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## ORCA Questions – Week One

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### 1. General comments (re. Chapters 1 and 2)

- Chapter 1 provides a brief factual background on the organic sector. Is the information correct and sufficiently comprehensive?
- In Chapter 2, section 2.1 describes transnational efforts to promote organic agricultural research. Are there other significant efforts that should be included in this section? If so, what are they and where is information found that describes those efforts? We mention ARNOA in the discussion of transnational efforts. Is there a website or paper that describes the organization as it is currently operating?
- In trying to illustrate the kinds of organic research activities that exist, we choose to describe a handful of examples in Chapter 2, sections 2.3 and 2.4. Our choices are not meant to signal that these particular countries are doing better than others. Do you understand the presentation in this way, or does it elevate certain efforts and imply that they are certain to be included in ORCA?
- We have solicited a list of CGIAR organic research efforts in preparation for writing this paper. CGIAR staff provided that list and several discussions were held. A critical and fundamental choice in the design of ORCA was deciding that organic agriculture requires an effort outside of CGIAR but that this separate effort should be coordinated with CGIAR. Is this discussion found in sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 sufficient to convince you that we need to establish a new centre network dedicated to organic agriculture? If not, it is because there is missing information or the sections are poorly argued or is it because you think that existing research entities can be reoriented to undertake more organic research?

### 2. The ORCA vision (re. Chapter 3)

- Chapter 3 begins with a guiding vision: “a robust scientific enterprise for organic by 2025”. Everything in this paper is driven by this vision. Do you agree with the articulation of this vision? If this is a shared vision, will ORCA, as described in this paper, cause this vision to be realized?
- We struggled with decisions about how much detail to provide in our design of ORCA. We decided to provide sufficient detail to engage in this electronic discussion at a level that goes well beyond “we need more organic research”. That said, we truly consider this a draft and do not mean to discourage brainstorming other approaches. Are there completely different approaches to achieving the vision that you would like to contribute to our discussion?
- We propose 10 centres in Chapter 3 and our wheel diagram illustrates how the alliance as a whole fits together. Is this diagram helpful? It places the Facilitation Board and FAO Secretariat in the centre. We intend for the Board and Secretariat to be small and for resources and power to be decentralised. Do you understand ORCA in this way or does it come across as “top-down”?

- Twinning is an essential element in the ORCA design. Perhaps we should include explicit discussion of tripling or other arrangements whereby research centres can strengthen one another. What suggestions do you have to improve Section 3.4?
- When we distributed a rough draft of this paper to a small circle of friends, we received mixed feedback on the soils discussion. Some felt very strongly that all centres, as described in this proposal, should have some responsibility with regard to soils while an equal number felt that this was not practical or desirable. What do you think?
- Do you agree with the membership composition proposed for the Facilitation Board? Will it ensure adequate participation from civil society?
- If insufficient funding is received, or staggered investment from donors requires iterative implementation of ORCA, what priorities that should be set for centre investment?

### **3. ORCA topics (re. Chapter 4)**

- In Chapter 4 we attempt to describe each of the 10 centres and the 20 resource concentrations. Do you agree with the elevation of these particular topics (e.g., should agri-tourism be a resource concentration)? Are they coupled correctly (e.g., does it make sense to have agri-tourism within the Centre on Seeds and Breeds)?
- Do you agree with the hierarchy proposed? Should some “resource concentrations” be elevated to centre sectors? In particular, we would like to know whether climate change is appropriately placed in this scheme?
- In the discussion of each resource concentration, we have sought to outline specific organic research needs and have tried to indicate a few organizations that are sources of information in that area. Is there additional information you would like to see under Section 4.2?

### **4. Organizational matters (re. Chapters 5 and 6)**

- In Section 5.1, we propose 16 selection criteria for determining which research centres will be included in ORCA. Do you agree with these criteria? Are important elements missing? Should the criteria be weighed equally or are some more important than others?
- Is the selection process as described in Section 5.2 sufficiently transparent?
- We have little idea as to the reaction of donors to this proposal and have found it necessary to design this absent any real sense of a potential budget. Do you think our range of \$10-20 million described in Section 6.2 is about right? Is it feasible to develop ORCA as we describe on such a budget?