



**EU-ACP *ALL* Agricultural Commodities Programme**

**“What could a sustainability claims  
portal look like ?”**

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# Contents

1. UNCTAD: AN INTRODUCTION
2. BACKGROUND
3. GOALS OF THE PORTAL
4. TARGET AUDIENCE
5. PROPOSED CONTENTS
6. INFORMATION QUALITY AND PORTAL MANAGEMENT
7. CONCLUSION: PORTAL'S ADDED VALUE

# 1. UNCTAD: AN INTRODUCTION

## What is UNCTAD

Established in 1964. It is a direct arm of the UN General Assembly, and is the focal point for the treatment of trade and development issues in the UN system.

## What it does

### **The 3 pillars of its work:**

1. Acts as a *Forum* for intergovernmental deliberations aimed at consensus building on trade and development policies
2. Undertakes *policy-oriented research and analysis* on trade and development problems
3. Provides *technical assistance* tailor-made to the specific needs of developing countries

## Location and institutional framework

Based in Geneva, the UNCTAD Secretariat is a *department of the UN Secretariat* and reports to the UN Secretary-General

## 2.BACKGROUND

### 2.1 ACP Producer's side

- Stringent/complex non-tariff measures, new restrictive safety and quality measures, variations in hygiene laws, deepening of regulations (e.g. SPS requirements, ISO, GlobalGap). Loss of markets.
- “Sustainability related” growing demand (organic, fair trade), but competing complex schemes for growing niche markets
- High and increasing standards compliance costs
- **AAACP Programme and UNCTAD consult ACP producers needs through AAACP regional workshops.**

## 2.BACKGROUND

### 2.2 EU Consumer's side

- Entitled to know:
  - i) what s/he purchases exactly, defined by established and credible rules and verification
  - ii) how her/his purchase drives changes.
- Needs a better understanding of how the environmental/economic/social dimensions of sustainable development are encompassed in the products s/he purchases.

# 2.BACKGROUND

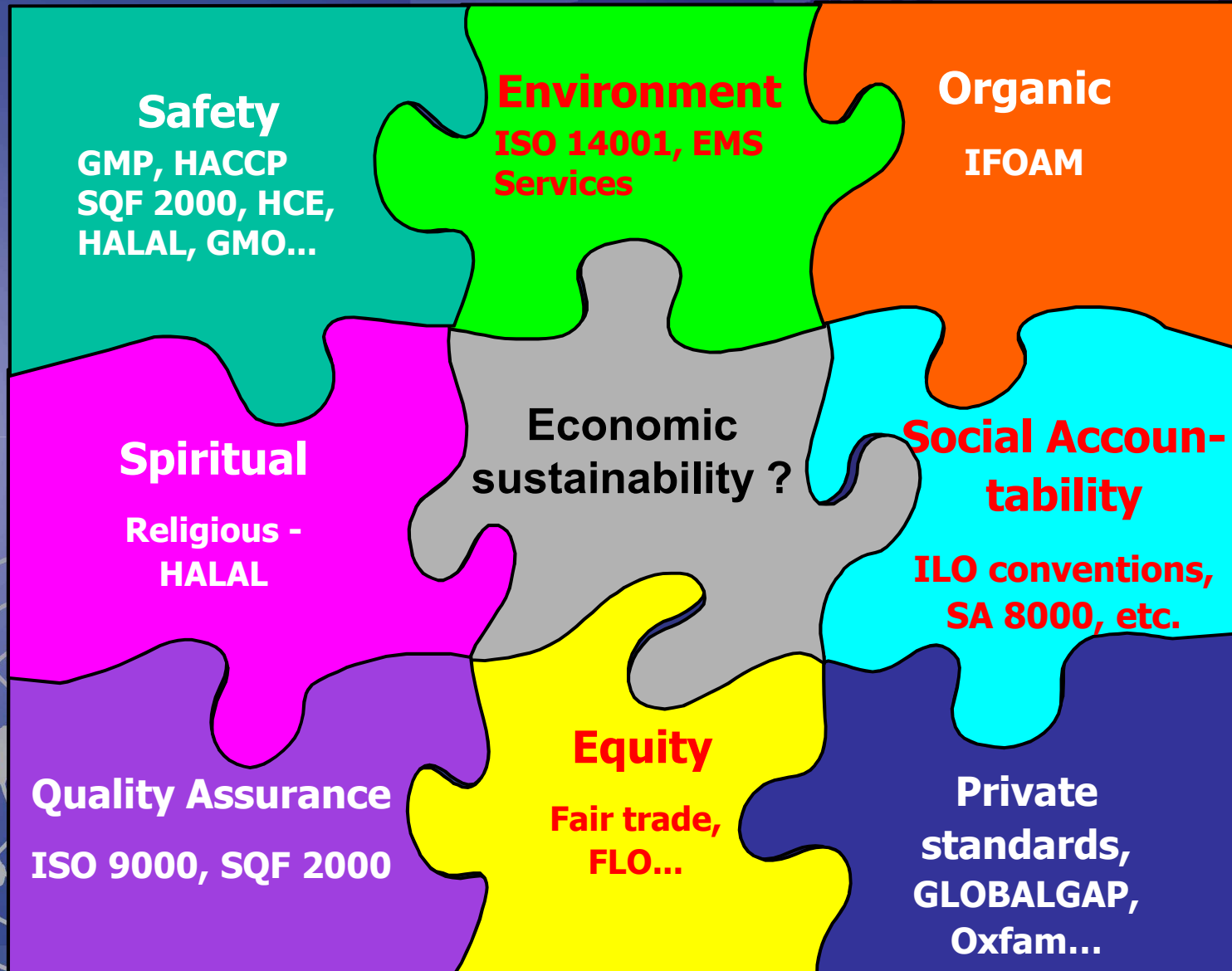
## 2.3 Issues

**Inefficiencies:** proliferation of many schemes → 1. inefficiencies at the production level; 2. repetitive, sometimes overlapping and costly verifications & inspections; 3. confusion for consumers

**Credibility:** multiple, voluntary product labeling programs → reduced credibility of the added-values declared as differentiation to products from traditional production and trading channels

**Risks:** abusive self-declarations on sustainability, organic / fairtrade / social compliance → least rigorous stakeholders could benefit most from consumers' willingness to pay.

# Dilemma of sustainability



# Sustainability claims portal

## What's available ?

The portal will not re-invent the wheel: our aim is to add value!

International Portal on Food Safety, Animal & Plant Health

agrifoodstandards.net

Small-scale Producers and Standards in Agri-food Supply Chains

TripleStandards.org

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS helping to build a world without hunger

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES



OrganicAgInfo

Organic Research Database

Supporting your research in organic and sustainable agriculture

CABI Publishing  
A division of CAB International

agritrade

News and analysis of events affecting ACP agricultural trade

USDA United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Library

ALTERNATIVE FARMING SYSTEMS  
INFORMATION CENTER

vedura

le portail du développement durable

# 3. GOALS

## **General Objective**

Enhanced accountability of sustainability claims

## **Specific objectives**

- (i) Access to credible information on sustainability claims for producers, exporters, processors, distributors and consumers
- (ii) Access to information on standards, labels, certification,
- (iii) Clearing House for information resources concerning sustainability claims for agricultural and food products.

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# 4. TARGET AUDIENCE

## PRIORITY TARGET AUDIENCE

- EU consumer
- ACP Country producer and producers' group
- Policy makers

## OTHER IMPORTANT CONCERNED AUDIENCES

- Distributors and retailers
- ACP Processors and exporters
- EU importers and processors

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

- 5.1 Introduction on sustainability claims
- 5.2 Major registered labels
- 5.3 Compliance and certification costs
- 5.4 Towards self-assessment
- 5.5 Products & Regional priorities
- 5.6 Other contents

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.1 Introduction on sustainability claims

General introduction (background)

Introduction to the issue:

- public/private standards,
- labels,
- verification and certification.

# 5.PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.2 Major registered standards & labels

Features of major registered labels, including:

- Short summaries on key details of registered standards and labels (+ websites links)
- Sustainability impacts: environmental, social scope and economic impact for the producers, their territories and their communities
- Examples/Case Studies

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.3 Compliance and certification costs

- costs implied by compliance at the developing country level (e.g. HACCP norms, Globalgap, organic, fair trade)
- costs entailed by verification and certification.

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.4 Towards self assessment

- Information on key regulations and stakeholders in verification and certification; links & contacts
- Information on processes of internal and external verification & certification by third parties,
- Target: reliable self assessment in developing countries

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.5 Products and ACP Regions Priorities

1. coffee,
2. cocoa,
3. cotton,
4. tea,
5. tropical fruits and beverages,
6. tropical/temperate vegetables,
7. roots and tubers,
8. herbs and spices,
9. medicinal plants
10. + Establish REGIONAL priorities?

# 5. PROPOSED CONTENTS

## 5.6 Other contents

- Resource database/links
- Interactive e-forum
- Call centre?

# 6. INFORMATION QUALITY AND PORTAL MANAGEMENT

## 6.1 How to ensure supervision of the quality of information?

- Representation issue: How will ACP producers be represented and involved in portal management and selecting the information to be posted?
- How will NGOs be represented?
- Who will decide on the Steering committee members?
- What should be the *criteria* to be used in selecting the information and labels to be posted on the portal?

### ***In other words:***

- *Who will decide on the NGOs and labels that should NOT be included?*

# 6. INFORMATION QUALITY AND PORTAL MANAGEMENT

## 6.2 Which management structure for the portal?

**Option 1:** Run and hosted by UNCTAD. Conducted by a Steering Committee made up of EC representatives, ACP secretariat, key NGOs for organic and fair trade and social accountability claims, NGOs/producers associations from ACP countries, major agri-food distributors, and major consumers associations from the EU. Co-founded by the EC, UNCTAD, and major stakeholders groups

**Option 2:** Run and hosted by entities/stakeholders that are representing associations of : i) producers, ii) consumers; iii) distributors. Leadership by a stakeholders Steering Committee. UNCTAD, the EC and the ACP Secretariat assist in the launching of the Portal. Initial co-funding by EC, UNCTAD, private sources such as NGOs, producers+consumers+distributors, and sponsors.

**Option 3:** Combination of the above options, or any other option.

# 7. CONCLUSION: PORTAL'S ADDED VALUE

**1. First *super partes* global website** addressing the credibility and accountability of agriculture and food related sustainability claims, covering simultaneously:

- Environmental sustainability (organic labels, potentially energy cost, carbon...)
- Social sustainability (social responsibility, rural communities benefits...)
- Economic sustainability (fair trade, equity, balanced economic growth...)

**2. Contribution to the debate on sustainability claims**, and to the emergence of renewed criteria and transparency

**3. Catalytic instrument for an enhanced accountability** of claims referring to the developing countries' sustainable development.

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A dark blue background featuring a faint, light blue world map. The map shows the continents and is overlaid with a grid of latitude and longitude lines.

**Thank you for your  
attention and  
participation**

The logo of the United Nations, consisting of a world map surrounded by a laurel wreath, is positioned in the bottom left corner of the slide.

**[www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)**

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