



WORLD BANANA FORUM

CHARTER

DRAFT (December 2011)

1. BACKGROUND

The decision to create a multi-stakeholder Forum is the result of a long process of consultation between stakeholders which started in 1998. The aim was to bring together all the stakeholders of the banana sector, from production to consumption, to address jointly the challenges it faces. Subsequently, a series of meetings were held showing the consensus on the need for a permanent forum aimed at developing a sustainable banana sector from the social, environmental and economic perspectives. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been involved in this process through its Trade and Markets Division (EST) since the beginning. It launched in 2009 the *Multi-stakeholder forum on sustainable banana production and trade* (MSF) project to organize the first World Banana Forum and help stakeholders establish a permanent forum. An informal preparatory committee comprising representatives of every stakeholder group in equal numbers was formed and after extensive discussions, the first World Banana Forum (WBF) took place at FAO headquarters in Rome from 7 to 8 December 2009.

Over 150 participants came from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. They represented a wide spectrum of stakeholders of the banana sector: representatives of producers associations, trade organizations, private companies (including major banana marketing corporations, shipping companies and retailers), trade unions and other civil society organizations, research institutes, technical cooperation agencies and governments. The participants decided to start with an informal structure for the Forum to subsequently adopt a more formal structure.

The WBF has acted as an informal network, focusing on results and delivering regular communications to governmental representatives through the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas and Tropical Fruits (IGG), whose secretariat is also hosted by the EST Division of FAO. The activities of the Forum are guided by a Steering Committee (SC) and implemented by specialized Working Groups. These activities are funded by annual contributions paid by the Forum's participants and funds provided by donors.

2. WBF: DEFINITION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. Definition

The World Banana Forum (WBF) is a permanent space of assembly for participants involved in the global banana supply-chain to promote open dialogue on challenges facing the banana industry. This initiative brings together producers, their organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, exporter groups, trading companies, retailers, public agencies, governments, research institutions and civil society organizations.

2.2. Mission

The Mission of the World Banana Forum is to inspire collaboration between stakeholders that produces pragmatic outcomes for the betterment of the banana industry; and, to achieve an industry-wide consensus of best practices regarding workplace issues (including rights of workers), gender equity, environmental impacts, sustainable production and economic issues.

2.3. Vision

The hope of the World Banana Forum is that all stakeholders can share the vision of a sustainable banana value chain for present and future generations.



2.4. Objectives

The WBF focuses its activities on the development of sustainable banana production and trade. It undertakes activities that can rapidly generate gains for all stakeholders and its outputs will be made available for free to everyone. The WBF seeks through its objectives the promotion of:

- sustainable management of natural resources;
- mitigation of climate change and harmful environmental impacts;
- respect for human rights (labour rights, health and safety at work);
- gender equity;
- fair distribution of value along the supply chain;
- knowledge sharing as a tool for development (sharing information on best practices).

2.5. Scope

The Forum focuses on internationally traded bananas⁽¹⁾ but ensures links and information exchanges with the scientific community and producing countries that are not currently major exporter.

(1) this term includes both dessert and cooking bananas

3. STRUCTURE

The WBF comprises the following:

- its participants;
- a Steering Committee (SC);
- task forces;

Two task forces have been working since the beginning of the Forum to specifically handle activities related to Budget and Fundraising (TF01) and Communications (TF02). These task forces support the SC's decisions and help the Secretariat to produce project proposals, contact potential donors, collect funds and deal with communications.

- thematic working groups;

A number of working groups focus on the effective implementation of activities related to the Forum's goals and objectives.

- and a Secretariat.

. The Secretariat assists the working groups and facilitates the flow of information among them and with the SC and task forces. It facilitates the communication between the Forum's participants and the outside world, it responds to queries of information, promotes the WBF, manages the budget, and administrative tasks.

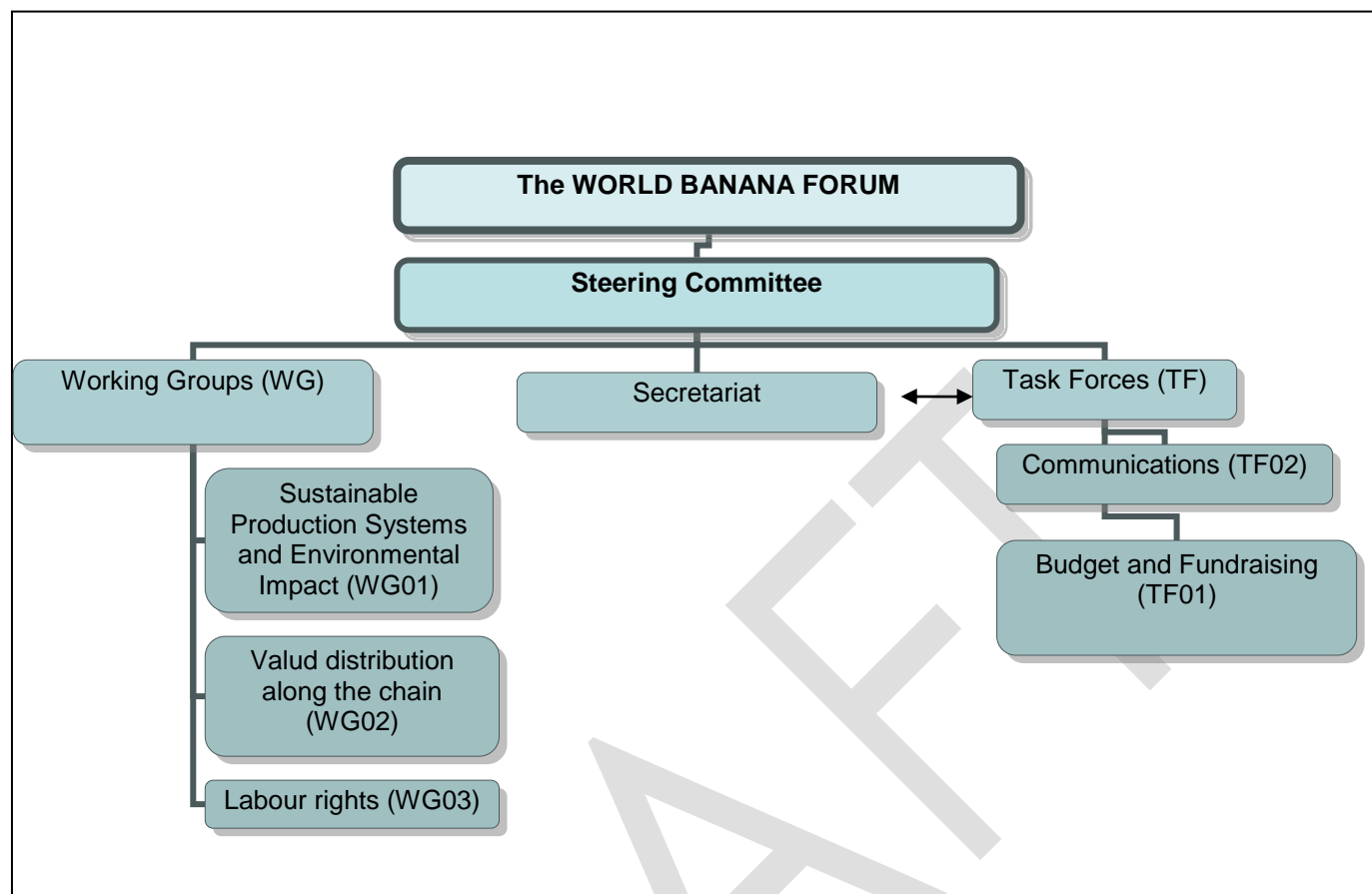


Figure 1. WBF structure diagram

4. WBF PARTICIPATION

4.1. Participants

Participation in the WBF is open to all organizations with an interest in the banana sector. The participants are from all the major geographic regions which contribute to world trade either as producers or consumers. Participants typically belong to the constituencies below; nevertheless, other type of actors might be considered.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The CSO group includes small-scale farmer associations, trade unions, human rights, environmental and development NGOs, consumer associations and standard-setting and certification organizations.

Private Sector. This group includes national producers and their organizations, multinational producers and traders, trade associations, exporters, shipping companies, importers, ripeners and retailers distributing bananas. It also includes companies supplying inputs and services to the banana industry.

Governmental/Intergovernmental Institutions. It includes government representatives of producing and importing countries and also inter-governmental institutions, notably FAO, the ILO and UNCTAD.

Research institutions. Mainly specialized research centres and universities.

4.2. Participation requests and roles

Requests for registration as a participant of the WBF shall be submitted directly to the Secretariat, who will assess them based upon the following criteria. Final approvals of the applications will be conducted by the Steering Committee (SC). The criteria are as follows:



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- (i) Belonging to the banana sector or having relevant activities directly related to it;
- (ii) Ability and willingness to contribute to attaining the WBF objectives through sharing knowledge, willingness to implement changes, and participation in the WBF meetings and pilot projects;
- (iii) Effective financial and/or in-kind contributions to the WBF.

The WBF has five categories of affiliation; all of these can be referred to as 'participants':

- **Steering Committee members:** Individuals or representatives of organizations who lead the development of the WBF, defining its work plan and budget and overseeing their implementation, approving new participants' applications, defining the calendar of meetings and long term strategy of the Forum.
- **Working Group coordinators:** Individuals or representatives of organizations who lead and coordinate the activities of one of the working groups of the WBF. These participants use their expertise to guide the WG through the production of concrete outputs.
- **Participants providing financial contributions:** Individuals or representatives of organizations who provide an annual contribution to support the Forum and may belong to any of the Working Groups.
- **Participants exempted from providing financial contributions:** Individuals or representatives of organizations who are unable to provide an annual contribution to support the Forum. They can also belong to any of the Working Groups.
- **Partners:** Institutions which due to their status - e.g. governmental bodies, UN agencies or networks – may be unable or unwilling to become a member under another network's umbrella. They may liaise closely with the WBF.

4.3. Benefits for paying participants

The participants who provide voluntary financial contributions following the approved scale¹ enjoy the following benefits:

- (i) attend the WBF meetings and participate in its main decisions;
- (ii) become eligible as member of the Steering Committee or as coordinator of one of the Working Groups;
- (iii) have their name, logo and a link to their website in the WBF project's webpage (same size and relevance regardless of the amount of the contribution);
- (iv) access the WBF project's database;
- (v) access the WBF materials (information and technical guides).

5. WBF MEETINGS

All the meetings held under the umbrella of the World Banana Forum will seek a balanced representation from a geographical point of view and per constituencies.

5.1. Global meetings

The WBF will organize a "Global meeting" addressed to all the banana stakeholders worldwide once every two years on average. When possible, this event should be held back to back with the sessions of the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas and Tropical Fruits (IGG).

¹ The scale was approved during the Second Meeting of the SC (November 2010, Rome). Contact the Secretariat if you wish to read it.



The meeting of December 2009 which gave birth to the World Banana Forum is to be considered the first Global meeting. The next meetings will be named following the denomination: 2nd World Banana Forum (planned for 2012), 3rd World Banana Forum and so on.

5.2. Working meetings

The working meetings of the WBF happen with regularity throughout the year. There are three types of working meetings:

- (i) Steering Committee (SC) meetings. Physical meetings to be held, in principle, twice a year. The date, venue and agenda will be decided by the SC itself after a proposal is received from the Secretariat. It is advisable that electronic meetings are held in between the physical meetings.
- (ii) Working Group's coordinators meetings. When possible, the coordinators of the Working Groups will be invited to meet in parallel sessions to the SC meetings. Since the WGs focus on the delivery of outputs, it is important that those are overseen and validated by the SC members.
- (iii) Working Groups meetings. Each of the Working Groups of the WBF will be free to schedule their own meetings, based on the demand and needs perceived by their respective coordinators. The WG coordinators (or 'core team') might prefer to meet amongst themselves sometimes, but they need to call open meetings with regularity to promote open dialogue and greater participation.

5.3. E-forums (electronic meetings)

Electronic meetings and/or consultations will be held with regularity (at least twice a year). The Secretariat will offer a web based platform to facilitate the process.

6. GOVERNANCE

As a general rule, the SC operates as the decision making body for the WBF and in that capacity defines and directs the fund allocation strategy in accordance with the terms and procedures set out below. The Secretariat coordinates the day to day operations of the WBF in accordance with the terms described below. Finally, the WG's coordinators lead and coordinate the activities of the working groups, focusing on concrete outputs.

6.1. About the Steering Committee

6.1.1 Membership. The Steering Committee (SC) membership is open to all the WBF participants provided that they have paid the annual financial contribution (see 4.2 above) and have sufficient time and willingness to support actively the Forum. In order to adequately manage the process, it is recommended that the SC is formed by not less than 10 members and no more than 30. Each organization may designate one representative to join the SC, however it is advisable that alternates can be also nominated and they have the right to be copied in all the communications and attend meetings.

Every organization or individual has the right to candidate himself to the SC. He/she will have to explain the link of his/her work with the banana sector and accept the conditions affecting SC members described in the section 6.1.7 of this document. The SC will accept new members by consensus after they are presented through the Secretariat.

Following the spirit of the dialogue process since 1998, the SC should be comprised of at least one member from each of the following types of organizations with total membership *by each category* not to exceed 50% of the total number of SC members.

- (i) Representatives from CSOs.
- (ii) Representatives from the private sector.
- (iii) Representatives from governments and intergovernmental organizations.



Regarding the geographical representation, ideally 1/3 of the members should come from regional and/or national organizations representing developing countries. The SC should include members from at least three out of the four following producing and exporting regions: Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia-Pacific.

Rotations within the SC are expected. SC members whose participation is sponsored should be alternated at least every two years unless a majority of SC members voted for this period to be extended.

SC members who do not attend two successive meetings of the SC will be excluded from the SC unless they provide proper justification.

6.1.2. Functions. The SC has the following main functions:

- (i) Lead the overall development of the WBF defining its policy and strategy, long term objectives and expected outputs;
- (ii) Define the annual WBF work program and financial plan for activities, deciding on the allocation of funds;
- (iii) Ensure the implementation of the work program and monitor its progress;
- (iv) Review and validate the outputs of the Working Groups;
- (v) Supervise the activities of the Working Groups and Task Forces;
- (vi) Take note of parallel activities contributing to the WBF objectives, considers means of enhancing the alignment of these activities with the WBF work program;
- (vii) Oversee the inclusion of new participants in the Forum and the SC;
- (viii) Oversee the creation and development of *ad hoc* task forces.
- (ix) Define selection criteria for activities included in the approved work program;
- (x) Contribute to fund raising activities;
- (xi) Review and decide on the dissemination of the communication and technical materials produced by the Working Groups and WBF participants; and
- (xii) Promote the WBF and its activities

6.1.3. Meetings. The SC meets on average every quarter, either in person or through conference calls. In principle two meetings per year should be in person. Additional meetings may be in person or by telephone/video conference. The SC sessions are chaired on a rotating basis, ensuring a balanced representation of every constituency.

6.1.4. Participation. In addition to the SC members, every participant of the WBF may attend open sessions of the SC in an observer capacity, although the Chair of the SC meeting may declare certain sessions of the SC closed to observers.

6.1.5. Materials. Agendas and materials to be considered at SC meetings are provided by the Secretariat or the Chair at least 7 days in advance of such meetings.

6.1.6. Decisions. A quorum by the SC includes at least one member of each category of the SC and at least a majority of all SC members. Under normal circumstances the SC is a non-voting body that works by consensus. In the event that the SC is unable to achieve consensus on a matter, a decision will be approved if at least plus one of the participating SC members agree.

6.1.7. Duties of SC members. The SC members accept the following duties:

- (i) Participate in the meetings of the SC with regularity and integrity, read the draft documents sent by the Secretariat, contribute comments and attend electronic and in-person meetings (it is required to be present in person at least at one SC meeting every year);
- (ii) Play the role of intermediate between the WBF and the organizations they represent (they should circulate the WBF's decisions and outcomes internally within their own organizations);
- (iii) Seek consensus as the first method to avoid confrontation, SC members understand that different points of view can -and should- exist among them and also among WBF participants;
- (iv) Respect the neutrality of the Forum and, while acting as SC members, do not take position regarding issues out of the scope of the WBF;



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- (v) Follow the principles of collaboration, sharing knowledge, demonstrating solidarity and ethical behavior which inspired the creation of the WBF;
- (vi) Do not try to use the membership of the SC to derive personal profits or advantages.

In case of non-compliance with these duties the SC may decide to exclude a member with a majority vote.

6.2. About the Secretariat

6.2.1. For the period 2011-2012, the Secretariat is hosted by the Trade and Markets Division of FAO at the FAO HQ in Rome. Being hosted at FAO, the Secretariat of the WBF must respect the rules and procedures of this Organization.

6.2.2. The responsibilities of the Secretariat include but are not limited to the following:

- (i) Coordinate the preparation and implementation of the strategic plan -as defined by the SC considering the WBF's objectives- and annual work programs;
- (ii) Assist in the preparation of project documents (such as project proposals) and letters of agreement with potential donors and participants;
- (iii) Provide technical and logistical support to the operations of the Steering Committee and organize its meetings;
- (iv) Liaise with the various member organizations, government representatives, donors and multiple stakeholders;
- (v) Act as contact point for stakeholders seeking information on the WBF project and reply to queries;
- (vi) Contribute to the fundraising for the WBF and participate in the activities to be done by the other task forces that may be created;
- (vii) Manage the WBF finances in accordance with the financial management systems of the institution housing the Secretariat (for the time being, the FAO);
- (viii) Liaise with other networks and institutions to maintain up-to-date information on parallel and complementary analytical and policy/stakeholder dialogue initiatives;
- (ix) Provide SC members and WG coordinators regular reports on the deliberations of the meetings and overall status of all the WBF activities;
- (x) Provide technical advice on and maintain an internet platform enabling online work and communication within Working Groups and between them and the Secretariat;
- (xi) Provide technical advice and support to the specialized Working Groups of the WBF (as much as possible, based on available funds);
- (xii) Ensure smooth communication among the Working Groups and between them and the Steering Committee in order to create synergies and avoid overlaps;
- (xiii) Facilitate discussions of the WBF through web platforms and electronic conferences (to collect ideas and proposals from members and obtain their feedback on draft documents, etc.);
- (xiv) Set up and update dedicated web pages providing information on the WBF in the FAO website (in three languages);
- (xv) Assist in the identification, elaboration and showcase of best practices by WBF participants and other banana industry stakeholders with potential for broad dissemination;
- (xvi) Assist in translating documents and e-conference contributions into English, French and Spanish (as much as possible, based on available funds).

6.2.3. Any proposals made to the SC are directed through the Secretariat prior to consideration by the SC. The Secretariat has responsibility for indicating to the SC that a proposed activity may be inconsistent with the WBF's objectives/policies and as such it may not be implemented. The SC will make the final decision.

In exceptional circumstances the SC may pass a motion of no-confidence in the Secretariat.

6.3. About the Working Groups' coordinators

6.3.1. The role and functions of the coordinators in each WG should be based on mutual consensus within the WG. A team of three to six coordinators per WG is envisaged. The coordinators should be



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appointed by the participants of the WG trying to ensure a balanced representation regarding geographical origin and professional activity. The coordinators are not supposed to be permanent; this is a voluntary position which can be continued as long as there is mutual consensus.

6.3.2. The WG's coordinators have the following main functions:

- (i) Lead the coordination of the Working Groups according to the WG guidelines document (accessible at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/banana/documents/WBF_guidelines180210_en.pdf);
- (ii) Report regularly to the Secretariat: WG composition, objectives, work plan and financial needs (the role of a rotating rapporteur is advisable);
- (iii) Work as a link between the WG and the WBF (the Secretariat, the SC and the rest of the members of the forum), but their power should be considered equal to that of any other member;
- (iv) Establish a WG working plan (revisable when needed) and make it available to the members of their WG and the SC; and
- (v) Call meetings and hold teleconference as deemed necessary.

The WG's coordinators elect a lead coordinator who is responsible for facilitating the WG, sending reminders for inputs and feedback, calling meetings, etc. The lead coordinator function rotates among WG coordinators. WG coordinators may also decide to hire a consultant to support the lead coordinators or request the Secretariat to provide this support if funds are available for this.

6.3.3. Link to the SC. Every Working Group should have at least one representative in the SC.

6.4. About the Task Forces' coordinators

6.4.1. The role and functions of the coordinator in each Task Force (TF) should be based on mutual consensus within the TF. One coordinator per TF is envisaged. The coordinator should be appointed by the participants of the TF. The coordinators are not supposed to be permanent; this is a voluntary position which can be continued as long as there is mutual consensus.

6.4.2. The TF's coordinators have the following main functions:

- i) Coordinate the TF
- ii) Report regularly to the Secretariat on the TF's activities
- iii) Call meetings and hold teleconference as deemed necessary
- iv) Write and distribute short reports of the meetings and teleconferences

6.4.3. Link to the SC. Every TF should have at least one representative in the SC.

7. FUNDING

The existence of the World Banana Forum primarily relies on voluntary annual contributions paid by participants as stipulated in the scale approved by the Steering Committee. These contributions enable the coordination of the WBF and the basic functioning of the Secretariat and Steering Committee. In addition, participants cover their participation in the WBF's activities (travel costs, staff time...) except for non-profit organizations from developing countries. However, these voluntary contributions are not sufficient to fund all the activities envisaged, in particular those of the working groups and the participation of non-profit organizations from developing countries. The Forum is still at an early phase and it requires support from FAO (which provides technical support, an office with computer and telecommunication equipment for the Secretariat and the facilities for the meetings that will be held at HQ) and public sector donors. The use of public funds is also justified by the public goods that the forum generates. The Task Force on Budget and Fundraising, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat have the responsibility for collecting funds from donors. The mix of public and private funds ensures that the Forum operates independently and impartially. As the Forum develops over time, gains new members and as the positive impacts of its activities become evident throughout the banana sector, an increasing share of its budget will be financed by its participants.



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Voluntary financial contributions will be accepted only after an assessment of the interest and relevance to the banana sector. This assessment will be carried out by the WBF Secretariat and at least one member the FAO Partnership Committee should be informed in each case. The Secretariat has prepared a standard letter containing a voluntary contributor agreement to clarify the status, rights and obligations of voluntary contributors.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

The technical outcomes and other communication materials issued by the WBF are available for free to everyone. Since the WBF is tri-lingual (English, Spanish and French), it is foreseen that most of its outputs will be produced in all the three languages of the Forum (provided sufficient funding is available).

The WBF relies on the Task Force on Communications for dealing with all kind of communications (external and internal). This team of WBF participants prepares communication materials such as press releases and oversees the content and style of the messages delivered by the WBF. Different audiences are targeted: WBF participants and stakeholders, donors, governments, retailers, international institutions and specialized media.

9. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Rules of Procedure for the WBF may be made by a 2/3 majority of the SC members. Such affirmative agreement may not arise from a mere lapse of a no objection period, whereas affirmative agreement by all members present at a SC meeting shall be sufficient. The Secretariat shall maintain and distribute clear records of any such amendments.

Contact information:

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