



The World Banana Forum (WBF)

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade



The need for urgent action

Bananas are the world's most exported fresh fruit both in volume and value (US\$7 bn/year). They are an essential source of income and employment for hundreds of thousands of rural households in developing countries. However, agrochemical-intensive production on large-scale plantations along with declining producer prices have given rise to many environmental and social challenges. These can only be properly addressed if all the sector's stakeholders collaborate actively.

A series of international conferences gathering key players from the banana industry, public sector and civil society forged consensus on the need to establish a permanent forum. Hence, the **World Banana Forum (WBF)** was launched at a conference organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome in 2009 with the participation of some 150 stakeholders from the whole banana sector worldwide. They have formed **3 specialized working groups** to implement practical activities which address the most urgent **environmental, social and economic** challenges.

Objectives

The World Banana Forum promotes the **worldwide adoption of best practices for sustainable banana production and trade** by providing a permanent space where the different stakeholders of the banana sector¹ jointly seek solutions to their common challenges through collaboration. The specialized Working Groups and partners of the WBF work together to promote:

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

The WBF focuses its activities on **finding practical solutions to field problems**. It undertakes activities that rapidly generate gains for all stakeholders. Its outputs are made available for free to the whole banana sector worldwide in three languages (English, French, Spanish).

¹ These include fresh produce companies, exporters, trading and logistics companies, producers' and workers' organizations, retailers, labeling and standards organizations, research institutions, civil society organizations, governments and international organizations.

Activities and expected outputs

The WBF reviews the developments in the banana sector. It organizes debates and joint activities to address the challenges facing the sector. Its Working Groups identify and analyze **best practices**, test them through **pilot projects** and produce **recommendations, guidance documents**, and a best practices library open to everyone.

These are the expected outputs of the WBF:

1. The **environmental impact of banana production and trade** activities has been analyzed and practical solutions to address it have been discussed, proposed and promoted.
2. Mechanisms to ensure a **fairer distribution of the value along the banana supply chain** have been discussed and suggested.
3. The **respect of labour rights, gender equity** and **occupational health and safety** (OHS) in banana plantations has been assessed and specific proposals to promote it have been developed.
4. The **WBF** has adopted a stable structure and it **continues to develop in the future**.
5. **Consumers understand the importance of purchasing sustainably-grown bananas.**

FAO's role

The Trade and Markets Division of the FAO hosts the Secretariat of the WBF. As an intergovernmental organization, FAO is trusted by all stakeholders, who appreciate its professionalism, **independence** and **technical expertise**. FAO gives the WBF the **objectivity** and **credibility** that are prerequisites for its success.

Mixed funding scheme

The WBF is funded by a **mixed scheme**. Part of the funds come from donations by public-sector donors; however, these occasional contributions are not sufficient to fund the WBF's activities, which aim to produce changes at a worldwide level. The participants of the WBF also provide annual contributions to ensure that the WBF develops autonomously.

The banana sector is moving towards a more sustainable system.

Join the WBF to play an active role in this change!



Secretariat of the World Banana Forum

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

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