

World Banana Forum (WBF)

WBF| GUIDELINES FOR WORKING GROUPS *Task Force 03*

ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES

What for?

These guidelines define a set of procedures which should guide the functioning of the working groups created by the World Banana Forum (WBF). The purpose of this document is to understand which are the common objectives to pursue and the procedures that the working groups should follow.

Applicability

The following guidelines are just indications expressed to turn the Working Groups of the WBF into a useful resource. The participants can choose freely to join the Working Groups and they can choose to stop their involvement in those at any stage. All the inputs to the Working Groups are based on voluntary contributions. These guidelines should be observed although there has not been yet foreseen a mechanism to ensure that they are used.

Since the Working Groups are voluntarily formed, they can also decide to establish particular own rules if these are supported by all their members and consistent with these guidelines.

GUIDELINES CONTENT

1. Status of the World Banana Forum's Working Groups (WGs)

The five working groups created during the first World Banana Forum as well as the future WGs which might be created under the umbrella of this Forum are based on the voluntary participation of its members.

The groups should have a high degree of autonomy and self-organize their work. Generally speaking, these groups will undertake projects that can quickly produce benefits for all stakeholders. The groups are a result-oriented instrument at the service of the WBF main objectives:

- *exchanging information on best practices and sustainable development projects (e.g. techniques and systems for sustainable banana production);*
- *jointly designing and implementing field research projects to produce best practices in banana production (these projects will be based on collaboration in the field among all relevant actors, including governments and their technical agencies; e.g. research institutes, extension services);*
- *assessing workplace issues and encouraging the adoption of practices that are consistent with ILO core conventions and recommendations and guarantee gender equity;*
- *suggesting strategies which correct inefficiencies in the banana value chain while guaranteeing fair prices and earnings for all the relevant actors.*

2. Participation of stakeholders in the WGs

Every person or organization involved in any step of the banana industry should be considered a stakeholder of the WBF and, thus, a potential member for one or more of the WGs. Examples of stakeholders are: producers, their organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, exporter groups, trading companies, retailers, public agencies, governments, research institutions and civil society organizations.

Having attended the first meeting of the WBF (Rome, December 2009) is not a prerequisite to be considered a member to the WBF or its WGs.

Every application to join a particular WG should be accepted by default.

Due to specific reasons, a participant could be denied to participate in a WG. If this would be the case, the WG's coordinators should send a detailed communication to the Secretariat and the Steering Committee of the WBF, which should take a final decision.

If a rule established by the WG affected the participation of a new member, it is up to the WG to decide whether this rule should be revised. If the WG decided not to change its position, the new participant can formally address a complaint before the Steering Committee who would analyze the situation and make a recommendation.

3. The role of the coordinators in the WG

The role and functions of the coordinators in each WG should be based on mutual consensus within the WG.

It is envisaged a team of about three to six coordinators per WG.

The coordinators should be appointed by the participants of the WG trying to ensure a balanced representativeness 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 supporting it.

The coordinators should verify that these guidelines are applied and that not one is excluded from participating in the WG.

The coordinators will work as a link between the WG and the WBF (the Secretariat, the Steering Committee and the rest of the members of the forum), but their power should be considered equal to that of any other member.

The coordinators are responsible to establish a Working Plan (revisable when needed) and make it available to the members of the WG and the Steering Committee. This Working Plan should include the following information:

- i. Objectives of the WG
- ii. Expected outputs
- iii. Proposed Planning (estimated dates of conference calls, meetings, achievements, etc.)

- iv. General Information (responsibilities of the members, tools, communication languages, etc.)
- v. Estimated Budget

4. About communication

4.1 Communication within the WG

Every WG should pledge to some common rules regarding internal communication and communication procedures with the Secretariat and the rest of the WBF members. This is to guarantee maximum accessibility to the discussions and outputs of the WG to all the interested stakeholders.

The Secretariat of the WBF is offering a web-based platform to facilitate the communication flow within the WGs. All the WGs are requested to use this tool as a way to promote openness and homogeneity through the work of the different WGs. This website is the place to publish the outcomes of discussions that occur within each WG (face to face meetings and/or teleconferences). All forum participants (even the newcomers) should be informed about how to find these reports. They are allowed to post their own comments or to make their suggestions on this site at every stage.

4.2 Communication with the Secretariat of the WBF

Every WG should communicate the Secretariat (which is the link to the Steering Committee and to the rest of the WBF stakeholders) the main decisions adopted during their discussions for reviewing, validation and dissemination of results.

The WGs are requested to copy the Secretariat in their relevant communications and keep it informed about meetings, resolutions, progress of activities, financial needs, new members recruiting and similar issues.

4.3 The use of languages in the WG

The WGs should respect the tri-lingual status of the WBF. The team of coordinators should, ideally, be able to communicate in the three languages of the Forum (English, Spanish and French) and make sure that no participants are being left aside.

5. About meetings

The WGs will have to work mainly on distance (through e-mails discussions, teleconferences and similar methodologies). Nevertheless, face to face meetings are expected to happen and should be encouraged and facilitated as much as possible. It is understandable that an *active core group* (not restricted to anyone) will actually meet with frequency. The rest of the participants of the WG should be allowed to take part in these meetings if they request so. Each subsequent meeting (or teleconference) of the active core group should start with a review of all the comments or suggestions made on the website and the group should agree on a collective response to these comments or suggestions if appropriate or necessary.

The Steering Committee suggested that one or two meetings per year should be arranged. The WGs will plan their meetings considering the geographical location of the WG's members and their availability.

The Steering Committee members and/or the Secretariat could attend these meetings if that would be considered useful and funding were available.

6. Financial resources

It is foreseen that the WGs will need financial resources to comply with their duties.

The Steering Committee will allocate an amount of funds to each WG depending on the effective availability of those funds and the relevance of the proposed activities. A specific task force on budget fundraising has been created under the Steering Committee, with the mission to raise as much resources as possible.

Every WG is encouraged to look for their own funds in order to facilitate their work.