



## **West Africa Regional Sustainability Claims Portal Launch Workshop**

**CONCEPT NOTE (DRAFT)**

**Organized by:**

**United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

**In collaboration with:**

**Réseau des organisations paysannes et des producteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest  
(ROPPA)**

**In the context of the:**

**All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme**

**Week of the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011, Dakar, Senegal**



## **Background**

As one of the executing agencies of the All-EU ACP Programme on Commodities, UNCTAD has been invited by the programme sponsors to design a Sustainability Claims Portal - SCP, (a web-based information system), in order to provide for targeted stakeholder groups (EU consumers and ACP producers) accountable information on sustainability claims. The portal aims to promote a comprehensive framework and common set of equitable trading practices (economic, social, and environmental requirements) by which to demonstrate that agricultural products have been produced and handled in a sustainable manner - from soil preparation and seed planting, through production, harvest, post-harvest handling, and distribution to its final consumers.

Following the regional Kick-off Workshops and a stakeholder consultation meeting, held in Brussels in April of 2008, the SCP was created [www.unctad.org/scp](http://www.unctad.org/scp) . The Brussels consultation attended by 38 key bodies involved in sustainability issues determined the content and format of the information tool.

The portal is expected to enhance the accountability of sustainability claims related to agricultural and food products, and enable agricultural supply chain stakeholders to better understand and evaluate these claims. As a result, stakeholders will have better access to, and benefit from, sustainability initiatives and markets. More specifically, the portal will contribute to:

- (i) Improved access to credible information on sustainability claims for agricultural commodity supply chain stakeholders (producers, exporters, distributors and consumers);
- (ii) Increased access of these stakeholders to information on standards programmes and initiatives, aiming to contribute to sustainable development;
- (iii) Review of information resources concerning sustainability claims and related sources of information (Sustainability Initiatives; Research; Policy; etc.);
- (iv) Contribute to better communication and cooperation between all stakeholders in the areas of standards setting, inspection, certification, and accreditation; strengthening the validity of sustainability claims.

UNCTAD would like to test the current version of the SCP and ask for an evaluation of the portal at the West Africa launch workshop. The West African workshop is scheduled to be held in Dakar, Senegal.

UNCTAD has launched the portal in the Pacific and Caribbean however it is hoped that discussions at the West Africa launch will inform the future direction of the portal as well as provide a road map for tailoring the information for West African users. UNCTAD would like to establish what the stakeholders would find most relevant and meaningful on the SCP.

UNCTAD's main partner in the region is ROPPA.



## **Objective**

The objective of the workshop is to raise awareness of sustainability claims, regional certification initiatives and to present the current version of the SCP to West African stakeholders. Participants will be asked to evaluate the SCP and provide meaningful feedback on whether the information presented is relevant and useful. The results of this initial SCP evaluation will be incorporated into the development of the portal, and stakeholder recommendations are expected to shape the relevance of the information, ensuring the portal's long-term functionality.

## **Expected outcomes**

- Participants will gain deeper understanding of sustainability standards, certification schemes, and local/regional sustainability initiatives.
- The Sustainability Claims Portal will be presented as participants discuss and critique the information on the SCP and provide feedback on information gaps.
- The results of this SCP evaluation will be incorporated into the second development phase of the portal.
- Follow up activities are to be identified based on the information requirements of the participants. UNCTAD anticipates one requirement to be, the development of a SCP sub-section, entirely devoted to West African issues and regional certification schemes. Secondly, information on food safety standards may need to be more closely linked to the SCP.

## **Participants**

This workshop will be organized in close cooperation with one of the project's national partners, ROPPA. ROPPA will assist UNCTAD with the invitation and participant lists, contact relevant ministries, farmer cooperatives, and people working in the area of sustainability, fair trade and organic agriculture.

Regional representatives will be selected from UNCTAD's well established networks and on the recommendation of ROPPA and the host country. Due to financial constraints, UNCTAD is anticipating inviting a maximum of 2 participants from priority countries, as identified at the Kick off Workshops including, Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Togo. Anglophone countries such as Ghana will be invited to the Anglophone launch of East and Southern Africa, scheduled for August/September of 2011.

Other national stakeholders will be invited and experts in the area of private agricultural standards will be sourced. The number of participants and local experts is likely to be 40; however it may be larger if participants from rural Senegal are able to participate.



A regional expert will be invited to provide background information on sustainability claims, private standards and their relevance to West African countries, market analysis of certified products, and the possible gains for certification. Case studies on regional certification initiatives will also be presented.

Representatives of ministries and local government stakeholders are expected to participate and UNCTAD is seeking the cooperation of organic grower and fair trade associations to ensure broad representation.

### **Venue**

In collaboration with UNDP and ROPPA, a venue will be chosen in central Dakar.

### **Budget estimate**

The total budget of this workshop is approximately 45,000euro

- Financing local and regional participants (travel and DSA)
- Regional resource persons and UNCTAD staff (travel and DSA)
- Rental of workshop facilities for two days
- Lunches/Coffee breaks
- Administrative miscellaneous costs (reproduction of training materials, computer hire, etc.)

### **Tentative Agenda**

This two day capacity building workshop will focus on the introduction of the Sustainability Claims Portal to stakeholders, and on the collection of data from participants on how to improve the Portal.

The first day will focus on broader issues of sustainability, labeling systems, and the presentation of case studies from the region. The second day will be devoted to the presentation of the Portal, breakout sessions to evaluate and critique the information, and discussion of stakeholder requirements - what information would the stakeholders like to see and what would be most useful.

Breakout sessions will be organized and interactive discussion will be encouraged throughout the two day workshop. Recommendations stemming from the discussions will be shared, and a plan on how to integrate the proposed changes to the Portal will be presented.

