

The background of the slide is a solid green color with a repeating pattern of small, light green icons representing various food items. These icons include vegetables like carrots, tomatoes, mushrooms, and leafy greens; fruits like apples, grapes, and berries; and animal products like chickens, cows, pigs, and fish. The icons are arranged in a grid-like fashion across the entire page.

Keeping GMOs out of organic

Project presentation

August 2018 - 2020

The project 'Keeping GMOs out of organic' was developed in 2018 and revised in August 2018, after the adoption of the final decision of the European Court of Justice on the legal status on new genetic engineering techniques¹, in order to adapt the activities of the project to take it into account.

Keeping GMOs out of organic

An IFOAM EU project

1. Introduction

Organic agriculture is by definition free from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Regulation 834/2007). But the ability of the organic sector to produce and supply high quality food, cosmetics and textile at a decent cost is under threat from the risk of contamination by GMOs, reinforced by the development of new genetic engineering techniques which remain largely unregulated in most regions of the world.

The project 'Keeping GMOs out of organic' is the continuity of the project 'Keeping GMOs out of food' started in 2014 and which finished in July 2018. IFOAM EU will continue to build the capacity of organic movements to minimize the risk of release of GMOs in the environment and in the food chain. The new project will have a specific focus on the regulation and identification of new genetic engineering techniques at the European level.

The project 'Keeping GMOs out of organic' will identify the difficulties faced by the organic sector to remain GMO-free and develop practical solutions. It will advocate for policy frameworks that ensure rights to GMO-free producers at the European level. The project will also help IFOAM EU's members in their own advocacy work at national level.

The work consists of two pillars, structured as follows:

1. Strengthen GMO-free organic production by organising and supporting the organic movement in its effort to develop practical strategies to remain GMO-free and by facilitating the dialogue with the conventional GMO-free sector.
2. Develop positions and coordinate advocacy work to maintain the ability of the organic sector to remain GMO-free.

At the end of the project, conditions for the organic production chain to stay GMO-free should be significantly improved, due to gained knowledge, strategies developed and improvements of the political framework.

2. Goals of the project

Organic agriculture and GMOs are two opposing concepts. Organic farming relies on locally adapted seeds integrated into a balanced ecosystem, while industrial agriculture promotes the use of identical seeds, usable worldwide with the help of chemicals in monoculture systems dedicated to agri-food companies. These two opposed agricultural models can hardly coexist

¹ [ECJ, Confédération Paysanne and others, 25 July 2018, C-548/16.](#)

and the future of organic agriculture is at stake because of the increasing risk of contamination by GMOs of seeds, food or feed products². For the organic sector, it is increasingly difficult to remain GMO-free at a reasonable cost despite the polluter-pays principle³, which is hardly implemented in the agriculture sector. Thus, it is really important to bring the voice of the organic sector to European institutions and to defend the legitimate interest of organic farmers and processors to remain GMO-free and to be protected from contamination. Both national and European levels are important in the European decision-making process. That is why it is particularly important for the organic sector to be correctly organised on this topic, to circulate information between the national and European level, and to coordinate advocacy work to make sure the organic sector will be able to respect its own principles.

Another key challenge for the European organic sector is the question of the legal status of new genetic engineering techniques. The 25th of July, the European Court of justice released a landmark decision stating that certain genetic engineering techniques with no long record of safety are GMOs and must be regulated as GMOs⁴. This decision represents a first victory for the organic movement and its allies in the environmental movement. It is crucial now to ensure that this decision will be enforced by the European Commission and that Directive 2001/18/EC will not be modified to change the definition of a GMO and the scope of the legislation in order to exclude all new techniques. The biotech industry, part of the seed sector, several Member States (e.g. the Netherlands, the UK) and some foreign governments (e.g. the USA) are already lobbying the Commission to convince them to review the legislation. In 2012, the European Commission already overturned a favourable decision of the ECJ on the labelling of GMO presence in honey⁵, by modifying the labelling rules⁶. If such plants and animals would be marketed without prior assessment and authorization, nor mandatory labelling, it would be very difficult for the organic sector to exclude their presence from the production process. The decision is a very important step but it will surely not close the debate. The topic is discussed worldwide and the position of the European Union could have a huge influence on the future of these techniques while influencing the international market.

3. Project overview

Overall objective: To protect the GMO-free production chain against contamination by GMOs and therewith ensure an economic perspective for sustainable and organic producers in Europe, by encouraging strategies and policies to mitigate the contamination risk.

To achieve the overall objective, the project is structured into six work packages (WP).

² The EU did not adopt harmonized coexistence measures. Each European country can decide to adopt such legislation or not, which result a very different situation amongst all countries. http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ifoameu_policy_gmos_dossier_201412.pdf

³ Article 191 (2), Treaty on the functioning of the European Union:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>

⁴ See footnote 1.

⁵ [ECJ, Mr Bablock, 6 September 2011, C-442/09.](#)

⁶ [Modification of Directive 2001/110/EC in 2014.](#)

Work package 1: Development of GMOs experts network

The advocacy work at the European level, to be effective, needs to be coordinated with advocacy work at the national level. The necessity to work efficiently on both levels is particularly important on the GMOs issue. The process of GMOs authorisation in the European Union, for example, involves many authorities both at European and national level. Hence, it is necessary to build a network of GMOs experts amongst IFOAM EU's members on each Member State.

Main targets:

National organic farming organizations, political decision-makers at the European and national levels.

Key activities:

1. Identify one resource person per Member State amongst IFOAM EU's members. This person will be in charge to pass information amongst other relevant networks/organisations in his/her country.
2. Raise the knowledge of the network developed under activity 1, through the organisation of three webinars on specific topic depending of the needs of the network and IFOAM EU's advocacy work, and regular updates about the work of IFOAM EU.
3. Advocacy work: IFOAM EU will support advocacy activities for its members at national level with providing advice, arguments, draft letters, key messages.

Expected results:

To help IFOAM EU while constructing strategies to better understand the needs of its national and local members.

To improve the exchange of information between national and European levels.

To improve the efficiency of IFOAM EU's advocacy.

Work package 2: Provide information on new genetic engineering techniques and develop strategies to ensure that these techniques will be regulated as GMOs

The European Court of Justice published one decision on the legal status of new genetic engineering techniques regarding the GMO regulation (Directive 2001/18). It is crucial to continue our advocacy work to ensure the correct implementation of the decision at the European level and that Directive 2001/18 will not be modified to explicitly exclude these new techniques from its scope.

Main targets:

European and national stakeholders, IFOAM EU members.

Key activities:

1. Coordination with other NGOs (national and European) working on new genetic engineering techniques.
2. Leaflet on new genetic engineering techniques to explain the position of the organic sector, translated in several European languages.

3. Legal analysis of the decision of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and distribution of the analysis amongst IFOAM EU members (newsletter, website, extranet).
4. Strategic meeting with IFOAM EU members to organize IFOAM EU strategy work.
5. Advocacy work after the decision of the organic sector to make new genetic engineering techniques regulated as GMOs.

Expected results:

To ensure a better coordinated work at the European and national level on new genetic engineering techniques.

To ensure that new genetic engineering techniques will be regulated as GMOs and will not be marketed without assessment, prior authorization and traceability.

To help the organic sector to remain GMO-free according to its standards.

Work package 3: Roundtables and workshops

Following the work started in 2014, IFOAM EU will continue to organise roundtables and workshops to create discussion space on specific topics, depending of the evolution of GMOs policies and the specific needs of the roundtable participants and the GMO-free sectors. These events are the occasion to have strategical discussion, used in IFOAM EU's advocacy work (see WP 5). Considering the importance of new genetic engineering techniques, a specific focus on this topic will be laid in several regional roundtables.

Main targets:

The organic sector (farmers, processors...), the conventional GMO-free sector, civil society organisations sharing common interest with the organic sector.

Key activities:

1. Evaluate the potential need for new strategic roundtables on specific topics, notably related to cosmetics and textiles.
2. Organisation of three regional roundtables to explain to IFOAM EU members the decision of the European Court of Justice on new genetic engineering techniques, the ongoing developments related to this decision and the position of the organic sector resulting from the strategic meeting.
3. Organize two workshops on topics to be defined (2019 – 2020).

Expected results:

To improve the exchange of information between different organisations working on GMOs.

To help the organic sector to develop a strategic position on specific topics, to be define, depending on the needs of the organic sector.

To highlight specific needs of the organic and the conventional GMO-free sectors.

Work package 4: Development of practical tools for the organic sector

From the roundtables and workshops organised in the 'Keeping GMOs out of food' project (2014-2018), members of the roundtables expressed the need for a database to facilitate the access to specific information. Notably specific tools to avoid new genetic engineering techniques will be developed.

Main targets:

The organic and conventional GMO-free sector (breeders, farmers, processors).

Key activities:

1. Evaluation of the existing databases available for the organic sector on seeds and additives, notably at the national level, and the possibility to develop, update, translate and merge them.
2. Database on new genetic engineering techniques: it will take at least two years for the decision of the ECJ to be correctly implemented by the European Commission, provided the Commission does not decide to simply change the EU legislation on GMOs to make way for the new techniques. Moreover, the Commission has so far refused to launch research projects to develop detection methods for products genetically modified with new techniques, and the development of such methods will take time. It is therefore important to allow the organic movement and civil society to keep track of the development and marketing of new GM plants and animals in other regions of the world, in particular to ensure that no such product or GM organism is unknowingly imported in the EU.
3. Database on GMO-free additives and processing aids: This database will help organic processors to know what is available and where to find reliable GMO-free additives.

Expected results:

Facilitate supplies to GMO-free seeds.

Facilitate supplies to GMO-free additives and processing aids.

To increase the availability of GMO-free seeds and additives while giving the possibility to organic breeders and GMO-free additives to promote their production.

Work package 5: Advocacy

IFOAM EU will continue its advocacy work on GMOs issue initiated during the 'Keeping GMOs' out of food'. Direction of advocacy work will depend of the political context, the needs highlighted by the steering committee (see below project implementation), participants of workshops and roundtables (see WP 2) and national members (see WP 1). This work package is complementary to the advocacy work done on new genetic engineering techniques (see WP 2: Provide information on new genetic engineering techniques and develop strategies).

Main targets:

Political decision-makers

Key activities:

1. Regular meetings with EU policy-makers: to prevent GMO authorisations, raise awareness on the need to ensure freedom not to use GMOs, and to ensure transparency on the use of new genetic engineering techniques and the funding of EU research projects to develop reliable detection methods.

2. Regular meeting with European NGOs working on GMOs issue.
3. Monitor possible evolution regarding the end of the Zero Tolerance policy on seeds contamination.
4. Provide the organic sector with information (newsletter, email...) about IFOAM EU advocacy work and political developments on the topic.
5. Organise a final event, to bring interested stakeholders together and to report on the results of the whole project (end of 2020).

Expected results:

Highlight the importance of keeping the organic sector free from GMOs.
 Highlight policy solutions and make policy-makers support them.
 Policy-maker support better regulation

Work package 6: Project management

Main targets:

Internal

Key activities:

1. Monitor project milestones and outputs, project expenses, oversee potential risks and find relevant solution to address them.
2. Updates donors on project progress and produce project reports.

Expected results:

Project activities implemented correctly and objectives met.
 Potentially necessary adaptations of project activities to changing circumstances.

4. Project implementation

The project is led by the Steering Committee, the decision-making body, which provides strategic direction, practical support, advice and/or feedback on the project process:

- **Alexander Beck**, IFOAM EU Processors Interest Group chair and Managing Director of Association ökologischer Lebensmittelhersteller e.V.
- **Eduardo Cuoco**, IFOAM EU Director
- **Thomas Fertil**, IFOAM EU Board Member and Agriculture Policy Manager in BioAustria
- **Eric Gall**, IFOAM EU Policy Manager
- **Dorota Metera**, IFOAM EU Council Member and Director of BIOEKSPERT
- **Pauline Verrière**, IFOAM EU Policy Officer

5. Timeline (August 2018 – 2020)

Main tasks	2019												2020																	
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
WP1 - Development of GMOs experts network																														
Identification of national experts																														
3 webinars																														
Advocacy work																														
WP 2 - Provide information on new genetic engineering techniques and develop strategies																														
Coordination with other NGOs																														
Leaflet on new genetic engineering techniques																														
Legal analysis of the ECJ decision																														
Strategical meeting																														
Advocacy work																														
WP3 - Roundtables and workshops																														
Evaluation of the need on new RT and WS																														
2 Workshops																														
Regional roundtable 1 on new GMOs																														
Regional roundtable 2 on new GMOs																														
Regional roundtable 3 on new GMOs																														
WP4 - Developments of practical tools for the organic sector																														
Evaluation of existing tools																														
Database on GMO-free seeds																														
Databasae on GMO-free additives																														
WP 5 - Advocacy																														
Regular meeting with EU Policy-makers																														
Regular meeting with NGOs working on the same topic																														
Monitoring of the evolution of regulation on seeds contamination																														
Provide the organic sector with information																														
Organisation of the final event																														
WP 6 - Project Management																														
Organise & follow up the implementation of the project																														
Monitor project progress																														
Send updates and status of the project to funders																														

6. Budget (2018-2020)

	WP 1 - Development of GMOs expert network	WP 2 - Provide information on new genetic engineering techniques and develop strategies	WP 3 - Roundtables and workshop	WP 4 - Development of practical tools for the organic sector	WP 5 - Advocacy	WP 6 - Project management	
Personal costs	22,773.75	53,706.75	5,215.50	13,444	76,389.10	10,081.50	181,610.60
Subcontracting costs	0	7,260	0	40,000	0	0	47260
Travel and accomodation	0	3,000	0	0	5,000	0	228,870.60
Other costs (events organisation...)	0	10,350	54,750	0	12,100	0	77200
	22,773.75	74,316.75	59,965.50	53,444	93,489.10	10,081.50	314,070.60

Reasons to join the project:

- Increase your knowledge on fundamental topics for the future of organic farming: GMOs, new genetic engineering techniques...
- Participate to strategical discussions to develop concrete solutions to help the organic sector to remain GMO-free at an acceptable cost.
- Enable the organic sector to develop advocacy on crucial topics, to influence EU policy to let the organic sector be able to remain GMO-free.

“Keeping GMOs out of organic” project supporter

Applies if contract is for €2,500 for each year (2018/2019/2020)

Visibility in project documents and events

- Workshops and Roundtables
- Closing conference
- Other events
- Published documents related to the project

Online visibility (logo) on IFOAM EU – KGOOF project webpage

Logo on IFOAM EU homepage for 5 consecutive months per year

“Keeping GMOs out of organic” project sponsor

Applies if contract is for €2,500 for 2018 and €5.000 per year for 2019 and 2020

Visibility in project documents and events

- Workshops and Roundtables
- Closing conference
- Other events
- Published documents related to the project

Online visibility (logo) on IFOAM EU – KGOOF project webpage

Logo on IFOAM EU homepage for 6 consecutive months per year

“Keeping GMOs out of organic” project patron

Applies if contract is for €5.000 in 2018 and €10.000 for 2019 and 2020

Visibility in project documents and events

- Workshops and Roundtables
- Closing conference
- Other events
- Published documents related to the project

One advertisement page in publication related to the project other than leaflet.

Online visibility (logo) on IFOAM EU homepage throughout the project

Online visibility (logo) on IFOAM EU – KGOOF project webpage

Current sponsors of the project ‘Keeping GMOs out of organic’



This publication is co-financed by the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility for this communication lies with the IFOAM EU Group. The EASME is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

For more information on the project, please contact:

Eduardo Cuoco

IFOAM EU Director

Tel.: +32 2 280 12 23

eduardo.cuoco@ifoam-eu.org

Pauline Verrière

IFOAM EU GMO Policy Officer

Tel.: + 32 2 808 60 79

pauline.verriere@ifoam-eu.org