisements or promotional materials regarding organic food. Consumers identify organic products with nutritious, tasty and safe food; see the graph.

Thirty key informants from hotels, shops and restaurants were positive about organic but mentioned a number of challenges:

- The supply of organic products is very much limited and unreliable.
- Most people do not know or understand much about what organic products are.
- Those who know are few, and amongst these the demand is high, but demand overall for organic products is low.
- The higher prices of organic products are also a deterrent.

On how their customers verify that the products are organic, most key informants said that they provide designated places on the business premises for organic products or menus for restaurants and hotels. When their consumers select from these designated places, they know they

are selecting organic products. Others also said that the organic products are clearly labelled as such while some said that the consumers ask for their guidance on what is organic and what is not. Most key informants were aware neither of the standards for organic products nor whether their suppliers had certification. A few whose businesses are solely organic were aware of organic standards and whether the suppliers were certified.

Key informants were asked to give their opinion on what key issues consumers should be educated on concerning organic farming. An overwhelming majority said that the consumers simply need to be educated on what organic farming and products are all about and more so on what the benefits of consumption are. Most key informants believed that if only more consumers knew, they would definitely prefer to consume organic products as opposed to non-organic. This knowledge, they said, would best be imparted through the mass media (radio, TV and newspapers), and the bearers of this message should be producers, suppliers and manufacturers with governments also participating, in particular line ministries such as health, trade and agriculture. Other participants could be NGOs involved in health issues or agricultural issues or both.

EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC MARK

The OSEA meeting in December 2006 agreed in principle to establish an East African Organic Mark (EAOM), along the following general lines:

- mark to be owned by the NOAMs
- used on products and promotional materials
- used on products produced according to the EAOPS with verification mechanisms accepted by the NOAMs which can include both third-party certification and PGS

It was agreed that there was an urgency to establish the mark so that it could be given a strategic position in the consumer-awareness and marketing campaigns. A Kenyan agency was contracted to develop proposals for a mark design. They developed seven proposals based on instructions from the project.



There were national consultative meetings about the mark and other market-related issues. All three meetings preferred the same design. Based on those meetings the designers were given new instructions to improve the most popular design, and in April 2007 the following mark was agreed among the NOAMs.



Establishing the Management Structure for the Mark

Once the design of the mark was agreed upon, a management structure for the mark had to be established. The structure is based on an agreement between the three NOAMs (it is open to the participation from Rwanda and Burundi, once they have comparable organizations). The agreement contains the main things regulating the mark and establishes a management mechanism, the Joint Management Committee (JMC) for the East African Organic Mark.

Registration of the Mark

Each NOAM registered the mark in its own country. NOGAMU was entrusted with the registration of the mark in Burundi and Rwanda.

Licensing and Registration

A licensing agreement, to be signed by the users and the respective NOAM, has been drafted. The mark is provided for a nominal fee to users. A simple registration procedure has also been developed. In December 2007 there were 15 users of the mark in Kenya, four in Tanzania and none in Uganda (because of a delay in registration).

The Nature of the East African Organic Mark

The mark should be seen as a promotional tool, the main objective being to create a clear identification of organic products in the marketplace. Therefore it is open in its construction and can be used on imported organic products. The mark is not linked to any of the certification bodies and is therefore available regardless of who has certified the production. It is also not a “brand” in the normal sense. This means that the mark can be used together with the brand of the supplier and together with certification marks. All this assists to make the mark useful as a common mark and communication tool. The ownership with the National Organic Agriculture Movement means that it is controlled by non-profit independent organizations whose aim is to promote organic.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE EAOPS AND THE EAOM

Linked to the launch of the EAOPS and the EAOM, a consumer awareness campaign was designed focusing on the media and the production of materials.

A media training session was conducted for key staff (head and media manager) of the NOAMs. This was followed up by one-day seminars for selected media in the three countries, where in total 60 journalists participated. Media briefs were also produced based on IFOAM materials. The following materials were also produced:

roll up banners
road side banners
posters
brochures
information kits/folders
guidance booklets for the use of the mark
key holders
promotional DVD
stickers
EAOM T-shirts
caps
cotton bags

An organic song, “Kilimohai” (the Swahili word for organic), was produced by the Mionzi Dance Theatre for the conference in May 2007. The project organized a recording of the song and made it available to the NOAMs for use in radio programmes and other promotional activities.

The NOAMs made plans for the dissemination of the materials and associated activities and implemented this. In Kenya the following took place⁶:

- Brochures/folders and posters were distributed to training organizations and NGOs throughout Kenya. They were also distributed during the farmers’ markets as well as national trade fairs. Some were taken to the ministry of agriculture’s organic desk.
- T-shirts and bags: These were strategically given to the staff of outlets selling organic produce and also during the organic farmers’ markets.
- EAOPS was also distributed to training institutions and NGOs working with farmers. They were also issued during the meeting organized by KOAN to popularize the EAOPS.
- The roll up banners were issued to organic outlets.
- Key holders and DVDs were given out during events (workshops, farmers markets, training programmes).
- Stickers were issued to outlets.
- There were two adverts in the press linked to the Dar event.

6 Similar activities were also carried out in Uganda and Tanzania.

REGIONAL EVENTS

Three main regional events, co-organized with the CBTF and other partners, were used to raise awareness and consult with stakeholders. The first one was in Arusha Tanzania in March 2006. The others are described below.

ORGANIC STANDARD FORUM 13 DECEMBER 2006, NAIROBI, KENYA

The second draft of the East African Organic Standard was presented to the public on 13 December in Nairobi at the first Organic Standards Forum to be organized in Africa. The Kenyan agriculture secretary, Wilson Songa, opened the forum, which was part of a week-long series of events focusing on organic agriculture in East Africa. The forum attracted 80 participants from 18 countries. Experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development expressed their support for the initiative, and in particular for the pioneering private-public partnership. Linked to the forum was a policy workshop where 33 experts and stakeholders from 11 countries discussed the need to mainstream organic policies.

EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC CONFERENCE, 28 MAY TO 1 JUNE 2007, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

This event, probably the biggest organic event held in Africa since the IFOAM Conference 1989 in Burkina Faso, attracted almost 250 participants. It was co-organized with the CBTF, EPOPA, TOAM and the Ministry of Agriculture in Tanzania. The first day was about local and regional marketing. It also featured an exhibition which was opened by the minister of agriculture, Stephen Masatu Wassira. The official launch of the EAOPS took place the second day by the prime minister of Tanzania, Edward N. Lowassa. The same day also had a panel with ministers and other high-level representatives from the five countries.



Following the public conference, a two-day event, “Moving the Organic Agenda Ahead in East Africa”, attracted 80 participants. It built on the policy workshop in Nairobi and engaged governments, the private sector, development partners and international organizations.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for the promotion of organic agriculture in general and the launch of the EAOPS and the EAOM was well-publicized in the region and further afield. TV, radio and press covered the event extensively.

‘The East African Organic Team’

The regional events and the spirit of cooperation between all actors have created something that best is described as the East African Organic Team. It is not a formalized structure but rather a network of people from all walks of life, with the common objective of moving organic ahead in East Africa.



RELATED ACTIVITIES AND IMPACTS

Through the cooperation with the CBTF project there was substantial general awareness raising and promotion of organic farming as well as considerable influence on the policy-development processes. Three regional meetings, in Arusha in March 2006, Nairobi in December 2006 and the Organic Conference in Dar es Salaam, as well as direct consultations with the relevant ministries, created momentum for organic in all respects. The policy dialogues also influenced how the countries will regulate organic. At the start of the project, most of the government, if at all interested, seemed inclined to copy most of the mandatory regulation of the European Union, something that the movement and IFOAM considered to be premature and possibly destructive. Now the governments seem more positive to a situation in which there is less control by the government.

Through cooperation with ITC, a major national meeting was organized in Rwanda in October 2007, where the NOAMs and project experts gave considerable input and shared their experiences. The Ministry of Agriculture of Rwanda is now set to develop organic further.

There was also interaction between the OSEA project and other IFOAM activities in Africa:

- a study on participatory guarantee systems with a focus on existing systems in East Africa
- a workshop about PGS, based on the study, with the objective of further developing the existing systems in East Africa
- a study on local organic markets in Africa

Through the good cooperation between the NOAMs within the OSEA project frame, a platform has been created for their cooperation in other ventures.

Wider Impacts

The direct outputs of the project and the CBTF project and other partners contributed to strengthening the organic sectors in East Africa. In particular it has stimulated the mainstreaming of organic agriculture in policy development.

The cooperation between IFOAM, UNCTAD and UNEP has deepened considerably through the joint work in East Africa.

Influencing the EAC Standard-setting Process

The process of the development of the EAOPS has set a new example of how (regional) standards can be developed by industry-driven consultations. Several representatives of the national bureaus of standards said that the EAOPS process has set a benchmark for standard development in other areas.

Spreading the Experiences

Through financing by IFOAM through its Africa Office, ITC and the CBTF participants from other African countries were invited to the major events, from which they returned inspired for further action. In the event in Dar es Salaam there were representatives from Benin, Burkina

Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan and Zambia. African Institutions such as COMESA, NEPAD and the African Development Bank also participated in the conference. During the project period, and partly as a result of the inspiration from the project, COMESA has embarked on a number of projects related to organic.

The EAOPS also received public attention, through the media and the cooperating organization. It has been presented at several international events such as

- the Biofach trade fair, Nuremberg, February 2007
- the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment, Geneva, 2 May 2007
- the IFOAM conference on values in regional food, Germany, August 2007
- the CBTF Symposium, “Environmental Requirements and Market Access: Turning Challenges into Opportunities”, Geneva, October 2007
- the seventh meeting of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture, Bali, December 2007

IMPLEMENTATION

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Gunnar Rundgren (Grolink AB) was contracted by IFOAM as the project leader, and as such oversaw all activities. Patricia Wangong’u from IFOAM acted as a regional coordinator and Anne Boor as the IFOAM coordinator. The heads of the three NOAMs—Eustace Kiarri (KOAN), Jordan Gama (TOAM) and Moses Muwanga (NOGAMU)—were part of the OSEA Advisory Committee, which guided and monitored the project. Eva Mattsson, Grolink AB, was the consultant in charge for standards development, field testing and inspection protocol. Samuel Ndungu, KOAN, coordinated the consumer survey, assisted by staff from the three NOAMs. The NOAMs also implemented some of the project activities directly, in particular those related to consumer awareness. The project also benefited from input from the CBTF project, in particular from Sophia Twarog (UNCTAD) and Asad Naqvi (UNEP).

CHALLENGES

When the project was planned, the EAC had only three members: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. However, in 2006 Rwanda and Burundi sought membership in the EAC, and the project tried to integrate them in the major activities, e.g., the standards working group. Budget constraints, however, didn’t allow for their full integration.

Obviously there have also been problems in the implementation. The main obstacle initially was resistance in one of the national standards bodies to the private-sector-led initiative. It took major efforts to convince them that the model chosen was the right one.

There was also certain scepticism from the private sector towards government involvement and to what extent the East African Community indeed was the best framework for governance of the standard. While there are still some reservations, it was ultimately agreed that this framework gave the standard credibility and that it was open enough to allow the national organic agriculture movement to influence the standards in the future.

CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNING POINTS

The project has been successful. This is mainly explained by strong commitment from the stakeholders and good preparation and implementation. The project also was seen as the right thing at the right time.

The development of the organic sector in East Africa has been led by NGOs and commercial companies. Governments have played a small role. Also, the development of the organic standards and certification has been private-sector led. However, in the end it is critical that the governments get involved. In the process of development of the East African Organic Products Standard, the governments participated mainly as one of the stakeholders and not as the regulator. This enabled the quick accomplishment of the objectives. A government-led process would likely have taken a lot more time and it is doubtful that the organic sector would have felt comfortable with it. The fact that the standard is, initially at least, a voluntary standard and is not linked to certification also cleared some of the resistance. It was of critical importance that the scope and role of the standard was consulted and agreed on early in the process.

The development of the standard is an example of incremental development. The stakeholder and the government may in the future conclude that they want to regulate the organic market more firmly, and if so they are able to do so with limited efforts, as most pieces are in place. The open construction around the mark enables its quick uptake in the marketplace as it is not linked to a particular certification body or even to certification as such.

There is a certain amount of power-sharing built in by the public (East African Community) ownership of the standard and the private (the national organic agriculture movements) ownership of the mark. The standard itself is obviously a strong regulatory tool, but in the end what consumers are most interested in is a clear identity of the products. The mark provides that. It is assumed that this power-sharing will protect the participatory and inclusive atmosphere that has been the hallmark of the process.

The whole process has been development-oriented. The standard and the mark are mainly seen as market-development activities to further the organic sector. Key words have been facilitation, not control; inclusion, not exclusion. The consultations about the standards were extensive in all stages of the process, which both made the final products better and more accepted by all.

It is tempting to copy existing standards for many reasons. One is that they have already been thought through, tested in reality and revised for improvements. Another is that standards of importing countries are already in use by those exporting. However, in many cases these standards are not fully applicable to the local conditions. It is therefore a clear advantage when the stakeholders can agree that the standards are mainly developed for the local and regional markets, as that takes away the bias in favour of standards in the importing markets.

The existence of the East African Community and its joint standardization was an advantage. The stakeholders have a strong feeling for the East African idea, and it saved considerable effort in not having to develop a unique governance structure for the organic standard. Nevertheless it still remains to be seen whether the EAC standardization process will allow for sufficient stakeholder engagement when the standard is revised in the future.

Notably, many stakeholders already had considerable experience from organic standards and certification, and national standards already had been developed. This means that they already knew how standards could be drafted to suit local conditions. It also meant that they had basic skills in formulating standards. This was further enhanced by the participation of experts from the national bureaus of standards. Starting a regional standards process without these experiences will require much more capacity building. It will inevitably make the process slower.

Standard setting is, or should be, a participatory activity, and a lot of people participated in this process. At the same time, formulation of standards is a craft that needs concentration and many checks to ensure the standard is consistent (a change in one place may lead to a contradiction with another section, or change the meaning of other parts). The East African Organic Products Standard was developed with strong technical support, both for the process and the content. Without that support, the task would not have been accomplished easily.

With the adoption of the EAOPS and the EAOM and with the development of a local certification structure there is now an institutional framework for the development of the organic sector—a frame that still needs strengthening. Consumer awareness is still low and considerable efforts are needed to increase it. There is also a need to strengthen capacity on many levels, ranging from farmers' groups to service providers (extension, certification) and from sector bodies to governments.

ANNEX 1: KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST AFRICAN ORGANIC PRODUCTS STANDARD

Activity	Time and Place	Comment
Comparison of existing national standards	September-October 2005	By consultant
First meeting of the RSTWG	25 October 2005 in Kampala	Discussion about the general approach; presentation of the comparison between the national standards; clarification of the need for a regional standard, scope, etc.
Production of background materials for RSTWG 2	November 2005-February 2006	By consultant
RSTWG 2	6 March 2006 in Arusha	Agreement on the framework for the standard, scope and a number of key technical issues
Production of DRAFT 1	March, early April	By consultant based on comparison, input from RSTWG 1 and 2
First national consultations		First national meetings focused on general framework of standards, need, ownership, etc.
First national consultation Tanzania	10 May	44 participants
First national consultation Kenya	11 May	20 participants
RSTWG 3	25-26 May in Nairobi	Agreement to ask the EAC to adopt the standard
technical discussion on Draft 1		
Meeting with EAC secretariat	31 May in Arusha	A mission to inform the EAC secretariat about the plans and to better understand the modus operandi of the EAC
First national consultation Uganda	20 July	> 50 participants
Production of draft 2	June-July	By consultant based on the input from RSTWG 3
Mailing out draft 2 stakeholders	17 July	Was sent by email directly from project office to 800 stakeholders. Was further distributed by NOAMs
Promotion mission Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania	20-25 July	A visit to the ministries of agriculture, the national standards bodies (NSBs) and other public- and private-sector stakeholders in all three countries. Meeting with all three heads of the NSBs, the permanent secretaries for agriculture in Kenya and Uganda, and the minister of trade of Uganda
Request to KEBS to sponsor adoption of EAOPS as an EAC standard	10 August	An official request was sent to KEBS to move the EAOPS for adoption as an EAC standard, once finalized
Second national consultations		The second round of national consultations focused on the content of the draft 2 out for consultation
Second national consultation Kenya	16 October	19 participants, organized by KOAN
Second national consultation Uganda	5 October	59 participants, co-organized by UNBS and NOGAMU
Second national consultation Tanzania	15 September	27 participants, co-organized by TBS and TOAM
Deadline for comments on draft 2	5 October	18 comments received, including reports from the national meetings

Comparison of EAOPS against Codex and IFOAM	November	By consultant
Field testing of EAOPS, Uganda	26 November – 1 December	Made by two consultants and three organic inspectors, visiting 10 sites to assess how well adapted the EAOPS draft was
Compilation of comments to standards	First week of December	By consultant
Joint IFOAM SC- RSTWG meeting	13 December	A meeting between the RSTWG and the IFOAM Standards Committee to discuss areas of divergence
Organic Standards Forum	13 December	80 participants; informed stakeholders about the process
RSTWG 4	14–15 December	Intensive technical work leading to draft 3
Production of draft 3 (final)	16 Dec–15 Jan 2007	Consultant in email contact with the RSTWG compiles the final draft
Final draft sent to KEBS	15 Jan 2007	
KEBS edited the standards and forwarded them to the EAC secretariat	February 2007	KEBS did final editing of the draft into prescribed EAC formats and brought it into the formal EAC standards harmonization process
The EAC council of ministers adopt the standard as EAS 456	April 2007	
The official launch of the standard	28 May 2007	By the prime minister of Tanzania at the regional organic conference

ANNEX 2: CONTACTS

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Naturally Nurtured

Eat Organic, it is the Healthy Way to Live

- Are you concerned about the food you are eating?
- Are you worried by your frequent visits to the doctor?
- Are you concerned by the frequency with which you are taking prescription medicine?

You are what you eat!

- You can live a healthy life through eating organic food.

Why eat organic food?

- Organic foods are high in nutritional quality and quantity. They are produced under a system which ensures healthy soils thereby resulting in healthy crops that are rich in diverse minerals, enzymes, macro and micro-nutrients. Eat organic, be strong!
- Organic foods are safe to eat and do not contain harmful synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilizers. These chemicals, often present in conventionally produced foods, negatively affect our endocrine and immune systems, are carcinogenic, and when breathed by farm workers, can cause reduced fertility and respiratory problems. Eat organic, be healthy!
- Organic foods are usually higher in antioxidants, essential amino acids, folic acid and other medicinal components in food, thereby enabling them to serve as natural medicine. Eat organic, be fit!
- Organic foods have consistently been rated as having better flavor, taste and texture than conventional foods. This enhances their palatability especially by infants, and convalescents. Eat organic, be resilient!
- Organic animal products do not contain antibiotics and growth hormones. Antibiotics used in conventional animal production have led to resistance to antibiotics by our bodies. Growth hormones in animal products are a precursor to obesity and abnormal growth of body cells. Eat organic, be real!
- Organic foods do not contain Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Consuming GMOs has been found to have negative health effects on animals and human beings. Eat organic, be natural!

How do I identify organic foods?

- Organic foods can easily be identified on the shelves of food stores in East Africa by checking out for the East African Organic Mark. This guarantees that the foods have been produced and processed according to the East African Organic Product Standard.
- The East African Organic Mark identifies organic products which have gone through a verification system to ensure they are truly organic.
- Always ask for organic food the next time you visit a food joint. You'll notice the difference!



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