



Report of Secretariat's activities (2010-2011)

1) Support to the development of the thematic Working Groups (WGs)

The Secretariat has regularly participated in conference calls with the coordinators of the 3 WGs of the Forum. When funds permitted it, a representative of the Secretariat attended physical meetings of the WGs. The Secretariat has provided technical support and guidance to the WGs (i.e. distribution email addresses, dedicated webpages for the WGs). When possible, it has helped with translations and communications. Finally, it also keeps a record of all the interested stakeholders and communicates with them.

▪ Communications through the Internet

The Secretariat worked closely with the WG coordinators to prepare a dedicated webpage for the use of each of the Working Groups. These pages are hosted by FAO and are used to disseminate the current and future outputs of the WGs. The official public website of the WBF has been updated and keeps running in the three languages of the Forum: English, Spanish and French. This site has been opened for free and it will be kept open on the FAO servers at no cost.

website address: <http://www.fao.org/economic/worldbananaforum/wbf-working-groups>

There is a second platform for discussion. It has been developed as a page for e-conferences. This site was used during the last e-conferences of the Steering Committee and Working Groups' coordinators.

website address: <http://dgroups.org/fao/worldbananaforum>

Through DGroups there is also the possibility to address messages to all the coordinators of each of the WGs; the email sent to each of the following distribution addresses will arrive to the list of active coordinators of the chosen WG.

2) Promotion of the WBF to enlarge its membership

2.1) Using the internet to promote the WBF

The Secretariat has continued expanding its public website in 3 languages. It has added new web pages and new downloadable documents. Additionally, the Secretariat regularly uses different tools to ensure that the WBF is a good and accessible platform to share knowledge with interested stakeholders from every country. Our work with social media (web 2.0) has been appreciated in FAO and our case is being used as a "best practice" in the area of low-cost effective promotion. We have been sharing knowledge through: TYPO3, Google Sites, Skype, Slideshare and Twitter.

Find the Secretariat of the WBF at Skype or Twitter; our account ID in both is: **FAOwbf**

2.2) Awareness raising campaign to government representatives during the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)

These two committees are governing bodies of FAO and are attended by representatives of the member governments. The CCP deals with trade in agricultural products while COAG deals with agricultural development. The Secretariat set up a booth in the Atrium of FAO during the last meetings of the above mentioned bodies to raise awareness of government delegates on the importance of the WBF. It handed out leaflets and documents and recorded registration requests.

2.3) Liaison with FAO experts and officers from other international organizations

The Secretariat has informed FAO experts and officers from other international organizations about the WG's activities and invited them to actively contribute to these. Several staff members of FAO and the ILO have been included into the lists of WG members.



2.4) *Development of a visual identity for the WBF*

In order to affirm its identity and become widely known, it was thought that the WBF needed to adopt a clearly-recognizable logo. The Secretariat contacted graphic designers and received several proposals (at no cost). After some elaboration, a final selection of proposals was done and submitted to the members of the Steering Committee for voting. Since October 2010, the WBF has its own logo.

2.5) *Database of media contacts*

The Secretariat keeps a database of media contacts and new potential partners for the Forum.

3) Facilitation of the Forum's Steering Committee

The Secretariat has continued to facilitate the Steering Committee. It organized three e-conferences for the SC and dealt with the incorporation of new members. Reports of these e-conferences were made available to the WBF members.

As the efforts were focused on supporting the working groups and in order to save money, the SC decided to hold a limited number of in-person meetings from December 2009 to present. A total of four meetings were held since the inception of the WBF (December 2009, November 2010, October 2011 and February 2012).

4) Fundraising to ensure the Forum's financial sustainability

4.1) Financing the interim period after the MSF project

In order to ensure the continuity of the WBF during the 6-month period between the end of the old MSF project and the reception of funds into the newly-established multi-donor trust fund, the Secretariat searched for funding within FAO. It managed to obtain sufficient funds to cover this interim period. Additionally, the Trade and Markets Division of FAO made exceptional donations to the WBF project which helped to keep the Secretariat working during some critical periods in 2011. Due to budget cuts, this extra financial support from FAO is unlikely to happen again in 2012.

4.2) Collection of annual fees from WBF participants

The Secretariat has had to dedicate a considerable amount of time to the collection of annual fees from WBF participants. The Secretariat has contacted a high number of companies involved in the banana sector, including large-scale retailers and shipping companies.

4.3) Fundraising with donors

The Secretariat has produced various budgets and funding scenarios in order to persuade interested donors about the relevance of the project and the involvement of its participants. The Secretariat has contacted some foundations and public-sector donors.

5) Attending international meetings on behalf of the WBF

A representative of the Secretariat attended the following meetings in representation of the WBF:

- International Banana Forum (organized by AEBE). Guayaquil, EC; 5-7 April 2011
- Working Group on Bananas (organized by FRESHFEL). Brussels, BE; 7 June 2011
- INREF expert meeting (organized by Wageningen University). Rotterdam, NL; 9 June 2011

The above listed travels were funded partly by the meeting organizers and partly by FAO's regular budget.



6) Preparation of proposals, concept notes and other documents for the WBF

The Secretariat is continuously working on the update and production of new documents. These documents are addressed to different targets: SC members, WG coordinators, donors, potential contributors, new members, press, general audience, etc. Below are some of the key documents produced; all of them in the three languages of the WBF:

- Preparation of a draft charter –Rules of Procedure- for the WBF (see WBF-F2-12-9e).
- New WBF project concept note for donors and presentation note for interested stakeholders.
- WBF reports to the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas and Tropical Fruits.
- Reports to the SC after each of its meetings and e-conferences.

7) Other actions

The Secretariat recruited an intern for a period of 6 months. Ms. Arnal joined the Secretariat of the WBF in December 2011. It is expected that more interns come in the future, rotating on a regularly basis depending on the needs of the permanent Secretariat and the WGs of the Forum.