



**The certification of agricultural products:  
10 key factors for transforming an entire sector**

GIGA/FONAP/PEGNet Workshop

The Certification of Agricultural Products as a Key Driver of Sector Transformation

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**1) The structure of the relevant sector has to be taken into account.**

Which kind of production structure exists in the sector: Is the sector characterized by large-scale or smallholder production? The respective supply chains may differ in terms of their characteristics and complexity.

**2) The complementarity of different certification schemes is key.**

The effects and dissemination of standards may be boosted through already-implemented schemes (for example, through existing infrastructure or developed markets).

**3) All relevant stakeholders need to be involved.**

All stakeholders have to be involved in the process of standards development (multi-stakeholder approach). Good partnerships within the supply chains are necessary.

**4) Good management of stakeholders' expectations is needed.**

The different stakeholder objectives have to be balanced: Markets, retailers, brands and consumers want schemes to be strong, credible and robust. However, producers need standards to be practical and affordable.



**5) Schemes have to be feasible on the ground.**

Schemes should consist of both recommendations and flexible frameworks for smallholders to achieve their own priorities (for example, through the combination of audits and guidance).

**6) Schemes have to offer additional services.**

To increase incentives for producers, certification schemes should impact the rural infrastructure – for example, by providing inputs for production, extension services, training and/or micro-financing.

**7) A high degree of committed management has to be provided.**

To guarantee long-term effects, schemes should build trust and should be clear and transparent for farmers.

**8) Overcoming yield gaps is essential.**

Higher standards are not an automatic means for the rural development of smallholders. Higher output prices through price premiums are only one way to improve income levels. Yield levels also have to be raised – for example, through improved crop management skills.

**9) Functional socio-economic infrastructure is required.**

To implement schemes, the socio-economic infrastructure is crucial – for example, roads, electricity, market centres. Moreover, social norms have to be in line with those of the cooperatives.

**10) Policies have to support certification processes.**

Agricultural and food policies have to create an environment in which schemes can work. Institutions have to guarantee rights – for example, land rights. On the consumer side, policies should also raise public awareness of the social aspects of producers in developing countries.